



UNIVERSITY OF  
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FAMILY PLOTS: BIO-MEDICAL DISCOURSE, GENDER, AND  
FAMILIAL/MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MODERN GREEK FICTION OF  
THE 1920s AND 1930s

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present dissertation titled “Family plots: bio-medical discourse, gender, and familial/marital relationships in the modern Greek fiction of the 1920s and 1930s” consists of three chapters and is designed as a wide-ranging comparative study of bio-medical themes and concepts (degeneration, eugenics, and biological determinism), gender issues (domestic and social life, education and work, and sexuality), ties between family members and spouses, as well as parental figures in Greek family narratives published between 1920 and 1939. As such, the thesis examines and compares the various ways in which the fictional texts under consideration discuss the aforementioned issues; while also exploring the extent to which fiction from this period interacts with bio-medical and feminist discourses, as well as with contemporary cultural and legal shifts, and the various ways by which it acknowledges the realities of the interwar historical background.

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## INTRODUCTION

The present thesis, titled “Family plots: bio-medical discourse, gender, and familial/marital relationships in the modern Greek fiction of the 1920s and 1930s”, is a study of Greek family narratives that appeared in fictional works between 1920 and 1939, and it focuses on three areas of interest, i.e., bio-medical matters (degeneration, eugenics, and biological determinism), gender issues (domestic and social life, education and work, and sexuality), and familial/marital bonds.<sup>1</sup> ‘Family plots’ suggests fictional works in which the family is “the primary structural and thematic focus”.<sup>2</sup> Of course, the use of family as a case study is justified on the grounds that family is not only the mirror of society but also a miniature society in itself. In other words, there is “a metonymic relationship between the family and the state [society] as microcosmic and macrocosmic structures of order”.<sup>3</sup> Under this aspect, following Mark Freeman who remarks that “there is no more appropriate vehicle for studying human lives than through narrative inquiry”, I have worked on the assumption that there are no means more appropriate to learn about society than through family narratives.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the boundaries of my study

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<sup>1</sup> At this point, I shall note that the present treatise, to some degree, originates in my thesis *H αναπαράσταση της αστικής και μεγαλοαστικής ζωής σε μυθιστορήματα των δεκαετιών 1920 και 1930* where some of the texts and issues examined thoroughly in the present dissertation were broached and explored -more or less- for the first time. In other words, to an extent, it was the engagement with interwar fiction during my master’s that led me to pursue more in-depth research by examining issues evident in both the thesis and the dissertation, bringing up subjects related to the topics discussed in the thesis, raising new research questions, and including as many as possible case studies. See Bitsiani 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Ru 1992: 1.

<sup>3</sup> White 2007: 25.

<sup>4</sup> Freeman 2015: 21–22.

(1920–1939) frame the first and the second interwar decades “as a convenient as well as logical and obvious unit of literary history”.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the period within which the fictional works under consideration were created merits a word or two.<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, the authors were writing during a rather transitional and turbulent era, characterised by the sudden and complete collapse of the Great Idea (Megali Idea), which, in turn, gave rise to a political and ideological crisis. Alongside this, tensions sparked constant conflicts and bitter polarisation between the two opposing political camps/blocs, i.e., Venizelism and Antivenizelism identified with the Liberal Party and the People’s Party respectively; as well as the resurgence and rekindling of the National Schism (Ethnikos Dichasmos), inherited from the second decade of the 20th century, rooted in heated discussions about Greece’s participation in the First World War and the concomitant constitutional conflict. Further political and governmental instability was caused by successive elections, plebiscites, military coups and counter-coups that took place during the interwar period. This troubled climate was exacerbated by social issues, as well as social and workers’ unrest (such as workers’ impoverishment, the reduction in salaries, high rates of unemployment, and ongoing strikes); and, while efforts were made to bring stability to public finances during the 1920s, the economic, social, and political consequences of the Wall Street Crash were felt strongly in Greece in the 1930s. Finally, authors of the time witnessed the

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<sup>1</sup> Ferrall and McNeill 2018: 8.

<sup>2</sup> For the interwar historical background, see Alivizatos 1995; Clogg 1986; Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002; Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010; Mavrogordatos 1983; Mazower 1991; Mazower 1998; Papadimitriou 2012; Rigos 1988; Veremis 1999.

restoration of monarchy, the abolition of Democracy and parliamentary rule, and the imposition of a dictatorship.

Bio-medicine/literature interface and aspects of gender and family have been - more or less- discussed in a number of critical works. For example, Maria Sakalaki's (1984) *Κοινωνικές ιεραρχίες και σύστημα αξιών: ιδεολογικές δομές στο νεοελληνικό μυθιστόρημα 1900–1980* is concerned with the values that feature in the Greek novel between 1900 and 1980 and are associated with each social class and gender.<sup>1</sup> In *Οι Ελληνίδες πεζογράφοι του μεσοπολέμου (1921–1944)*, Eleni Lianopoulou (1993) lists female authors published between 1921 and 1944, notes common themes in their fiction and examines more closely the fictional texts of Galateia Kazantzaki, Kleareti Dipla-Malamou, Elli Alexiou, Lilika Nakou, Tatiana Stavrou, Ioanna Boukouvala-Anagnostou, and Melpo Axioti.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Lianopoulou stresses the need for a study exploring the perspective of the most representative male authors on gender issues that they touched on in their works of the same period.<sup>3</sup> Polyxeni Bistas' (1998) *Γυναικεία προσωπογραφία στο έργο του Άγγελου Τερζάκη* is, as the title suggests, an exploration of the depiction of female characters in Angelos Terzakis' fiction alone.<sup>4</sup> In “‘Η ανεξακρίβωτη σκηνή’ (Σχεδιάσμα για μια ανάγνωση των μυθιστορημάτων του Άγγελου Τερζάκη)”, Tzina Politi (2001) suggests a psychoanalytical approach to Terzakis' *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, and *Μυστική ζωή*, claiming that what lies at the

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<sup>1</sup> Sakalaki 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Lianopoulou 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 328.

<sup>4</sup> Bista 1998.



heart of their narrative is the Oedipus and family complex.<sup>1</sup> In *Αναπαραστάσεις του γυναικείου στη λογοτεχνία*, Diamanti Anagnostopoulou (2010) examines the portrayal of female figures in a number of fictional works of the 1930s.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, she is primarily concerned with the hero or heroine’s fantasies about mother figures and the latter’s representations as “a source of desire and hate as well as of allure and aversion”, and a cause of “fear, remorse, and death”;<sup>3</sup> as well as exploring the depiction of younger women “as either whore, virgin or object of desire”, and “as either assertive or passive figures”.<sup>4</sup> Maria Zarimis’ (2015) *Darwin’s footprint: cultural perspectives on evolution in Greece, 1880–1930s* explores “the influence of Darwinian, post-Darwinian, and other evolutionary ideas in the works of literary writers and other intellectuals in Greece” between 1880 and 1930;<sup>5</sup> while Frangiski Ampatzopoulou’s (2017) “Λογοτεχνία, παραλογοτεχνία και βιοεπιστήμες στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου” mainly discusses the presence of biophysical theories in fictional texts of the 1920s, whose “primary structural and thematic focus” is not necessarily the family.<sup>6</sup> Finally, in *Δοκιμασίες: όψεις του οικογενειακού πλέγματος στο νεοελληνικό μυθιστόρημα 1922–1974*, Mary Mike (2019) touches on family crises in a number of fictional works published between 1922 and 1974.<sup>7</sup>

As for the present dissertation, it endeavours to be as inclusive as possible in pursuing a comparative exploration of family plots in Greek fictional texts

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<sup>1</sup> Politi 2001: 56.

<sup>2</sup> Anagnostopoulou 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 17, 122 and 123.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 17–18.

<sup>5</sup> Zarimis 2015: 4 and 287.

<sup>6</sup> Ampatzopoulou 2017: 337.

<sup>7</sup> Mike 2019.

appearing between 1920 and 1939. More particularly, it aspires to scrutinise the highest possible number of fictional works brought out in the 1920s and 1930s which employ the family as a narrative structure and are variously written by male or female, confirmed or unconfirmed feminist, as well as bourgeois or socialist, authors. Quite predictably, the larger the sample of fictional texts used, the more examples there will be to work with, thus allowing considerable insights into the various means and narrative techniques by which the authors present issues associated with bio-medicine, gender, and family/marriage life. It is this comparative approach to the writers and their texts that primarily informs my study.

Based on a detailed account of the emergence of bio-medical beliefs and practices and their dissemination within Greece, this thesis suggests a comparative examination of eugenics and intermarriage informing these fictional works, as well as an exploration of the influence of genes (biological determinism) and the protagonists' ability to act against heredity (free action) as the question of the hereditary qualities of character comes up quite often and can be determined by the pessimistic or optimistic outlook adopted by the authors. Further, by describing the resurgence of feminist discourse in interwar Greece and the new space given to discussions about sex (sexual activity) and female sexuality both outside and within Greece, my study provides a thorough examination of male, female, confirmed, and unconfirmed feminist authors who touch on gender issues (a gap clearly identified and stressed by Eleni Lianopoulou). It also discusses matters that have barely been addressed so far, such as women and fashion, types of entertainment, mixed-gender gatherings, sex education, abortion, hymenoplasty, and hymenotomy. Regarding familial and marital relationships in the historical, cultural, and legal contexts of the

interwar years, it offers a comprehensive account of family and marriage crises in 1920s and 1930s fiction alone, while at the same time dealing with representations of maternal and paternal figures and tracking crises in the performance of their roles. Finally, the thesis as a whole sheds light on authors and texts that have been inadequately explored or practically ignored in earlier studies, such as Aimilia Daphni's *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς* and *Η ξένη γη*; Dionysios Kokkinos' *Μυστική φωληά* and *Πλιγγος*; Pavlos Floros' *Αποικιοι*; and Thanasis Petsalis-Diomidis' *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* and *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*.

As already mentioned, the focus of my research is on fictional texts of the 1920s and 1930s where family constitutes the backbone of the narrative and issues pertaining to bio-medicine, gender, and family/marriage are broached.<sup>1</sup> Aiming at an in-depth examination of the examples to be considered in each chapter and with a view to sketching a detailed context for discussion of the fictional works, I turned to both primary (interviews, letters, diaries, census data, and statistics) and secondary (newspaper and journal articles, dissertations, thesis, essays, and critical reviews) data sources. In other words, I read the fictional works closely with the intention of determining how the topics of bio-medicine, gender and family/marriage inform these texts; interpreting their fictional representation in relation to bio-medical and feminist discourse, cultural and legal shifts, and the historical realities of the time (the authors' point of view included); and showing a connection between interwar fiction on the one hand, and the bio-medical, feminist, cultural, legal, and historical backdrop on the other.

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<sup>1</sup> It should further be said that I only examined Greek families.

As it seems, my study draws its data from modern Greek fiction of the interwar period, while also borrowing tools that allude to a wide range of fields, such as anthropology, sociology and (bio)medicine, to mention but a few. Naturally, such a methodological perspective generates discussions about whether and why literature can be seen as anthropological, sociological, (bio)medical and other scientific data; and how analysis of this data adds to the reading and understanding of fiction. The answers to these questions are expected to hit the nail on the head by shedding light on the very nature of literary texts themselves and on the importance of connecting realms of knowledge otherwise held apart.

Fictional narratives, like all major forms of art, are undoubtedly cultural products of a certain time and place; and as such, they develop a close relation to the external world. As Thomas Winner stresses, “literature exploits the real world not for its own sake, but for the sake of the literary text itself, the construction of a fictive world”, and as a result, literary texts, although they “can never substitute for fieldwork, can serve as corroborating documentation” instead.<sup>1</sup> On his part, Mariano Longo views fictional narratives as “documents –that is, sets of data”.<sup>2</sup> Particularly, he claims that literature “creates worlds which are reality-like, as well as a temporally and logically coherent meaning structure, within which a portion of reality is represented, given significance and relevance”.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore on the grounds of fictional texts’ capacity to offer “artificial reconstructions of reality”, “to construct verisimilar rather than truthful accounts”, so to speak, that their cognitive value and

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<sup>1</sup> Winner 1988: 51, 52 and 53.

<sup>2</sup> Longo 2015: 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 4.

use as “sources of data” are established.<sup>1</sup> For Rik Peels, although literary works “are not meant to represent the actual world, they are important cultural products and expressions of humanity” and they deliver knowledge and understanding, since “they give us insight into the work and the world of the work of art in question; they shape our intellectual virtues; they invite the reader to apply various hypotheses; they deliver moral propositional knowledge; and they increase or bring about full understanding with respect to meaning, virtue, and significance”.<sup>2</sup> It is the emphasis on literature’s ability to “embody or confer certain epistemic values” –as other scientific disciplines do– that allows the treatment of literary texts as a mine of information.<sup>3</sup>

Scientists’ attitudes towards literature further attest to its value as a source of data.<sup>4</sup> For example, for anthropologists, fiction is “an ideal field of inquiry” in that it is “an interesting document of humanity in action” and “a rich source of information about societies”. For sociologists, fictive narratives, regardless of their fictionality, are an invaluable resource for “the scientific study of society”; and thus, they are subjected to sociological investigation and analysis. For (bio)medical experts, considerable benefits arise from the inclusion of “the study of literature in medical education” in that “literary accounts of illness can teach physicians concrete and

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<sup>1</sup> Longo 2015: 5, 6 and 27–52.

<sup>2</sup> Peels 2020: 199, 200, 201, 202 and 206. See also Gibson 2009: 467; Swirski 1998: 6 and 7. For more details on the ways literature has epistemic value, see Peels 2020: 203 and 206–221.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 200 and 201; Swirski 1998: 15.

<sup>4</sup> For the details that follow, see Ahmadi 2021: 132; AL-Gharib 2020: 94, 96, 98 and 99; Alwaqaa 2020: 36; Bibbò 2019: 74–75; Charon et al. 1995: 599; Cohen 2013: 3; Douglas and Douglas-Malti n.d.; Fabre and Jamin 2012: 582, 583, 584 and 599; Longo 2015: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 125; Markowski 2012: 89; Merrill 1967: 648 and 656; Pasco 2004: 379, 383 and 389; Schaffner 2015: 37; Shmidt 2008: 14; Wiles 2020: 282.

powerful lessons about the lives of sick people” and allow them to “better understand patients’ stories of sickness and his or her own personal stake in medical practice”; while also providing “new perspectives on the work and the genres of medicine”. For sexologists, literary texts “serve as evidence” and provide “case studies deemed just as valid as empirical observations”. For psychoanalysts, literature is viewed “as a source or exemplar for psychoanalytic conceptions themselves”. And finally, for historians, fiction, “when approached with historical discernment and critical acumen, becomes an increasingly reliable historical archive”, a “legitimate historical source”, and a mine of “specific historical information”.<sup>1</sup>

Much goes to show that literature is the boundary-crossing of “a half-dozen disciplines within a few lines”;<sup>2</sup> and thus, the relationship between the humanities (especially literature) on the one hand, and both the natural and social sciences on the other, can be imagined via metaphors of underground communicating vessels, suggesting that different branches of knowledge can come into fruitful communication and develop complementary relationships.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the convergence between literature on the one hand, and anthropology, sociology, (bio)medicine, sexology, psychoanalysis, and history on the other, see Ahmadi 2021: 132; AL-Gharib 2020: 99; Alwaqaa 2020: 34, 35, 36 and 37; Charon 2000: 24 and 25; Cohen 2013: 8; Craith and Kockel 2014: 695; Douglas and Douglas-Malti n.d.; Erickson 1988: 123; Fabre and Jamin 2012: 579, 580 and 581; Gwynne and Poon 2012: xii; Lang et al. 2017: 1; Lawlor 2021: 5, 6, 9 and 15; Lemos and Gomes 2017: xv; Longo 2015: 1–8, 53 and 125; Markowski 2012: 88; Merrill 1967: 656; Pasco 2004: 374, 381 and 383; Rapport 1994: 23 and 26; Shmidt 2008: 27; Syofyan 2018; Wiles 2020: 282 and 285.

<sup>2</sup> Clune 2018.

<sup>3</sup> A fine example of the intersection between literature and science constitutes the emergence of naturalism and psychologism against the background of the theories of evolution (anthropology) and of the function of the psyche (psychology). It could therefore be inferred that scientific ideas and

perception of literature as a “locus” where concepts and modes of thinking developed in other fields of study have permeated that clearly points to its interdisciplinary nature, necessitating in turn its interdisciplinary approach.

To consider and read literary texts in terms of interdisciplinarity proves rather useful and productive, since borrowing the tools from and “using the lenses of various academic disciplines”, “collecting different types of evidence from research sources”, and “selecting appropriate and relevant ideas, approaches, theories, concepts, methods, and comparisons from different fields or disciplines” are regarded as contributing to ‘knowledge production’.<sup>1</sup> It goes without saying that within the present dissertation, such an interdisciplinary attitude is not only necessary but also of considerable value, for the addressed topics pertain to a variety of branches. Thus, close reading, together with the use of data and interpretations available in other areas of knowledge, aspire to offer a better, deeper, and more thorough understanding of the fictional works in question. As such, this study may be useful and appealing to students and scholars from the literary field as well as to a wider transdisciplinary readership.

My approach to the texts, as already mentioned, aims to explore, determine, and compare the ways in which the authors discuss the matters of concern (i.e., bio-

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concepts inform literature; and both literature and science may be concerned with the same issues from different perspectives. Márcia Lemos and Miguel R. Gomes on their part emphasise that “literary authors have never stopped engaging with scientific topics and representations, be it for utopian, didactic, emulative, critical, satirical, or other purposes”; while also “acknowledging the implications of the arts and the humanistic disciplines for scientific research”. See Lemos and Gomes 2017: ix and x; Schwartz 2017: 162 and 163. For the “dialogues and confluences”, as well as the “affinities and distinctions”, between fiction and science in the nineteenth century, see also Otis 2002.

<sup>1</sup> Committee on Key Challenge Areas for Convergence and Health et al. 2014: 46; Graff 2015: 5; Swirski 1998: 6; Troyka and Hesse 2012.

medical, gender, and familial/marital issues). This comparative approach is evident throughout the dissertation –even in the ‘Conclusion’ where I attempt to show how motifs and themes presented throughout the main part of the thesis are discussed in each of the three chapters in different contexts. It should not be left unmentioned that my intention to offer a comparative study that is as inclusive as possible ‘clashes’ with the restrictions on word limit. That is why some of the fictional works in my dissertation are only commented on in passing in the footnotes.

As for the sequence in which the fictional texts appear, in each section they are presented in chronological order (publication year). When more than one work by the same author is examined within the same section, chronological order is also followed; while the presentation of the next author’s fictional work(s) continues from the year of publication of the first text by the previous one. Finally, where more than one book appears in the same year, they are examined in alphabetical order (by author’s name).<sup>1</sup>

As for the structure of the thesis, the main part is divided into three chapters. Chapter One follows and discusses the reception and incorporation of bio-medical themes and concepts (degeneration, eugenics, and biological determinism). Chapter Two draws attention to narratives concerning the life stories of daughters and sons and examines the representation of the ‘gender-space’ relationship. Chapter Three focuses on fictional works in which family and marriage constitute the mainstay of the narrative line and explores familial and marital bonds as well as parental figures. The main part is followed by the ‘Conclusion’ where my concluding remarks are

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<sup>1</sup> I should also note in advance that, to avoid repetition of the phrase “My translation” in the footnotes, all translations from Greek into English are mine.



followed by thoughts and suggestions regarding prospects of future research. At this point, I should also underline that the themes discussed in the sections of each of the three chapters are tightly interlinked, and that is why the chapters are longer than usual.

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**FAMILY AND BIO-MEDICAL DISCOURSE: DEGENERATION,**  
**EUGENICS, AND BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM**

Literary discourse can be characterised as either a mosaic or a melting pot of various discourses.<sup>1</sup> A characteristic example is the case of the bio-medical themes and concepts which are occasionally received and incorporated into literature. My aim is to examine the various ways and reasons for which bio-medical discourse, whose features are different from those of literature, often informs modern Greek fiction of the interwar period.<sup>2</sup>

To broach or present issues and themes associated with bio-medicine, literary works are bound to borrow ‘technical terms’ and vocabulary from that field, and readers of interwar fiction will come across a wide range of bio-medical vocabulary, which could reflect concerns for degeneration, heredity, atavism, evolution, and retrogression, but also eugenic beliefs and practices. The use of the word ‘blood’ here, along with the antitheses between ‘healthy’ and ‘sick’, ‘vigorous’ and ‘weak’, ‘fit’ and ‘unfit’, is incredibly important, since, as will be shown, these terms, in their literal or figurative application, convey the idea of degeneration in the sense of “physical or mental impairment, immorality and criminality”.<sup>3</sup> Is it the case that the occurrence of such antithetical pairs, as well as the deployment of terms like ‘blood’ and ‘illness’, point to the authors’ views and perceptions regarding society? Does the use of such bio-medical vocabulary imply that society may be ailing or

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<sup>1</sup> This reflects Bakhtin’s polyphonic view on literature. See Bakhtin 1984: 200.

<sup>2</sup> Here one should be reminded of the critical works of Maria Zarimis and Frangiski Ampatzopoulou. See Ampatzopoulou 2017; Zarimis 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Kokkinos and Karasarinis 2017: 130.

undergoing a crisis? And, as a result, could one suppose that, through identifying such themes, fiction from this period gives voice to some urgent need for regeneration?

The fact that such issues were closely explored in contemporary Greek fiction of the interwar period probably means that writers were usually aware of or consciously espoused contemporary bio-medical theories and their sociological implications. Considering this to be the case, my main concern is to identify references to the bio-medical theories (degeneration, eugenics, and biological determinism) and try to establish a correlation between these theories and the ideas or themes found in fictional works. Yet, let it be stressed once again that, in my attempt to examine the bio-medical/literary discourse interface during the interwar period and to find out what lies behind the instances where terms, themes, and concepts from the field of bio-medicine are employed in that period's literary output, I intend to discuss writers who use the family as "their primary structural and thematic focus" with the intention of expressing their views on society and the various forces which shape it.<sup>1</sup>

While focusing on the attitudes of fiction writers of this period, questions naturally arise. Could degeneration of an individual family member result in the social and moral decline of his family? Do the authors, through the notions of degeneration and biological determinism, express their fears, concerns, and anxieties, linking, in a rather crucial period, the fate of the individual with that of contemporary society or the nation as a whole? To what extent are individuals free to make their own choices to counteract the defining influence of blood and genes?

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<sup>1</sup> Ru 1992: 1.

Is degeneration unavoidable or can it be reversed and lead to regeneration? As might be expected, pessimistic perceptions are associated with ideas of ‘degeneration’ and ‘biological determinism’ and, conversely, optimistic ones are interwoven with those of ‘regeneration’ and ‘freedom of action’.

Eugenic beliefs and practices, featuring in bio-medical and anthropological discourses of the interwar period, were also applied, developed, and contemplated in the fictional works where family constitutes the mainstay of the narrative line, a narrative device; thus, part of my project involves looking at the ways such beliefs and practices are woven into the narrative fabric of the texts under examination. Does the mood of the time underlie their presence in the text? Does the degeneracy of characters’ genetic traits indicate the consequent degeneration of societies, nations, and races? Can the family play any role in negotiating this danger? Do the writers talk about eugenics, and do they take the knowledge acquired in the fields of biology, anthropology, and medicine into account with a view to proposing their vision of a better, healthier and more ethical society?<sup>1</sup> In other words, is the implementation of eugenics, in the sense of giving birth to biologically acceptable offspring (physically and mentally healthy), put forth in the examples in question in this chapter the answer to the danger of degeneration?

What deserves special mention here is the fact that specific motifs and themes, evident in the fictional texts in question, constitute essential elements of the tropology of naturalist fiction where they appeared for the first time. These include concepts such as “the degeneration of man into a sub-human state” (reversed evolution) and “the degenerate body as the locus of disorder”; the “devastating” and

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos and Karasarinis 2017: 142–143.

“fateful effects” of heredity; illness “as a sign of distinction” between healthy and unhealthy individuals and as a synonym for various mental disorders (for example, hysteria and neurosis/neurasthenia); the philosophy questioning individual’s ability to escape from inexorable laws and determining factors (such as heredity, blood and nerves); the transition “from order to disorder, from mental stability to hysteria and madness, from sobriety to intemperance, from integrity to corruption”; the gravitation towards disintegration and decomposition mirroring “a real crisis of human values” (entropic vision); and finally, the back-and-forth movement “between individual and social pathology”.<sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking, ‘naturalism’<sup>2</sup> typically describes the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century literary movement that aspired to apply the scientific discoveries

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<sup>1</sup> Baguley 1990: 63, 208, 209, 211, 212, 213, 221 and 222; Baguley 1992: 18–19, 21, 23 and 26; Campbell et al. 2011: 500; Claridge 1998: 915 and 916; Furst and Skrine 1971: 16 and 17; Hill 2009: 1202; Hill 2020: 51, 55, 61, 63, 95 and 96; Lyytikäinen 2014: 85, 86 and 87; Nelson 2012: 296, 297, 299 and 308; Pick 1989: 74; Ridley 1987: 32. Naturalism was introduced to Greece in 1879, when an incomplete translation of Émile Zola’s novel *Nana* appeared in the newspaper *Ραμπαγάς* (*Rabagas*). The Greek version of the French fictional work was finally released in book form in 1880, with its introduction “Ἐπιστολιμαία διατριβή ἀντί προλόγου” (“Thesis in letter form by way of a prologue”) suggesting the manifesto of the Greek naturalist school. The fictional texts *Ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κόσμου* (1888) and *Νικόλαος Σιγαλός* (1890) by Gregorios Xenopoulos, as well as *Ὁ ζητιάνος* (1897) by Andreas Karkavitsas (1865–1922), constitute representative examples of the Greek naturalist movement, while naturalist elements are also evident in the fictional works of Alexandros Papadiamantis, Konstantinos Theotokis, and Petros Pikros to name a few. The perception of naturalism in Greece was ambivalent, as shown by the critical texts of various authors, such as Angelos Vlachos’ “Ἡ φυσιολογική σχολή καὶ ὁ Ζολά: ἐπιστολή πρὸς ἐπαρχιώτην” (1879; “The naturalist school and Zola: letter to a countryman”), Agesilaus Giannopoulos Ipeirotis’ “Ἐπιστολιμαία διατριβή ἀντί προλόγου”, and Gregorios Xenopoulos’ “Αἱ περὶ Ζολά προλήψεις” (1880; “The prejudices about Zola”). See Galaios 2007: 112–128; Giannopoulos 1996: 271–297; Vlachos 1879: 789–795; Xenopoulos 1880a: 321–324; Xenopoulos 1880b: 337–340.

<sup>2</sup> Naturalism has a mongrel ancestry in the sense that when it appeared on the literary scene it already carried meanings originating in philosophy, the sciences, and the fine arts. Yet, “it was from the fine

and methods of the age to literature and thus, to offer new organisations of narrative.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the matter and the manner of the naturalist fiction draw from various sources of the time, such as August Comte's (1798–1857) philosophical positivism, Prosper Lucas' (1808–1885) treatise on natural heredity, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829), Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and Herbert Spencer's theories on evolution, Claude Bernard's (1813–1878) study on the scientific method in experimental medicine, and Hippolyte Taine's (1828–1893) views on the influence of both heredity –“in the guise of innate urges and instincts”– and environment, as well as on “the pressures of the moment”, on human behaviour.<sup>2</sup> And although the bridge between scientific theories and methods on the one hand, and their literary application on the other, were attempted in Edmond and Jules de Goncourt's novel *Germinie Lacerteux* (1864) for the first time, thereby being the first ‘scientific’ novel (“a clinical study of hysterical degeneration”), it was Zola's essay “Le Roman

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arts that” naturalism entered literary criticism: impressionist painters' interest in “everyday subjects from contemporary reality”, as well as in “the changing play of colour and light”, excited and prompted Émile Zola, a principal figure of the naturalist school of fiction in France, to write reviews of their exhibitions, where the words “‘impressionist’, ‘actualist’ and ‘naturalist’” appear as synonymous, thereby leaving no doubt that this was the source of naturalism's literary currency. See Baguley 1990: 41–42 and 44; Baguley 1992: 15–16; Claridge 1998: 914 and 915; Furst and Skrine 1971: 2–5; Nelson 2012: 294.

<sup>1</sup> Baguley 1990: 221; Furst and Skrine 1971: 9; Hill 2009: 1198, 1199 and 1203. For Gillian Beer, “fiction in the second half of the nineteenth century was particularly seeking sources of authoritative organisation which could substitute for the god-like omnipotence and omniscience open to the theistic narrator”. Following Beer, David Baguley claims that science served “not only as a guarantee of authenticity but also as a mark of originality, a source of generical renewal”. See Baguley 1990: 62 and 63; Beer 1980: 143.

<sup>2</sup> Baguley 1990: 57, 216, 217 and 221; Baguley 1992: 23; Campbell et al. 2011: 499 and 501; Carlson 1937: 186; Claridge 1998: 915; Furst and Skrine 1971: 9, 15–18, 19–20, 21, 22, 42 and 51; Hill 2009: 1202; Hill 2020: 96 and 97; Lehan 2012: 229; Nelson 2012: 296 and 299; Sleight 2017: 80; Smith 2017: 144.

expérimental” (1880; “The experimental novel”) that became the literary manifesto of the naturalist school.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially, in this treatise, Zola draws a parallel between the methods of the novelist and the experimental doctor –an attitude which one may wish to relate to the sciences’ fascination with “the demonstration of hidden relations and analogies”– that is grounded in the assumption that they “both study life”;<sup>2</sup> and he concludes that “the novelist is both an observer and experimenter”. It is against this background that Zola puts forth the principle of scientific observation and total objectivity in the presentation “of man as a creature dominated by heredity, milieu, and the pressures of the moment”, with the writer’s temperament being “a breach in the line” of such an approach.<sup>3</sup>

A by-product of the naturalist fiction, as well as the preoccupation with evolution and heredity, was the emergence of the ‘genealogical novel’ toward the end of the nineteenth century, with Zola’s *Les Rougon-Macquart* –a cycle of twenty separate

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<sup>1</sup> Baguley 1990: 54; Claridge 1998: 916; Hill 2009: 1200 and 1202; Hill 2020: 51 and 96; Nelson 2012: 308; Zola 1880. It should not be left unmentioned that “the first wave of naturalist novels”, such as the Goncourt brothers’ novel and Zola’s *Thérèse Raquin* (1867), “was preceded by a preliminary wave of realistic depictions”, notably works by Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Honoré de Balzac, Stendhal, Gustave Flaubert, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell. To put it differently, “it was from this combination of realist tradition and scientific innovations that the naturalist novel sprang”. See Baguley 1990: 48 and 221; Carlson 1937: 186; Claridge 1998: 914 and 915; Furst and Skrine 1971: 7–8, 9 and 42; Hill 2009: 1199–1200; Hill 2020: 52 and 95; Sleigh 2017: 80.

<sup>2</sup> Baguley 1990: 63; Beer 1980: 143; Furst and Skrine 1971: 20–21 and 52; Hill 2020: 55; Howard 2011: 98; Zola 1893: 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 8, 48, 95, 111, 256 and 257; Baguley 1990: 57 and 61; Claridge 1998: 915–916; Furst and Skrine 1971: 18, 20, 21, 42, 51, 52 and 70–71; Hill 2020: 52 and 55; Nelson 2012: 296, 297 and 299; Sleigh 2017: 80. The preface to the second edition of his *Thérèse Raquin* (1868) is also revealing about the “scientific character of naturalism”. See Claridge 1998: 915; Nelson 2012: 297.

but interconnected novels authored between 1871 and 1893– suggesting the prototype of this new genre.<sup>1</sup> This interconnection between the successively published volumes is reflected in the subtitle of the series: *Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire* (*Natural and social history of a family under the Second Empire*).<sup>2</sup> As Lilian Furst and Peter Skrine note:

The Rougons and the Macquarts are two branches of a large family whose progress is traced through five generations. Their 'natural history' comes in the role of heredity which is much to the fore in *Les Rougon-Macquart* in an amazing sequence of mental and physical diseases. The 'social history' emerges from the many professions and occupations in which the members of the family engage.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Claridge 1998: 916; Furst and Skrine 1971: 45; Nelson 2012: 295; Pick 1989: 75. In an early criticism titled "The genealogical novel, a new genre", fictional works fall into this new-fashioned category are described as follows: "instead of dealing, as the biographical novel usually does, with a single hero, and beginning the story at his birth or perhaps a little before, the genealogical novel affords a panorama of several generations, which link together the leading figures in the story. The fortunes of these characters in succeeding generations are presented in detail as each moves in turn through the picture". What further attests to the importance of this article is the fact that Zola is credited with contributing to the birth of this new genre, and that examples of French, English, German, American and Russian genealogical novels are also presented. The idea of a cycle of numerous novels with "recurring characters", as well as of "a comprehensive history of contemporary society", is attributed to Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) and his *La Comédie humaine* (1829–1848). See Nelson 2012: 294, 296 and 299; Zucker 1928: 551–560.

<sup>2</sup> It is *La fortune des Rougon* (1871; *The fortune of the Rougons*) that lays the foundation for a "natural and social history" of the Second Empire. According to Brian Nelson, the subtitle points to Zola's two intertwined aims: "to use fiction to demonstrate a number of 'scientific' notions about the ways in which human behaviour is determined by heredity and environment; and to use the symbolic possibilities of a family whose heredity is tainted to represent a diseased society". See Nelson 2012: 296.

<sup>3</sup> Furst and Skrine 1971: 17 and 45–46. Following Furst and Skrine, Nelson claims that "through the fortunes of his Rougon-Macquart family, Zola examined methodically the social, sexual, and moral



This reference to Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart* is of great significance, as it sheds light on the prehistory of a literary genre that was to spread around Europe and across oceans from the twentieth century onwards. On the other hand, in this chapter, my focus is on genealogical trees, i.e., generational/multigenerational novels. In this context, it should be stressed in advance that Gregorios Xenopoulos' novel in question may somehow bring his earlier preoccupation with naturalism to mind. Yet, despite the evident scientific themes and concepts, it is difficult to claim that Thanassis Petsalis-Diomidis, Angelos Terzakis, Pavlos Floros, and George Theotokas' fictional texts constitute representative examples of naturalist fiction.

The main part of the present chapter consists of three sections, namely "Degeneration", "Eugenics", and "Biological determinism". In the first section, I explore the emergence, meaning, and dissemination of the concept of 'degeneration' from the end of the 19th century onwards, and I try to identify intimations of degeneracy in the examples under consideration. In the second, I first discuss the rise of eugenics at the end of the 19th century and its international resonance in the first half of the 20th century, with a special focus on the Greek case; then, having identified the elements of degeneration and shown the degeneracy of the characters in the previous section, I investigate the eugenic means suggested or followed with a view to dealing with the danger of degeneration. Finally, in the third section, I provide the definition of the term 'biological determinism' and seek hints of

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landscape of the late nineteenth century along with its political, financial, and artistic contexts [...] Zola intended to write on the theme of heredity: a family, tainted with alcoholism and mental instability, were to intermarry, to proliferate and to pass on their inherited weaknesses to subsequent generations". Nelson 2012: 294 and 295. See also Baguley 1990: 208 and 212; Hill 2020: 52; Pick 1989: 75; Welge 2015: 2 and 4.

heredity and biologically determined fate –once again, an indication of the presence of bio-medical discourse in contemporary Greek fiction of the interwar period– in the texts under examination.

## **1.1 Degeneration**

### **1.1.1 ‘Fin de siècle’ and the fear of degeneration**

The idea of ‘degeneration’ prevailed in the fields of biological and social sciences at the end of the 19th century, especially in the 1880s and 1890s, and expressed fears and anxieties about the decline of Western civilization. In particular, due to a feeling fuelled by “morbid fears and pathological fixations”, the widespread belief at the time was that Western civilisation, despite economic and technological progress, was about to face “spiritual decline” and “moral bankruptcy”.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, these views were embedded in a narrative (‘degenerationism’) suggesting the reversion of “the direction of ameliorist versions of evolutionism, which proposed human history as an inevitable progression towards a higher and more rarefied state of civilization”.<sup>2</sup> This perspective, in essence, entailed the ‘disarray’ of European culture.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, these thoughts and fears were tightly interwoven with the French term ‘fin-de-siècle’, implying the turn of the century and the beginning of a new era, and describing the “mental constitution” and “disposition” at the end of the 19th century, which was perceived to be “a compound of feverish restlessness and blunted discouragement, of fearful presage and hang-dog renunciation”, and

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<sup>1</sup> Griffin 2007: 423 and 424.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 424; Hurley 2004: 65 and 84. The perception of ‘evolution’ as ‘reversion’ is examined thoroughly in the following pages.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 65.

“that of imminent perdition and extinction”.<sup>1</sup> The ‘fin-de-siècle’ was also linked to the ‘Dusk of Nations’, stemming from the ‘Dusk of the Gods’ idea and indicating that “mankind with all its institutions and creations is perishing in the midst of a dying world” like “all suns and all stars”, which “are gradually waning”.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of ‘degeneracy’ was introduced by the French psychiatrist Bénédict Augustin Morel (1809–1873) and developed further by the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909).<sup>3</sup> Morel used the term ‘degeneration’ in 1857 in reference to “human deviations”.<sup>4</sup> In his book, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l’espèce humaine et des causes qui produisent ces variétés maladives*, he defined “degeneracy as a morbid deviation from an original type” and, as a result, degeneration came to be a measurement of “the health of the individual”.<sup>5</sup> It follows that “anyone bearing in him the germs” – the elements ensuing from deviation and causing “brain lesions” – “becomes more and more incapable of fulfilling his functions in the world; and mental progress,

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<sup>1</sup> Hurley 2004: 65; Nordau 1895: 2 and 5. According to Roger Griffin, “the prospect that contemporary history was literally the fin de siècle” turned out to be “a leitmotiv of the times”, while “‘decadence’ became a European buzzword” and a “dominant metaphor of the disorienting, anomic nature of modernity among an entire generation”. As for the origins and the meaning of the term, ‘decadence’ “derives from the Latin ‘to fall’ [*cadere*] and indicates another analogy between falling and the loss of reality, vitality, or health”, yielding derivatives in English, such as “‘decay’ (from *decadere* via French), ‘collapse’ (from the Latin stem *labi*, to slip, slide, or fall), and ‘decline’ (from the Latin for ‘sinking away’)”. Although ‘decadence’ was “an artistic movement expressing the reality of disenchantment, anomie and breakdown of community, it was in the sphere of the natural sciences that a growing concern with the pathology of modern progress was to have its most profound social consequences”. See Griffin 2007: 422, 423 and 424.

<sup>2</sup> Nordau 1895: 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: vii.

<sup>4</sup> Nordau 1893: xxi.

<sup>5</sup> Hurley 2004: 71; Morel 1857: 5; Nordau 1895: 16.

already checked in his own person, finds itself menaced also in his descendants”.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, due to various factors, deviations from an initial healthy type are recorded, resulting in the formation of “a new sub-species” and the transmission of “morbid deviations”, namely “gaps in development, malformations, and infirmities” to the offspring.<sup>2</sup> For his part, Cesare Lombroso, “the father of criminology and criminal anthropology”,<sup>3</sup> regarded “criminality, madness, and genius” as “sides of the same psychobiological condition”, as “an expression of degeneration, a sort of regression”.<sup>4</sup> Lombroso had a great influence on Max Nordau (1849–1923), whose book *Entartung (Degeneration, 1892)* was inspired by the former’s work.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hurley 2004: 67; Morel 1857: 683; Nordau 1895: 16. It seems that the Lamarckian theory of the ‘inheritance of acquired characters’ lay at the very heart of degeneration, since Chevalier de Lamarck (1744–1829) advocated that both the characteristics acquired and the changes occurring over the life of an organism are transmitted to the offspring. See Hurley 2004: 67; Lamarck 1914: xxxviii–liii.

<sup>2</sup> Nordau 1895: 16. Daniel Pick, exploring the ‘faces of degeneration’, maintains that ‘degeneration’ described “the dynamic patterns which underpinned a chain of changing pathologies across generations”. Kelly Hurley agrees, since she claims that degeneration theory suggested “the disastrous effects of the inheritance of undesirable traits within a familial line”. See Hurley 2004: 10; Pick 1989: 49.

<sup>3</sup> Mazzarello 2011: 100. Lombroso tried to explain psychopathology by using substantial evidence, such as “the structure and function of the brain” and “the characteristics of the body”. Particularly, in his *Genio e Follia* (1864), he established the theory that criminality was an inherited trait, and there were specific characteristics confirming someone’s criminal identity. The German neuroanatomist and physiologist Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828) also followed the same pattern, as he tried to find a connection between “man’s character” and “skull configuration”, while the French physician Giuseppe Broussais (1772–1838) believed that “life’s phenomena depended upon external stimuli, while all pathology was based upon gastroenterites”. Last, but not least, Paul Broca (1824–1880), a French anatomist and anthropologist, conducted research “on the frontal lobe of the brain”. Ibid.; Broca 1861; Broussais 1828; Gall 1835; Nordau 1993: xx–xxi.

<sup>4</sup> Hurley 2004: 10; Mazzarello: 2011: 97. The evolutionary theories according to which ‘evolution’ was no longer regarded as “synonymous with ‘progress’” were given special importance, as they paved the way for the views on biological and social degeneration. Indeed, the notions of ‘retrogression’ and ‘reversion’ were mentioned in Charles Darwin’s (1809–1882) *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*

Nordau's book is "one of the most important documents of the *fin de siècle*", since it perfectly captured the *Zeitgeist* of the late 19th century and depicted the clash between "the robust views" and "the heightened sensibilities of a searching and disillusioned generation".<sup>2</sup> To his mind, "degeneracy is a pathological state" and the most indicative sign is "that the degenerate type does not propagate itself, but becomes extinct".<sup>3</sup> Nordau links the notion of 'degeneration' with "a criticism of industrial society" on the grounds that, in a society of that type, people suffer

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(1859), and in *The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex* (1871). In the first book, 'retrogression' is described as a "backward development" and occurs "when an animal, as it approaches maturity, becomes less perfectly organized than might be expected from its early stages and known relationships". In the second, Darwin explained 'reversion' as the case in which "a structure is arrested in its development, but still continues growing until it closely resembles a corresponding structure in some lower and adult member of the same group". Meanwhile, Edwin Ray Lankester (1847–1929) in his *Degeneration: a chapter in Darwinism* (1880) claimed that "we are subject to the general laws of evolution, and are as likely to degenerate as to progress", Cesare Lombroso in his *Criminal man* (1911) defined 'criminality' as "the reversion to a former state" ("atavism"), and for John Bagnell Bury (1861–1927) (*The idea of progress: an inquiry into its origin and growth*, 1920), "'evolution' may appear to be a cruel sentence or a guarantee of steady amelioration". The same dubiety was also felt by Herbert George Wells (1866–1946), who maintained that "modification will be upward or downward". Overall, it was "degeneration theory" that "reversed the narrative of progress", since "degeneration was evolution reversed and compressed". Compared to "the evolution from animal to human", degeneration seemed to be more "rapid and fatal" in the sense that a family line could die out in four generations. See Bury 1920: 335–336; Darwin 1859: 441 and 448; Darwin 1871: 117; Darwin 2009: 893; Hurley 2004: 10, 65 and 66; Lankester 1880: 60; Lombroso 1911: 135; Mazzarello: 2011: 97–98; Trotter 1993: 111; Wells 1891: 253; Zarimis 2015: 28 and 39.

<sup>1</sup> Nordau 1892. Max Nordau recognised that Lombroso's concepts played a crucial role in the writing of his book. For this reason, he decided to dedicate it to him. See Nordau 1895: vii–ix; Nordau 1993: xx.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: xiv–xv; Griffin 2007: 425.

<sup>3</sup> Nordau 1895: 555. Optimism, however, pervades the last pages of *Degeneration* in so far as the prospect of regeneration emerges through extinction of the degenerate and the 'survival of the fittest'. See Ibid.: 550 and 551; Griffin 2007: 426.

from “nervous excitement” and do not have enough time to “assimilate new discoveries, [which] make increasing demands on their labor”.<sup>1</sup>

Similar themes, i.e., the influence of the new conditions of life on the nervous system and the severity of mental diseases, can also be found in Alexis Carrel’s (1873–1944) *Man, the unknown*.<sup>2</sup> The French biologist underlined the frequency of the maladies of the nervous system: “The maladies of the central nervous system are innumerable. In the course of his life, every individual suffers from some attack of neurasthenia, of nervous depression, engendered by constant agitation, noise, and worries”.<sup>3</sup> He went on to describe this phenomenon as “the expression of a very grave defect of modern civilization”.<sup>4</sup>

A quite interesting definition of the term is also given in 1855 in *Essai sur l’ inégalité des races humaines* (*The inequality of human races*, 1915) by the French novelist Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882), who tried to define ‘degeneration’ with respect to the decline and fall of civilisations.<sup>5</sup> In particular, he put forward four intriguing proposals. First, the blood of a degenerate people is not the same anymore as a result of “continual adulterations having gradually affected the quality of that blood”;<sup>6</sup> second, a degenerate people “is a different being” compared to “the heroes of the great ages”;<sup>7</sup> third, a degenerate people “still keeps something of their essence

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<sup>1</sup> Nordau 1895: 35–36 and 39–41; Nordau 1993: xxi. The effect of industrialisation on the daily life of developed and developing Western countries was highlighted by Mario Vitti as well. See Vitti 1972b: 4.

<sup>2</sup> Carrel 1935.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 115.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 155. For details, *ibid.*: 155–158.

<sup>5</sup> Gobineau 1915: 1–2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 25.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

[i.e., of the essence of the heroes of the great ages], but the more [this people] degenerates the more attenuated does this ‘something’ become”;<sup>1</sup> and fourth, “a people dies because it is degenerate, and is degenerate because it dies”.<sup>2</sup> Apart from Arthur de Gobineau who linked the quality of blood to degeneration, Francis Galton also mentioned “suitable” and “less suitable strains of blood”, and thus he advocated that carriers of the first blood type must prevail over those of the second (*Inquiries into human faculty and social development*, 1883).<sup>3</sup> These views on the relationship between the quality of blood and degeneration on the one hand, and between degeneration and extinction on the other, will prove rather useful in examining the degenerate offspring of the novels in question.<sup>4</sup>

In assessing their mental state, Max Nordau’s work is instrumental as it describes the distinctive traits of degeneracy. Having looked at *Degeneration*, I realised that degeneracy reveals itself through its own characteristics called “‘stigmata’, or brand-marks as if degeneracy were necessarily the consequence of a fault, and the indication of it a punishment”.<sup>5</sup> These ‘stigmata’ are related to the asymmetries of a person’s external appearance.<sup>6</sup> Apart from ‘physical stigmata’, there are mental ones

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<sup>1</sup> Gobineau 1915: 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 24.

<sup>3</sup> Galton 1883: n.1, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Generally, blood was strongly associated with the concept of heredity in the sense that traits were transmitted from generation to generation through this vital fluid, whereas the “varying fractions of blood quantum were used as measures of race”. In this respect, “the supposed power of blood” was used as an “explanation” for “the evolution of individuals and societies”. Yet the evolution, as already stated, may also happen backward and as such takes the form of degeneration. See Aspinal 2018: 9; Kelly 2013: 105; Trubeta 2013: 162.

<sup>5</sup> Nordau 1895: 16–17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 17. This reminds me of the scientists who tried to establish a connection between human behaviour and physical characteristics. See this treatise, n. 3, p. 28.

as well, which manifest “the same irregularity”;<sup>1</sup> yet the most common characteristic among degenerates is that they all “lack the sense of morality and of right and wrong”, since “for them there exists no law, no decency, no modesty”.<sup>2</sup> If this is the case, they are inspired by “any momentary impulse, or inclination, or caprice” and “commit crimes with the greatest calmness and self-complacency”.<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon is called “moral insanity” and its “psychological roots are unbounded egoism and impulsiveness”.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from ‘degeneration’ (‘degeneracy’), the second malady detected at the *fin-de-siècle* is, according to Max Nordau, ‘hysteria’, whose first stage is ‘neurasthenia’.<sup>5</sup> These present interesting cases to consider as they share some characteristics and happen concurrently.<sup>6</sup> The most typical characteristic is that both neurasthenia and hysteria were considered to be the result of life’s changing conditions and technological improvement.<sup>7</sup> Max Nordau, influenced by Charles Darwin, saw a relationship between ‘struggle for existence’ and ‘extinction’: compared with healthy individuals, those suffering from neurasthenia and hysteria cannot survive this struggle and therefore become extinct.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nordau 1895: 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 15.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 36 and 38–41. Interestingly, “neurasthenia” was regarded as the “male counterpart to female hysteria”. Yet, both neurasthenia and hysteria on the one hand, and melancholy on the other, constitute, as it will be shown, a “basis for imagery of illness” in fiction. Of course, to a great extent, this imagery had its origins in Naturalism. Not unexpectedly, the same goes for the “imagery of fatal heredity”. See Lyytikäinen 2014: 86 and 87; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 35.

<sup>8</sup> Nordau 1895: 541 and 550.



In addition to “moral insanity, emotionalism, mental weakness and despondency”, i.e., “pessimism, a physical sickness, caused by bad digestion or nervous exhaustion”, constitute “stigmata”, which can be observed in the case of a degenerate.<sup>1</sup> This low mood (‘dejectedness’) is usually accompanied by “disinclination to action of any kind, abhorrence of activity, and powerlessness to will”, and “the degenerate has no suspicion that his incapacity for action is a consequence of his inherited deficiency of brain, believing that he despises action from free determination, and takes pleasure in inactivity”.<sup>2</sup> This lack of activity comes with an inclination to “inane reverie”.<sup>3</sup>

In the context of degeneration, as might be expected, it is necessary to mention certain ‘biological metaphors’ and ‘evolutionary mechanisms’, such as the ‘struggle for existence’, ‘natural selection’, and ‘survival of the fittest’, since on the one hand “the concept of degeneration” was “built on the thermodynamic law of increasing entropy and Darwinian evolutionary theory”, and, on the other, “the principles of Social Darwinism” underpinned works discussing degeneration, such as Nordau’s treatise.<sup>4</sup> Darwin sought to explain the connection between evolution and

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<sup>1</sup> Nordau 1895: 18 and 19; Nordau 1993: xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Nordau 1895: 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 21.

<sup>4</sup> Griffin 2007: 426; Keighren 2015: 722–723; Thomas 2008: 327; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 24. Nordau stated that due to their “organic constitution” degenerates are condemned to perish and “must be abandoned to their inexorable fate”. This rhetoric of ‘fit’ and ‘unfit’, as it will be seen, permeated the eugenic thinking of the interwar period as well, since the ultimate goals of eugenics were the prevention of biological decline and the multiplication of the fittest members of society. Essentially, the term ‘unfit’ acted as a “metonymy” for those regarded as dangerous to the nation’s well-being, and as such, individuals were divided into two categories: those worthy of living or proliferating (‘fit’) and those unworthy (‘unfit’). Ibid.; Nordau 1895: 550 and 551; Trubeta 2013: 207; Turda 2013: 116 and 117.

environment and developed theories describing the mechanisms “working” on the evolution of the species. For Darwin, “natural selection results from the struggle for existence, and almost inevitably induces extinction and divergence of character in the many descendants from one dominant parent-species”.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, extinction is considered to be unavoidable and is regarded as the death of the last individual of a species.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the concept of the ‘tree of life’ thoroughly explains the procedure of natural selection: species do not remain the same: they either become extinct, continue to exist or “split into multiple descendent species”.<sup>3</sup> The mechanism suggested by the ‘tree of life’ offers a convincing explanation for the fate of degenerates as well, in the sense that they have no other choice than to face extinction. Darwin’s thought aligned with this view, as made evident in *The voyage of the beagle*: “the varieties of man seem to act on each other; in the same way as different species of animals –the stronger always extirpating the weaker”.<sup>4</sup>

On his part, Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) connected the Darwinian principles of ‘struggle for existence’ and ‘natural selection’ with the ‘survival of the fittest’, as

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<sup>1</sup> Darwin 1859: 433.

<sup>2</sup> Hodge and Radick 2003: 7.

<sup>3</sup> Waters 2003: 117–119. By the same token, the ‘genealogical technology’ of the ‘family tree’ or ‘pedigree chart’ or ‘genealogical tree’ was used by eugenicists in the interwar period with the aim of “tracking the history of talented families, defective families, racially hybrid families, or of leprous, tubercular, epileptic, criminal, and alcoholic families”. The ‘family pedigree chart’, essentially, illustrates and explains “the inheritance of one or another trait”. Let it be noted in advance that from the middle nineteenth century ‘family trees’ were deployed by authors as well, and as such, in fictional works “the characters were explained in light of heredity”. See Allen and Turda 2015: 219; Aspinall 2018: 1–3; Carlson 1937: 189.

<sup>4</sup> Darwin 1839: 520.

the latter question formed the subject of his *The principles of biology*.<sup>1</sup> In particular, Spencer argued that “this survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr. Darwin has called ‘natural selection, or the preservation of the favoured races in the struggle of life’ [...] That organisms which live, thereby prove themselves fit to live, in so far as they have been tried; while organisms which die, thereby prove themselves in some respects unfitted for living”.<sup>2</sup>

Before moving on to the next subsection, I should refer to when and how the aforementioned concepts appeared and became known in Greece. The interest in Greeks’ familiarisation with the idea of ‘degeneration’, as well as the Darwinian and Spencerian mechanisms of ‘natural selection’, ‘struggle for existence’, and ‘survival of the fittest’, is justified on the grounds that ‘degeneracy’ is relevant to the aims of the following subsection, as is the proven relationship between Darwinian and Spencerian theory on the one hand, and that between the former and Nordau’s degeneration theory on the other. Regardless of the favourable or hostile reactions to all these theories, suggesting, of course, their positive and negative reception

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<sup>1</sup> Spencer 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 444–445. To some extent, Herbert Spencer’s name has been associated with ‘Social Darwinism’, a set of theories that arose mostly in Britain and the United States at the end of the 19th century. More specifically, it “is a philosophical, economic, social, and scientific movement” aimed both at drawing a parallel between biology and society and at implementing the Spencerian law of the ‘survival of the fittest’, closely related to those of ‘struggle for existence’ and ‘natural selection’, in the social sphere. ‘Social Darwinism’ postulates that “the way society functions is, and ought to be, a reflection of the methods and movements of biological evolution” and “sees a direct corollary between struggle in the biological world and struggle in the social world, with winners moving upward to success and losers eliminated: losing organisms fail to reproduce, losing firms go bust, losing people starve”. See Ruse 2008: 232–233; Williams 2000: 186.

respectively, a brief glimpse into the circumstances under which the Greeks became familiar with Max Nordau, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer is crucial.

The role of Angelos Vlachos (1838–1920) was of paramount importance -if not crucial- to the dissemination of ‘degeneration’, since he undertook the translation of the greatest part of Nordau’s *Degeneration*.<sup>1</sup> At first, the translation was serialised in the daily newspaper *To Asty* (*To Asty*) in 1897<sup>2</sup> and was later released in book form in 1905.<sup>3</sup> Frequent references to Nordau’s views are indicative of his considerable resonance in Greece, as is the repeated use of the antithetical pair healthy-sick, both found in various articles and reviews of the time.<sup>4</sup> The Greek readership was thereby familiarised with the concept of degeneracy.

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<sup>1</sup> As he admitted in the “Preface” of the translation, Vlachos omitted any details that would be less interesting to the Greek readership. See Vlachos 1897a: 2; Vlachos 1911: δ’.

<sup>2</sup> The translation spans a six-month period, from January 12, 1897, to July 13, 1897. Quite fascinating is the fact that in issue 2220 (January 4, 1897) there is an advertisement which not only announces the translation of *Entartung*, but also highlights the good qualities of both the author and translator of the book. Then, in issue 2221 (January 5, 1897), the “Preface” of the translation and the first translated part can be found. In the “Preface”, on the one hand, Vlachos gives basic information about Max Nordau and his treatise, and on the other, he explains how and why he translated the work of the German-Jewish doctor and phrenologist. Finally, since the first and the second part of the translation appear on January 5, 1897 and January 12, 1897 respectively, an advertisement in issue 2227 (January 11, 1897) acts as a reminder of the continuation of the translation. See Anonymous 1897a: 2; Anonymous 1897b: 2; Vlachos 1897a: 2; Vlachos 1897b: 2–3; Vlachos 1897c: 2–4; Vlachos 1897d: 3–4; Vlachos 1897e: 3–4; Vlachos 1897f: 3–4; Vlachos 1897g: 3–4; Vlachos 1897h: 3–4; Vlachos 1897i: 3–4; Vlachos 1897j: 3–4; Vlachos 1897k: 3–4; Vlachos 1897l: 3–4; Vlachos 1897m: 3–4; Vlachos 1897n: 3–4; Vlachos 1897o: 3–4.

<sup>3</sup> The book was republished in 1911, 1920, 1922 and 1925. See Nordau 1905; Nordau 1911; Nordau 1920; Nordau 1922; Nordau 1925.

<sup>4</sup> Matthiopoulos 2005: 426.

While Nordau and his theory were introduced to Greece relatively quickly after the publication of *Entartung*,<sup>1</sup> discussions about Darwin began in the 1870s –almost twelve years after the publication of his *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*– when his *The descent of man* was released.<sup>2</sup> This delayed reaction can be attributed, according to Kostas Krimbas, to “the Greeks’ lack of interest in nature and its evolutionary mechanisms” on the one hand, and to “their greater focus on the issue of national identity” with a view to laying solid foundations for the new Greek state on the other.<sup>3</sup> With these national aspirations floating around, Darwinian theory about human evolution was fiercely disputed in Greece on religious and national grounds as well.<sup>4</sup> After all, religion was a fundamental element of Greek identity, and Darwin’s explanation stood in contrast to that of the Bible.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the assertion that Man –and therefore Greeks– descended from an ape was rejected as damaging to national identity.<sup>6</sup> A text written by the student Ilias Liakopoulos is rather revealing of the reactions, as, in it, Liakopoulos complains about the teaching of Darwinian theory by Professor Ioannis Zochios at the Medical School of Athens

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<sup>1</sup> *Entartung* was published in 1892, while the French and English versions were released in 1894 and 1895 respectively. See Nordau 1894a; Nordau 1894b; Nordau 1895.

<sup>2</sup> Darwin 1859; Darwin 1871; Krimbas 2017: 11. The first book and parts of the second were translated into Greek by Nikos Kazantzakis in 1915 and by George Vrisimitzakis in 1917 respectively. Ibid.: 50; Darwin 1915; Darwin 1917; Zarimis 2015: 13.

<sup>3</sup> Krimbas 2017: 11 and 12. A characteristic example of this attitude was the effort to refute Fallmerayer’s discontinuity theory in relation to the descent of Modern Greeks. Ibid.: 12–16.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 16–17.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 16.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 17.

University.<sup>1</sup> Similar ideas were propagated in the book *Η νεωτάτη του υλισμού φάσις, ήτοι ο δαρβινισμός και τον ανυπόστατον αυτού* by Spyridon Sougras, assistant Professor at the School of Theology of Athens University.<sup>2</sup>

There were, however, fervent proponents, such as the doctor Spyridon Miliarakis who translated the English naturalist's research "Βιογραφικόν σχεδιάσμα μικρού τινος παιδίου" ("A biographical sketch of an infant", 1877),<sup>3</sup> as well as a summary of his life and works under the title "Κάρολος Δάρβιν".<sup>4</sup> Earlier, in 1871 and 1873, G. Apostolidis and Leandros Dosios respectively delivered lectures on Darwin's theory of evolution.<sup>5</sup> The contributions of Andreas Pharmakopoulos and Stamatios Valvis were also of great importance, as in 1910, the former translated Ludwig Büchner's treatise *Ο δαρβινισμός (Darwinism)*, while in 1890, the latter began translating Ernst Haeckel's study, *Ιστορία της φυσικής δημιουργίας ή περί της θεωρίας της εξελίξεως (The history of creation)* in the scientific journal *Προμηθεύς (Prometheus)*, both with a view to making Darwin's theory known.<sup>6</sup> Yet literature

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<sup>1</sup> Krimbas 2017: 17; Liakopoulos 1880. As Krimbas underlines, "Zochios taught six classes, and they became so popular that there was not enough space available for all those who wanted to attend the lectures". See Krimbas 2017: 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 26; Preyer 1880: 5; Sougras 1876.

<sup>3</sup> Darwin 1877: 817–824; Krimbas 2017: 23–24. As Krimbas points out, "extremely interesting is the fact that Theodor von Heldreich, a Hellenized German botanist, informed Darwin about the translation of his work and sent him the issue of *Εστία (Estia)* in which it appeared". See Ibid.: 23.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 24; Miliarakis 1879: 451–456. Miliarakis published an extended version of the article in 1880 aiming to disseminate the Darwinian views to the public. See Preyer 1880: 5.

<sup>5</sup> Krimbas 2017: 25.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 50, 55 and 59; Büchner 1910; The translation provoked the counterreaction of the theological journal *Ανάπλασις (Anaplasia)*. As Krimbas emphasises, "for Greeks, Haeckel was a valuable source of information about Darwinism". His book *Η καταγωγή του ανθρώπου (The descent of man)* was translated by Andreas Pharmakopoulos in 1910, 5 years before the translation of Darwin's treatise by Kazantzakis. See Haeckel 1910; Krimbas 2017: 51 and 53.

may have played the most decisive role in the dissemination of these ideas about evolution, since the fictional works were aimed at a wider readership.<sup>1</sup> Darwinism's resonance is also clearly indicated by articles printed in the 1930s, on the 50-year anniversary of the English naturalist's death.<sup>2</sup>

As for Spencer, the study by Argyrios Th. Diamantopoulos, *Το παρελθόν και το μέλλον του ανθρώπου κατά τις νεωτέρας επιστημονικές θεωρίας του Δαρβίνου, του Σπένσερ, Χαίκελ και άλλων* (*The past and the future of man in the context of the new scientific theories of Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, and others*) published in the journal *Αττικόν Ημερολόγιον* (*Attikon Imerologion*) in 1886 was among the first references to his views on the 'survival of the fittest'.<sup>3</sup> Much as in the case of Darwin, Spencerian theory was still discussed in the 1930s. The clearest proof of this is the article "Ο βιολογικός νόμος της επιβιώσεως και η κοινωνική κρίση" ("The biological law of survival and the social crisis") that appeared in 1932 in the journal *Πολιτισμός* (*Politismos*).<sup>4</sup>

To sum up, in this subsection, firstly, I traced the meaning of the concept of 'degeneration'; secondly, I shed light on the relationship between the quality of blood and degeneration on the one hand, and between degeneration and extinction on the other. As already discussed, 'degeneration' was tightly interwoven with the Darwinian 'struggle for existence' and 'natural selection', and the Spencerian 'survival of the fittest'. Thirdly, I mentioned the physical and mental stigmata of degeneracy; and fourthly, I shared information about Greeks' familiarisation with

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<sup>1</sup> Krimbas 2017: 98.

<sup>2</sup> Hatzidimitriou 1932: 185–186; Sideridis 1932: 217–222.

<sup>3</sup> Diamantopoulos 1886: 222–252; Krimbas 2017: 49.

<sup>4</sup> Mitropolitiss Serron Konstantinos 1932: 691–693.

the concept of Nordau's degeneration, as well as Darwinian and Spencerian 'biological metaphors' and 'evolutionary mechanisms'.

Of course, this framework is of paramount importance in reading the novels under consideration, since I aim to follow the elements of degeneration informing the texts and to establish the characters' degenerate nature.<sup>1</sup> Before turning to these degenerate protagonists, I should note that they all come from upper-middle-class families, a fact one may wish to relate to Nordau's belief that the notion of 'fin-de-race', compared to that of the 'fin-de-siècle', applies better in the case of "the rich inhabitants of great cities and the leading classes".<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1.2 Family and degeneration

The crucial role of degeneration in Gregorios Xenopoulos' (1867–1951) *Η νόχτα του εκφυλισμού* (1926) is tested by the novel's title itself, originating in the medical report of Phoivos' doctor who, as a neurologist, uses the term 'εκφυλισμός', in the sense of 'degeneration', to describe his patient's permanent mental state.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> In the present and following section, the chronological presentation of the texts is slightly 'violated', since it facilitates the comparative exploration of works where similar topics are broached.

<sup>2</sup> Nordau 1895: 2.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 149. Gregorios Xenopoulos is older than Pavlos Floros, Thanasis Petsalis-Diomidis, George Theotokas, and Angelos Terzakis who are examined in this chapter, and he belongs to the New Athenian School. However, I consider his work alongside those of the representatives of the '30s, because, firstly, his novel was published in 1926, i.e., during the interwar period, and secondly, bio-medical and literary discourse intermingled. The novel, after being published in the Athenian newspaper *Έθνος* (*Ethnos*, 18 / 4 – 6 / 8 / 1926), was released in book form by the publishing house A/foi Vlassi in 1994. A reading of this text can also be found in Maria Zarimis' critical work. I may say in brief that themes, such as the relationship between the quality of blood and degeneration on the one hand, and the biological decline of the Ionian-islands aristocracy on the other, appear in his novels *Μαργαρίτα Στέφα* (1893) and *Απάνεμα βράδια* (1938), as well as in his play *Ο ποπολάρος* (1933), all set in his native island Zante. Recurring motifs like these may be treated as proof of Xenopoulos' familiarity with Émile Zola's works (especially *Les Rougon-Macquart*). See Farinou-Malamatari 1997: 295 and 308; Zarimis 2015: 273–286; Ziras 2002: 116.



narrative focuses on Phoivos Vramis and Meropi Karamali, the protagonists of the book and typical degenerates.

The representation of the issue of degeneration in the novel is far from coincidental, as Xenopoulos seems to have Nordau's *Degeneration* in mind.<sup>1</sup> This can be inferred from the fact that he does not just explicitly refer to the book and give his view of it but also mentions its translation by Angelos Vlachos.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, apart from Phoivos, two other characters, Rosalia and Rena, whose lack of morality is proof of their degeneration, have also read Nordau.<sup>3</sup> Phoivos, since he cannot understand German, reads both the Greek and French translation of Nordau's book to find out what has been omitted from the Greek one.<sup>4</sup> Last, but not least, the narrator notes that reading Nordau was somehow fashionable at the time.<sup>5</sup> There is, then, sufficient evidence to support the claim that Xenopoulos was familiar with Nordau's work.

This is hardly surprising, since Xenopoulos had studied at the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences at the University of Athens,<sup>6</sup> and, despite his talent for Physics and Mathematics, he eventually devoted himself to literature.<sup>7</sup> However, his love of and interest in science are still evident, and it is not hard to see how bio-

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from the intra-textual evidence for Xenopoulos' familiarisation with degeneration theory, the extra-textual proof is the adoption and exploitation of Nordau's set of beliefs in his judgement of Andreas Karkavitsas' *Λόγια της πλώρης* (*To Asty*, 18–21 September 1899). See Matthiopoulos 2005: 422.

<sup>2</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 179. For Angelos Vlachos' translation, see this treatise, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 201.

<sup>4</sup> Here one should be reminded that Vlachos translated the parts that would be more interesting to the Greek readership. *Ibid.*: 180.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 201.

<sup>6</sup> Xenopoulos 1984b: 153.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 153 and 241.

medical matters appear in his fictional prose. The novel under consideration is a typical example. His familiarity with Nordau and the stigmata pointing to degeneracy allow Xenopoulos to create degenerate characters, with Phoivos' mental state raising more concern than that of Meropi.<sup>1</sup>

The case of Phoivos Vramis, the offspring of an affluent family, attracts the reader's attention from the very beginning, and manifold signs of his mental instability are scattered across the narrative.<sup>2</sup> He is preoccupied with the idea of crime, and the possibility of committing a criminal act seems to be something he enjoys.<sup>3</sup> After casting off such thoughts, he becomes exasperated with himself, wondering whether he is insane or not.<sup>4</sup> Such behaviour on his part may be regarded as a symptom of his latent mental condition, while pondering a crime brings him one step closer toward moral abnormality. Indeed, in Nordau's classification, apart from the obvious cases of "prostitutes, anarchists, pronounced lunatics, authors and artists", criminals are also included in the list of degenerates.<sup>5</sup>

Besides, Phoivos is indecisive and irresolute and displays a number of eccentricities, such as the loud or silent repeating of nonsensical words or phrases, counting the staircase's steps, the tiles of the pavement, as well as the letters in titles,<sup>6</sup> and he has a funny gait as he tries to avoid the cracks between the tiles.<sup>7</sup> According to his neurologist, all of these are symptoms of a "special physical

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 257.

<sup>2</sup> Phoivos' neuropathy runs in the family. The same goes for Meropi. This issue, however, will be examined thoroughly in the subsection "Family, biological determinism, and characterisation".

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 8–9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 9.

<sup>5</sup> Nordau 1895: vii.

<sup>6</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 73–74.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 74.

makeup” and indicate a psychic and mental disorder (mania) associated with degeneracy.<sup>1</sup>

His degenerate nature becomes apparent by degrees. At first, everyone in his family and school environment –namely his father, his mother, his teachers, and his classmates– believes that Phoivos will distinguish himself and become greater, ‘evolving’, so to speak, beyond his father who was a great poet.<sup>2</sup> However, even before he finishes high school, his memory and intellectual powers steadily wane, while his initial diligence is lost completely during his studies at the University, all pointing to the belief that “a great man’s descendants may include mediocre children”.<sup>3</sup> Feeling his intellect is either declining or stagnating, he abandons any ambitions he had to study Mathematics, Astronomy, Chemistry, or Philology.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, pessimism and melancholy, stemming from Phoivos’ fear that he is incapable of loving or unworthy of being loved, are further causes of his nervous disorder.<sup>5</sup> Dejection is a sign of his “special physical makeup”, along with lack of appetite and sleeping long hours.<sup>6</sup> Upon feeling he is ill for the first time, he pays a visit to the neurologist, but, after following the doctor’s advice for some time and feeling much better, he interrupts the prescribed treatment;<sup>7</sup> whether or not he is rehabilitated remains a moot point.

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 74. Meropi has some of these quirks too, and it is on this ground that their similar constitution is justified.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 42.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 41–43; Carrel 1935: 253.

<sup>4</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 43.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 53 and 63.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 68.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 69–78.

Further intimations of degeneracy may be seen in his lack of “morality, decency, and modesty”.<sup>1</sup> Despite his engagement to Meropi, he falls prey to a “momentary impulse, or inclination, or caprice” and develops sexual relationships with various low-class women, such as maids and seamstresses;<sup>2</sup> at the same time he avoids having any intimacy with his fiancée, who is asexual.<sup>3</sup> For Yiannis, Phoivos’ cousin, these behaviours constitute two different types of degeneration.<sup>4</sup> The carnal pleasures deteriorate his already degenerate mental and physical state;<sup>5</sup> his neuropathy reappears, and finally, due to mental exhaustion, a clear symptom of his degeneration, he is placed in a mental institution for three years.<sup>6</sup> Defying almost every single assumption about him, Phoivos recovers;<sup>7</sup> yet his recovery proves to be only temporary.<sup>8</sup>

At first, he discovers new talents, sets his mind to writing poetry, and publishes a poetry collection titled *Ξημέρωμα* (*Dawn*).<sup>9</sup> The title itself suggests the ‘recovery’ from his illness and the ‘dawn’ on his mind;<sup>10</sup> but his poetic ideas are nebulous and his writing style attests to the condition of someone living in a madhouse.<sup>11</sup> Yet this

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<sup>1</sup> Nordau 1895: 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Xenopoulos 1994: 115–128, 135–136 and 138.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 138. After his first committal, Phoivos ceases his beastly behaviour. Ibid.: 156.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 138.

<sup>5</sup> It is partly due to these “deteriorative effects on mind and body” that Phoivos’ “deviant sexuality” is regarded as “degenerate”. See Hurley 2004: 71.

<sup>6</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 147.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 149.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: 157–159.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.: 159.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.: 158. For Meropi, who is degenerate too, everything is clear and bright and bears a melodic quality. Ibid.: 159.

leaves a strong impression on some readers;<sup>1</sup> all of whom bear the same ‘mark’ on their forehead and come from the same ‘family’ in terms of speech, physiognomy, and manners.<sup>2</sup> Phoivos emerges as the leader of the Νέα Σχολή (New Literary School). This coterie of neuropaths decides to publish the journal *Νέα Τέχνη* (*New Art*).<sup>3</sup> The contents of the first issue and the journal’s editor are described by the readership and critics as giving evidence of the psychiatric ward,<sup>4</sup> and subsequent issues, met with savage criticism, do not fare any better.<sup>5</sup> Phoivos also gives a lecture with a view to more fully setting forth the objectives of Νέα Σχολή and *Νέα Τέχνη*, and, sure enough, the mentally ill horde throngs the lecture theatre to be ‘enlightened’.<sup>6</sup>

According to the narrative, it is against this backdrop that Angelos Vlachos characterised people like Phoivos and his followers as degenerates and decided to translate Nordau’s *Degeneration*.<sup>7</sup> In his understanding, although such people, even if they are urged to read it, cannot be treated, Nordau will be a cure which will

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 161–162. The publication of his book *Νέα Ηθική* (*New Morality*) garnered the same reaction. Ibid.: 262 and 267.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 161.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 161 and 163.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 170.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 171 and 172. The condemnation of the journal *Νέα Τέχνη* brings to mind Xenopoulos’ criticism on *Λόγια της πλώρης* by Andreas Karkavitsas, which is, in essence, an attack against the ‘degenerate’ editors of the monthly literary journal *Η Τέχνη* (*I Techni*), published between November 1898 and October 1899. The fact that Xenopoulos felt isolated from the social circle of *I Techni* to which he belonged may explain his resentment. See Matthiopoulos 2005: 422–424.

<sup>6</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 173–174. For more information about *Νέα Τέχνη*, ibid.: 177–178 and 218.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 178–179.

enlighten the world and protect those liable to be infected from further harm.<sup>1</sup> These views can also be found in the “Preface” of Angelos Vlachos’ translation.<sup>2</sup>

Despite his initial creativity, soon enough Phoivos runs out of steam. This is partly because he becomes familiar with Nordau’s *Degeneration* and partly because he falsely believes that there is a love relationship between his friend Glaucous Rodios and his wife.<sup>3</sup> Phoivos feels that the night of degeneration has almost arrived and will last forever.<sup>4</sup> Under the illusion that Glaucous and Meropi love each other, he tries to bring them together and enters extramarital relationships with various women.<sup>5</sup> The shock of Meropi’s pregnancy desists his immoral behaviour, but it does not act as a stimulus to his mental activity;<sup>6</sup> his ideas are vague, dark, and incomplete, and he is moreover incapable of working or concentrating on a certain project.<sup>7</sup> After a neurological crisis, his neuropathy, as it was bound to happen, reappears, and Phoivos ends up in a psychiatric hospital.<sup>8</sup> Again, he recovers but his recovery proves to be only temporary because he refuses to face up to the bitter reality of his child’s mental illness,<sup>9</sup> and he does not give, as he did last time,

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 178–179.

<sup>2</sup> Vlachos 1911: δ’.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 180 and 182. Phoivos is really impressed by the phrase “ἡ νύξ τοῦ ἐκφυλισμοῦ” (“the night of degeneration”) found in the “Preface” of Vlachos’ translation and used by Phoivos’ neurologist to describe his mental state during his first committal. Ibid.: 149 and 179; Vlachos 1911: δ’.

<sup>4</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 205.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 192–198.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 206 and 210.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 211–212.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 215–218.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: 246, 251–253 and 269–270.

evidence of any talent.<sup>1</sup> The final “night of his degeneration”, i.e., the absolute darkness of his mind, comes when he somehow realises that his son Apollonios is not capable of doing anything.<sup>2</sup>

Neuralgia and a weak nervous system also affect Meropi Karamali, who has been on medication ever since she was a child.<sup>3</sup> Meropi displays all or most of the typical symptoms of degeneracy; like Phoivos, at times she is melancholic, gloomy, sulky and subdued for no particular reason.<sup>4</sup> Neuropathy makes her a match for Phoivos.<sup>5</sup> Her persistence to remain engaged and subsequently marry an insane person is seen by her family as a symptom of madness.<sup>6</sup> Living with Phoivos under the same roof simply makes her mental state worse. However, Meropi becomes fully aware of her degeneracy after the birth of her mentally ill baby.<sup>7</sup>

To understand Phoivos and Meropi’s physical condition, one should compare them to Kriton, Meropi’s brother.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, Phoivos and Meropi suffer from headaches, a cause of irritation for Phoivos who seems to be vexed by anyone in apparent health.<sup>9</sup> Essentially, as already discussed, this commonly used antithesis

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 253.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 270–272.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 79.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 82 and 155.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 45, 80 and 167. Phoivos and Meropi have the same traumatic family experience in common as well, since their mothers have left the house. The family relationships, however, are the primary thematic focus of the chapter “Family and marriage”. *Ibid.*: 19 and 36–37.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 148–149.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 232–233.

<sup>8</sup> In Alexis Carrel’s thinking, “disease consists of a functional and structural disorder. Its aspects are as numerous as our organic activities. There are diseases of the stomach, of the heart, of the nervous system, etc. But in illness the body preserves the same unity as in health. It is sick as a whole”. See Carrel 1935: 112.

<sup>9</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 80.

between ‘health’ and ‘illness’ is typical of the interwar period.<sup>1</sup> The degenerate characters in the novels are usually compared and contrasted with healthy ones, reflecting in this way the desire for a regenerated, healthier, and more efficient society.

Moving on to the novel *Άποικοί* (1934) by Pavlos Floros (1897–1981),<sup>2</sup> the central point of the book is the main character’s (Dimitris Valeris) desire to perfect his family pedigree (‘το βαλερικό γένος’) and improve his nation/his race (‘phyli’) by conceiving a plan aimed at creating a new generation of human beings.<sup>3</sup> Once again, it is ‘the malady of the century’ (‘η νόσος του αιώνα’) that calls for immediate and drastic action.<sup>4</sup> Apart from Dimitris Valeris being aware of ‘the

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in *Δεσμώτες* (1932) by Angelos Terzakis, Fotos Galanis is contrasted with his childhood friend Alkis Georgiadis who is healthy and strong-willed. His name, in essence, is indicative of his qualities: the name ‘Alkis’ derives from the Ancient Greek adjective ἄλκιμος (robust, hearty), which in turn comes from the noun ἀλκή (robustness, heartiness). In *Παραστρατημένοι* (1936) by Lilika Nakou, Nikos Kastris, compared to his sister Alexandra, is a sickly and lean boy who limps. In *Αργώ* (1936) by George Theotokas, Alexis Notaras, compared to physically strong and well-balanced Manolis Skyrianos, seems pale, anaemic, weak, sensitive, and melancholic. The state of his health is, generally, described as fragile since he has heart disease as well.

<sup>2</sup> Pavlos Floros was a cosmopolitan man of letters, as well as business, with his literary output (especially his travel books) being irrefutable evidence of his studies, life, and travels abroad. As I. M. Panagiotopoulos and T. Korfis imply, it might be because of these life experiences that Floros was inspired by the vision of Greek society’s reform (Under this aspect, it is tempting to assume that Dimitris Valeris is, to an extent, the alter ego of the author). Yet, as will be seen later, any ideals notwithstanding, Floros was a realist. See Korfis 2008: 250, 254, 255 and 259; Panagiotopoulos 1980f: 94–95 and 97.

<sup>3</sup> “Race” is “one of the main groups to which people are often considered to belong, based on physical characteristics that they are perceived to share such as skin colour, eye shape, etc.” or “a group of people who share the same language, history, characteristics, etc.”. See Cambridge Dictionary.

<sup>4</sup> Floros 1934: 122 and 123. Kostas Papachristos characterises *Άποικοί* as “ethnological research”. See Papachristos 1938: 12.



malady of the century’, another character of the novel, the journalist Demosthenis Chlomochilis, carries out research on this issue and deems that this ‘disease’ will be eradicated, and people will enter a new cosmogony.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the danger that civilisation could decline, Floros also offers a psychological explanation for Dimitris Valeris’ desire to reform his nation/his race, as it seems that the frustrations and the melancholy of his childhood years, caused by the dissolution of his paternal house, are reflected in his dreams of creating something harmonious and perfect.<sup>2</sup> It is this childhood experience that makes the awareness of his era’s misery and the transition from the private (family) to the public sphere (nation/race) possible.<sup>3</sup> Despite the failure of the protagonist’s projects, this fictional text allows, as will be shown in the next subsection (“Family and eugenics”), a glimpse into the ways in which it incorporates the eugenics theme, associated -as in the case of Xenopoulos- with the concepts of degeneration and regeneration. Against this backdrop, the characterisation of *Αποικιοι* as a ‘roman à thèse’ is justified.<sup>4</sup>

As far as Thanasis Petsalis-Diomidis (1904–1995) is concerned, he broadly adopts the structure of the French ‘roman-fleuve’ (‘river-novel’);<sup>5</sup> thus, his trilogy

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<sup>1</sup> Floros 1934: 14, 268 and 269.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 324.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Panagiotopoulos 1980f: 97.

<sup>5</sup> Felber 1995: 1 and 8. The term was coined by Romain Rolland (1866–1944) and suggests this type of novel “published in several successively published volumes, through which strode the same characters, and particularly the same protagonists”. For example, Martin du Gard’s (1881–1958) *Les Thibaults* (1922–1940) consists of twelve volumes. Even though the books are released in the form of separate volumes (‘sequence novel’), they are all interconnected with each other. Besides the number of the volumes and of the protagonists –these novels usually feature multiple protagonists, the eventful plot, as well as the depiction of the historical, political, and social context of the era, are

*Γερές και αδύναμες γενεές* is composed of three novels, namely *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη* (1933),<sup>1</sup> *Το σταυροδρόμι* (1934),<sup>2</sup> and *Ο απόγονος* (1935),<sup>3</sup> in which he explores the life of three generations of an Athenian upper-middle-class family through which he gives a tapestry of the mores and lifestyle of this social class.<sup>4</sup>

In the second part of his autobiography *Διαφάνειες. Ο μεσοπόλεμος: ο δεύτερος τόμος της ζωής μου* (*Transparencies. Interwar: the second volume of my life*, 1985), the author expressed his thoughts on his first trilogy.<sup>5</sup> More pointedly, he revealed that at its nexus are the successive changes and the decline of an upper-middle-class family over the course of four generations.<sup>6</sup> The way the main characters and Maria Parni's role undergo changes points to the succession of generations. Maria is the

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among the features of the roman-fleuve. See Felber 1995: 1–4 and 8–9; Mackridge 1985: 6. For more details about 'roman-fleuve', see Felber 1995: 1–27.

<sup>1</sup> Petsalis: 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis: 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis: 1935.

<sup>4</sup> The bourgeoisie features in Petsalis' fiction for the first time in *Μερικές εικόνες σε μια κορνίζα* (1925). Apart from his focus on a particular milieu and social class, the influence of French naturalists (Émile Zola), as well as English aestheticists (Oscar Wilde) and French authors associated with the decadent movement (André Gide), becomes evident as well. This collection of short stories is followed by the series *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* (1933–1935) and *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* (1937–1939) which are designed, as will be shown more clearly in the following, as urban realist narratives about the upper class. See Agras 1936: 851; Charis 1933b: 955; Charis 1934b: 764; Charis 1936: 1094; Dellios 1937: 293; Doxas 1937a: 3; Hatzinis 1940: 19; Karantonis 1935b: 389; Kourtovik 1995: 184; Myrivilis 1940: 799; Papageorgiou 1993: 158–159; Sachinis 1992: 8, 11, 17, 35 and 39. For *Γερές και αδύναμες γενεές* and *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* that follows, see also Bitsiani 2014: 60, 61, 62–64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 76, 77, 79–80, 86–87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93–95, 96–98, 154 and 155.

<sup>5</sup> For details about the conceptualisation of the novel, see Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 256–257; Pikramenou-Varfi 1986: 270–282.

<sup>6</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 256. Brief information concerning the first generation is provided in the first book of the trilogy, and as a result, the narrative focuses on the life of the second, third, and fourth generation.

protagonist of the first novel, Alekos Parnis of the second, and Petros Parnis of the third, with Maria Parni successively playing the role of daughter, mother, and grandmother in each book of the trilogy.

The narration of the life and changing circumstances of a family over a considerable number of years assigns Petsalis-Diomidis' work to the special category of the 'family saga novel'.<sup>1</sup> His choice to write such a story was, to an extent, the result of various literary influences.<sup>2</sup> Petsalis' own statement in *Ο Μεσοπόλεμος: ο δεύτερος τόμος της ζωής μου* is sufficiently enlightening, as he admits that he was inspired by significant authors and great books, such as *Buddenbrooks* (1901) by Thomas Mann (1875–1955), *The Forsyte Saga* (1906–1921) by John Galsworthy (1867–1933), *Les Thibault* (1922–1940) by Roger Martin du Gard (1881–1958), *Jean-Christophe* (1904–1912) by Romain Rolland (1866–1944), and *Chronique des Pasquier* (1933–1945) by Georges Duhamel (1884–1966).<sup>3</sup> What all these works have in common is the 'ravages of time' motif and the inevitable decline of families over the course of several generations.<sup>4</sup> Of

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<sup>1</sup> Felber 1995: 10.

<sup>2</sup> The European influence on Greek authors in relation to the 'roman-fleuve' is stressed by Peter Mackridge. See Mackridge 1985: 6–7.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 251–252. A further common point is that they "write about a milieu and a social class of which they have intimate knowledge, about the environment from which each of them came". In the subsection "Family, biological determinism, and characterisation", it will be shown that, apart from literary influences, some other factors also urged Petsalis to compose his three-part series. See Furst 2006: 157; Ru 1992: 8.

<sup>4</sup> On these grounds, their characterisation as 'family chronicles', 'family saga', 'generational' or 'multigenerational' novels has been established. The same goes, as already stated, for *Γερές και αδύναμες γενεές*. The idea "about the passing time" is, as Peter Mackridge underlines, "Bergsonian", whereas "the decline of the family is", according to Yi-ling Ru, "compatible with the Fall myth". See Furst 2006: 157 and 159; Humphrey 2010: 159; Mackridge 1985: 6; Ru 1992: 1, 5, 36–37, 125, 159 and 173.

course, “the concept of decline” underpinning all these novels, also including *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*, was “a negative ramification of the nineteenth-century idea of evolution”.<sup>1</sup>

For example, *Buddenbrooks* has the rather revealing subtitle, “‘Verfall einer Familie’ (Decline of a family)”, suggesting the book’s “descending structure”, the “family’s fall from grace”.<sup>2</sup> As Hugh Ridley mentions, “from the opening scene of prosperity to the final scene the driving force of the novel is not merely the time passing through generations, but an underlying pattern of decline”.<sup>3</sup> In *The Forsyte Saga*, “the society which Galsworthy describes is based on the principle of survival of the fittest” and as such, “the tree of Forsyteism growing in the nineteenth century” follows “the inevitable laws of nature” and “declines from its high point”.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Petsalis explores the fortunes of the Parnides tree.

Returning to *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*, I should clarify that the term ‘generation’ not only suggests “a set of members of a family regarded as a single step or stage in descent”,<sup>5</sup> but also bears a wider meaning, since it indicates “all the people of about the same age within a society”.<sup>6</sup> In the second book of the trilogy, *Το σταυροδρόμι* – whose title clearly implies the transitional space between two generations – Thanasis Petsalis focuses on Alekos Parnis, Petros and Maria’s son, a change of protagonist which makes the transition from the prewar to postwar (for the readers interwar)

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<sup>1</sup> Hönnighausen 1990: 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 35; Furst 2006: 158 and 159; Petrits 1984: 26; Ridley 1987: 29. It is worth mentioning that at first the title *Abwärts* (*Downhill*) was considered as a possible name for the novel. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 29–30; Petrits 1984: 26.

<sup>4</sup> Furst 2006: 158 and 159; MacQuitty 1980: 104 and 105; Ru 1992: 7 and 31.

<sup>5</sup> Oxford Lexico.

<sup>6</sup> Cambridge Dictionary.

period possible. In this respect, Alekos represents the third generation of the Parnis family and the first postwar (for the readers interwar) upper-middle-class generation, embodying its concerns, anxieties, and hopes.<sup>1</sup> Thus his failure in the public and private sphere may suggest both the disenchanted hopes and dreams of his generation, as well as the unsuccessful efforts of his social class to achieve its revival.<sup>2</sup>

In an indicative passage from *Το σταυροδρόμι*, the first postwar generation is compared and contrasted to the prewar one.<sup>3</sup> Firstly, what characterises the prewar generation is the weakness of mind and body, and it is due to this lack of efficiency that the mental and physical improvement of the new generation becomes paramount. Secondly, the mood of the prewar generation's time was that of the decline of civilisation. Against this backdrop, the mission of the postwar generation is to lay the foundations for a new civilisation to be created through the combination of materialism and idealism.<sup>4</sup> Still, the suggestions put forward are not radical

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<sup>1</sup> Sachinis 1992: 25. As Kostas Papageorgiou claims, in Petsalis' fiction, the depiction of his protagonists as the products of a certain time and place is, to an extent, indicative of his interest in history, which, as will be shown in the following, manifested clearly in his choice to write historical novels from the 1940s onwards (A similar view is put forward by Vangelis Athanasopoulos as well). Indeed, in an interview with Maria Troupaki, Petsalis admits his lifelong fascination with both literature and history. See Athanasopoulos 1990: 182; Athanasopoulos 2003: 316; Papageorgiou 1993: 164 and 178–179; Troupaki 1985: 69.

<sup>2</sup> Chourmouzos 1979e: 141; Sachinis 1992: 27. Alekos is killed during a paramilitary movement organised to seize power by force, while his wife pursues an illegal affair with Nikos Lazarou, her husband's relative and best friend.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1934: 89 and 115.

<sup>4</sup> This advice may also reflect the concerns and the efforts of the upper middle class for its renewal.

enough (play sports, return to nature, eat healthier) to ensure the success of the attempt.<sup>1</sup>

As for the above mentioned advice on the way of living, on the one hand, it follows the trend of the twentieth century, the request for “life reform” with the aim of “restoring the body to more natural living conditions”.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, it was about “a wide range of practices”, such as “vegetarianism, care of the skin, sun- and air-bathing, nudism, and sex reform”, which flourished in the first decades of the 20th century because of the mounting anxiety for degeneration, the emergence of eugenic thinking, and scientific advancements.<sup>3</sup> Particularly, “a lifelong conviction” about “the healing and tonic quality of the sun” took off at the beginning of the 20th century, and as such, the “exposure to sunlight and fresh air” was suggested as beneficial.<sup>4</sup> Besides, in the 1920s, the interest in “food reform or vegetarianism” was revived.<sup>5</sup> With “the discovery of vitamins” at the outbreak of the First World War, “the term ‘vitamin’ was adopted”, and “food quality”, i.e., “a diet rich in fibre,

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<sup>1</sup> Chourmouzos 1979e: 142–143. For Aimilios Chourmouzos, the combination of these opposing philosophies proves to be impossible, and their incompatibility is illustrated, as it will be seen in the chapter “Family and marriage”, through the marital misfortune of Alekos Parnis. Theotokas on his part stressed in 1936 that “the complex political and social phenomena of his era” could no longer be interpreted through the lens of materialism and idealism. See *Ibid.*; Kourkouvelas 2013: 50; Theotokas 1936b: 73. Regarding the suggested means for mental and physical improvement, see Petsalis 1934: 91 and 224.

<sup>2</sup> Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 2. At the heart of this physical culture movement was “the Graeco-Roman hygienic ideal ‘Mens sana in corpore sano’” suggesting “a healthy mind in a healthy body”. *Ibid.*: 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 2 and 58. In his article “Το αδύνατο της επιστροφής” (“The impossible return”), Kostas Ouranis claims that the development and growth of sport was a clear sign of decay. See Ouranis 1933: 202.

<sup>4</sup> Saleeby 1923: 4–5, 9–10 and 15; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 9–10, 17, 28–29, 48, 151, 159, 162, 164, 166, 294 and 298.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 29 and 177.

fruit, and vegetables” was given top priority in the 1920s.<sup>1</sup> These suggestions for sunbathing and eating more healthily were combined with those promoting the improvement of physical condition and fitness, and as a result, “sports medicine” and “physical culture” were developed.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, these guidelines for a healthy and fit body, together with the tendency toward concentration of power in the executive branch, the tendency to authoritarianism, supported by the protagonist of the book Alekos Parnis, point to “the relationship between fascism and the physical culture movement”, with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany being the most representative examples.<sup>3</sup> The exploitation of sport and bodily culture on their part was, according to Gonda Van Steen, clear proof of their efforts to “turn sport into an essential component of their ultra-nationalist -and racist- interwar politics”.<sup>4</sup> Following Gonda Van Steen, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska claims that “there is an extensive literature on the body of the ‘superman’ as a fascist political icon and the role of sport under fascism”.<sup>5</sup>

The importance of “sport and bodily culture” was highlighted and advocated by the dictatorial regime of 1936–1939 as well, with the intention of buttressing its “nationalist ‘mission’”.<sup>6</sup> Under this aspect, “sport, spectacle, and Greek history” were intermingled and thus a number of “athletic events, military displays, and historical re-enactments of Greek military victories”, all suggestive of the “dogmatic

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<sup>1</sup> Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 8, 23, 151, 152, 162, 169, 172 and 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 22 and 36–51.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 194 and 206–215; Dimadis 2004: 263–265; Petsalis 1934: 128–129, 131, 203 and 205; Van Steen 2010: 2125.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 206.

<sup>6</sup> Van Steen 2010: 2121. The Colonel’s regime of 1967–1974 was on the same wavelength. Ibid.

conception of ‘a healthy mind in a healthy body’”, were staged during Metaxas’ dictatorship.<sup>1</sup>

Metaxas viewed “sport as a means to teach Greek citizens and especially Greek youth to respect authority” and therefore sport became “a prominent component of a totalitarianism of the body, which”, in turn, promoted “a totalitarianism of the mind”.<sup>2</sup> Besides, in view of national regeneration, athletics, in his opinion, contributed to blood revitalisation.<sup>3</sup> Against this backdrop, Metaxas announced “the foundation of the ‘Third Hellenic Civilization’ modelled after Hitler’s Third German Reich”.<sup>4</sup>

Now I turn to *Ο απόγονος*, the third part of Thanasis Petsalis’ trilogy *Γερές και αδύναμες γενεές*; and more specifically, to Petros Parnis, the protagonist of the novel and the offspring of the fourth generation of the upper-middle-class Parnis family. From the very beginning of the story, his mental and physical constitution is described in such a way that a number of hints indicating degeneracy are carefully scattered across the narrative.<sup>5</sup> Petros Parnis is, in general terms, a sickly, pale, thin, delicate, precocious, lonely, dreamy, pessimistic, depressed, hypersensitive, and neurasthenic young boy. He himself believes that there is something loose in his brain; depression and doldrums suddenly succeeded by enthusiasm and nervousness show him to be a psychopath. To fight off these symptoms, he resorts to a great

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<sup>1</sup> Van Steen 2010: 2121 and 2122.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 2134 and 2136.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 2136.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. For more information on the manipulation of sport by the 4th of August Regime, *ibid.*: 2133, 2136 and 2138–2139.

<sup>5</sup> Petsalis 1935: 12–13, 18–19, 21–23, 32, 34–36, 56, 62, 65–66, 70–71, 76, 78, 84, 139–143, 148–149, 151, 153, 160, 162–163, 168, 179, 184, 189–190 and 198.



variety of medicines, such as sedatives, tonics, anti-neurasthenics, tranquillizers, and soporifics. In addition to these, he not only prefers to play in his fantasy rather than seeking the pleasure of other children's company but he also shows no desire to do anything nor any aim in his life. Due to these qualities, on the one hand, Petros is undoubtedly completely different from his optimistic, active, full of energy and life father in the sense that the father's positive qualities "degenerate" in the case of the son "into a total inadequacy for life";<sup>1</sup> and, on the other hand, he may be regarded as a typical degenerate. His grandmother's disappointment and fear about the future of the Parnis family point to this assumption.<sup>2</sup>

To some extent, his lifestyle seems to have an impact on his weak mental and physical constitution. Petros lives almost exclusively with his grandmother, away from society, and he is an introvert, without friends and acquaintances. This isolation together with the "natural indolence of his social class" are responsible -as Apostolos Sachinis points out- for his "lonely and lazy life".<sup>3</sup> Although Petros goes to school and has the chance to make friends, his only friendly relationship, after a long period of time, involves just one boy, Anastasios Georgiadis.<sup>4</sup> Also, his sister Mary, in an attempt to fight his apathy, introduces him to her circle of friends, and Petros makes new acquaintances;<sup>5</sup> still, his idiosyncrasy is radically different from that of his peers, and Petros seems to be a precocious boy talking about things which hardly suit his age. Consequently, he becomes nervous and hypersensitive and expresses his troubled emotions through his love for music. Much as in the case of

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<sup>1</sup> Agras 1936: 845; Ridley 1987: 33.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1935: 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Sachinis 1992: 30.

<sup>4</sup> Petsalis 1935: 63-64.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 143.

Hanno in *Buddenbrooks*, Petros' features, to an extent, originate from "the fashionable concern of the 1890s for the dilettante and the descendant".<sup>1</sup> It is through this "sensitive dilettante and persona of the modern artist" that "decadence as an esthetic concept" may be an additional aspect of the family's decline in *Γερέζ κι αδύναμες γενεές*.<sup>2</sup>

His condition is further and severely affected by his love affair with an older woman, Dori Perraki.<sup>3</sup> At this crucial age for his temperament, this life-changing experience, with the intense feelings it generates, and the deep disappointment following the end of a relationship are responsible for the deterioration of his health and the change in his psychology. Besides, Petros matures earlier than might be expected. His liaison with Dori was neither an innocent flirt nor simple puppy love;<sup>4</sup> he experienced true love, and this experience distinguishes him from his peers. Thus, he is not willing to have a relationship with a girl of his age.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that the state of her grandson's health belies Maria's hopes expressed in the first part of the trilogy (*Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*). Particularly, she was hoping that her son Alekos would raise healthy children with a healthy body, brain, and nerves.<sup>6</sup> Having faith in the power of her blood, Maria, after her son's marriage, embraced her daughter-in-law tightly so that the same blood would run in her

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<sup>1</sup> Ridley 1987: 33.

<sup>2</sup> Hönnighausen 1990: 36.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1935: 139–141 and 145.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 145–147.

<sup>5</sup> Taking all these into account, I suggest that this neurasthenic, hypersensitive, with artistic inclinations young boy constitutes a case of an 'enfant prodigue' (prodigal son), and therefore, a loan from André Gide's *Le Retour de l' Enfant Prodigue* (*The Return of the Prodigal Son*), since the prevailing elements of the book's atmosphere are the dominance of "erotic nostalgia" and the "pain of the senses". See Chourmouziou 1979a: 150; Stasinopoulos 1930: 20.

<sup>6</sup> Petsalis 1933: 226–227.

veins.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, feeling proud of her competent son, Maria hoped that Alekos would be proud of his son Petros too, and therefore they all “should forge a chain of ‘prides’, which would connect one generation to another and would encourage as well as force them to follow an upward course”.<sup>2</sup> The reality, however, fell short of her expectations, since her son’s mission to raise healthy offspring was not accomplished in Petros’ case.

By contrast, Mary, Petros’ sister, is in rude mental health; still, when she is informed about her brother’s condition, she fears that, being siblings and sharing the same blood, she might suffer from the same illness.<sup>3</sup> Despite initial reasonable worries, Mary quickly regains her balance, expressing the opinion that “the balanced people are the blissful ones”.<sup>4</sup> So, Petros’ condition is further highlighted through comparison with Mary’s.

Lastly, in this novel, the decline of the Parnis family can also be seen in Maria Parni’s gradual decay and death.<sup>5</sup> From all the characters, Maria is the only one that appears in each part of the trilogy. In the first book, she has the leading role, and in the second, although she lives with her husband in Geneva, she reappears in various

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1933: 209.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 214. Stylianos Koukas, Maria Parni’s father, managed to get rich from trading, to climb to the upper social class and to gain reputation in his circle. Maria herself realised Koukides’ atavism by marrying Petros Parnis and gaining a weighty, in social terms, family name. Their son, Alekos, an active, ambitious, and successful young man, became a politician and managed to climb rapidly the steps of the political hierarchy. This upward course stops at Petros Parnis, Maria Parni’s grandchild, since he seems unable to continue this course and realise Koukides’ atavism. For the first reference to the notion of atavism, *ibid.*: 190.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1935: 139–143 and 151–152.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 152.

<sup>5</sup> The first indication of her decay has already been given in the second book of the trilogy. See Petsalis 1934: 99–100.

ways; she returns to Greece for her son's wedding and her grandchildren's birth, exerts ideological influence over her son and advises him on family happiness. In the third book, the author casts her as a supporting actor, and the explanation for her physical presence is double; she undertakes the task of raising her grandson and later dies. Thanks to numerous omens scattered throughout the novel, her death looks like part of the natural course of events.<sup>1</sup> Generally, she bears all those characteristics which are common to elderly people: she is sulky, melancholic, and weak, her eyesight and hearing keep worsening, her legs hurt, she has gained weight and has blood pressure issues. Pneumonia spells her death which is described in chapter XXXIII (pp. 195–201).

I will now deal with the backdrop against which the degeneration of the Parnis family is depicted. A strong relation seems to be established between the degeneration of families and that of the classes, particularly of the bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup> The Parnis are an upper-middle-class family, and Petros Parnis, a fourth generation descendant, is a typically degenerate instance; thus it is easy to deduce that behind the degeneration of the upper-middle-class Parnis family lies hidden the

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1935: 9–10, 21, 24, 60, 75, 107, 118, 144, 154, 168, 171–172, 178–179 and 182–183.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 66 and 186. The image of the drying branches, to a degree, brings the Darwinian concept of the 'tree of life' to mind, thoroughly explaining the procedure of natural selection and suggesting that species do not remain the same; they either become extinct or continue to exist or "split into multiple descendent species". The case of the Parnis family seems to be that of extinction. At this juncture, one should be reminded of the fact that the metaphor of the 'tree' in family novels was commonplace. For example, Galsworthy's *The Forsyte saga* is about the destruction of the tree of Forsyteism. See Carlson 1937: 189; MacQuitty 1980: 105–106; Ru 1992: 156; Waters 2003: 117–119.

degeneration of the social class it belongs to.<sup>1</sup> Two conclusions can be drawn from this: firstly, biological degeneration may cause social decline, and secondly, Petsalis adopted the family structure using the fate of the Parnis family as symbolic of the fate of its social class as a whole.

Finally, the title of Angelos Terzakis' (1907–1979) novel *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* (1934) foreshadows the destiny of the main characters. In fact, the author relates the steady and more or less inevitable decline of the upper-middle-class Skliros family.<sup>2</sup> The necessary information about the father, Menelaos Skliros, and his dissolute life is given briefly in the introductory chapter of the novel. He studied law, and, as the offspring of an upper-middle-class family who has inherited enough money to be able to live without having to work, he can afford to travel abroad all the time.<sup>3</sup> He leads a profligate life;<sup>4</sup> nevertheless, when he turns forty, he decides to get married.<sup>5</sup> Yet, even after his marriage, he continues on the same path, getting involved in extramarital relationships.<sup>6</sup> Further proof of his immoral ways is

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<sup>1</sup> Arguably, Petros, given his degeneracy, will likely prove himself 'unfit for living' in his 'struggle for existence', and his destiny will lead to extinction. Yet the final answer to this issue will be given in the subsection "Family, biological determinism, and characterisation".

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1934a. The fantasy and realistic novel intermingled in the case of this fictional work. Tzina Politi claims: "If the fantasy novel is regarded as a 'deviation' from the realistic one and a 'perversion' of reality, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* is associated with the genre in terms of both structure and theme, since degeneration and decline are the festering 'trauma' on the body of society and culture, which were once healthy and robust". In other words, given the relationship between family and society, and the ideological, political, financial, and social crisis of the interwar period, one can deduce that the degeneration of the Skliros family, as depicted in the novel, reflects an ailing society or a society in crisis. See Politi 2001: 105.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 10–11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 11–12.

provided by the birth of a child out of wedlock, the fruit of an affair with an Italian chanteuse.<sup>1</sup> Apart from his lifestyle, his blood is also characterised as ‘bad’ and ‘thin’ “in the biological, social, and moral sense”.<sup>2</sup> As Tzina Politi notes, “through the degenerate father, the common motif of the modern novel, that of degeneration and decline, is introduced”.<sup>3</sup> Degeneracy is closely associated with sickness, a condition which suggests its implicit or explicit contrast with health.

Degeneracy, manifested in the father’s blood, is also to be seen in the qualities of his sons. The two brothers share a degenerate nature which becomes more apparent in their mental characteristics than through any physical stigmata. The eldest son, Andreas Skliros, is primarily depicted as a flâneur and traveler;<sup>4</sup> for a long period of time, he stays in one place, but then, all of a sudden, assailed by Wanderlust, he disappears. He is addicted to drugs, mingles with people from a lower social class and thinks that he and his ‘friends’ constitute a group that will not take action and will not have any ambitions, and therefore, healthy people will oppose them.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, he is depicted as socially indifferent; despite the fact that one night he hears gunshots, encounters army patrols the next morning and notices the chain and the padlock on the University’s gate, he keeps walking hastily and indifferently.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 66 and 135–137.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 167–169; Politi 2001: 59. Blood is a vehicle of heredity and an indicator for close relationship: Laouretta, Menelaos Skliros’ illegitimate daughter, tells Andreas that all his close relatives –namely his father, his mother, and his brother– are in his blood, whether he loves them or hates them. Besides, Andreas agrees with his brother Stefanos that they are the same and have the same blood. In his understanding, this similarity between some people is a kind of consolation. See Terzakis 1934a: 182, 240 and 269–270.

<sup>3</sup> Politi 2001: 59.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 71 and 115–116.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 116–117, 140 and 141.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 93.

Although his physical constitution, compared to his brother's, is characterised as heathy, his actions tell of his mental disorder,<sup>1</sup> as a result of which Andreas falls in love with his half-sister and kills, without any hesitation, his brother on account of a dispute over paternal inheritance.<sup>2</sup>

The youngest son, Stefanos, has idiosyncrasies of his own. During adolescence, he displays symptoms of nervous disorder for the first time, and the main reason for this seems to be his habit of intensive reading compounded by an introvert nature.<sup>3</sup> Far from improving with time, his condition seems to deteriorate: he becomes more introverted and averse to any kind of human relationship and almost shut in his study, he buries himself in his books.<sup>4</sup> And when he decides to become 'active', he steals money from his mother's bedside table and runs away with the Lamptis family babysitter.

To sum up, Andreas and Stefanos manifest their irregularity, confirming their "lack of morality, of right and wrong and of law".<sup>5</sup> Such a lack is responsible for their "moral insanity" and "momentary impulse, or inclination, or caprice", and accounts for the crimes they commit "with the greatest calmness and self-

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 80 and 190. It is worth mentioning that hereditary criminality is evident in the depiction of the similarities between the mother (Delcharo) and the daughter (Fragoyiannou) on the one hand, and between the mother (Fragoyiannou) and the son (Moros) on the other, in Alexandros Papadiamantis' (1851–1911) naturalistic work *Η Φόνισσα*, first serialized in the journal *Παναθήναια* (*Panathinaia*, 15.1 – 15.6.1903) and released in book form in 1912. Yet, it is more likely than not that the emphasis is on the main heroine's (Fragoyiannou) reasoning behind the crimes committed, an issue that will be explored in detail in the following chapter. See also Farinou-Malamatari 2002: 54 and 100–101; Pateridou 2002: 422–425 and 428.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 14–15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 15 and 46.

<sup>5</sup> Nordau 1895: 18.

complacency”.<sup>1</sup> Apart from their “moral insanity”, the “disinclination to action of any kind”, “a consequence of the inherited deficiency of brain”, is yet further proof of their degenerate nature.<sup>2</sup> As a result, their mental state turns out to be a mirror of the overall mood of the story, and a sense of a gloomy brooding and suffocating atmosphere is conveyed to the readers.<sup>3</sup> The author, according to Andreas Karantonis, managed to both give the impression of “a neurological clinic” and to depict “a hellish, imaginary, and scary environment in which the protagonists act and harm each other”.<sup>4</sup> The feelings aroused are so negative that, at the end of the story, the reader does not experience catharsis, i.e., the purification and purgation of emotions.<sup>5</sup>

Overall, in this subsection, the novels in question are rich in references to the concept of ‘degeneration’, either undoubtedly suggested through the meticulous description of the stigmata pointing to the characters’ degeneracy (Phoivos Vramis and Meropi Karamali, *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*; Petros Parnis, *Ο απόγονος*; Menelaos, Andreas, and Stefanos Skliros, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*); or clearly indicated through the use of certain expressions, such as ‘the malady of the century’ (*Αποικιοί*) and the ‘decline of civilisation’ (*Αποικιοί* and *Το σταυροδρόμι*). Intimations of fears for degeneration and civilisation’s decline are also seen in the suggestions for sunbathing, eating more healthily, and improving a person’s

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<sup>1</sup> Nordau 1895: 18. For Aimilios Chourmouziotis, the two brothers are “medical case studies”, and their madness is unchallengeable. See Chourmouziotis 1979d: 159.

<sup>2</sup> Nordau 1895: 20.

<sup>3</sup> Tsiropoulos 1977: 91.

<sup>4</sup> Karantonis 1935c: 108.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 106–107. Against this backdrop, their degeneration is not only inevitable but also the harbinger of their moral and social decline. See Terzakis 1934a: 167–169 and 249.



physical condition and fitness (*Το σταυροδρόμι*), all indicative of the advice and practices put forth and developed against the growing anxiety for degeneration at the beginning of the 20th century.

My focus was on ‘family trees’, also called ‘pedigree charts’ or ‘genealogical trees’, and I tried to track the history of the families around which the narrative develops. In conclusion, they all exemplify the type of the degenerate family. The novel *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού* was about the ‘evolution’ of the Vramis family genius over the course of three generations, with Kostas Vramis, the great poet, founding the family, whereas his mad son Phoivos Vramis and his severely mentally ill grandchild, Apollonios Vramis, represent the second and third generation respectively. ‘Evolution’ is, of course, in inverted commas, since, as explained in detail, at some point “evolution” was no longer regarded as “synonymous with ‘progress’” –it might take the form of degeneration.<sup>1</sup> In the trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*, the story illustrated the withering of the Parnis tree over the course of four generations; and finally, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* revolved around the progressive, torturous, and nightmarish degeneration of the Skliros family over the course of two generations.

The fact that degeneration spans two (*Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*), three (*Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*), and four generations (*Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*) points to the belief that degeneration, compared to “the evolution from animal to human”, is “rapid and fatal”.<sup>2</sup> Due to the relationship between degeneration and extinction, put forward in

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<sup>1</sup> Bury 1920: 335–336; Darwin 1859: 441 and 448; Darwin 1871: 117; Darwin 2009: 893; Hurley 2004: 10, 65 and 66; Lankester 1880: 60; Lombroso 1911: 135; Mazzarello: 2011: 97–98; Trotter 1993: 111; Wells 1891: 253; Zarimis 2015: 28 and 39.

<sup>2</sup> Hurley 2004: 66.

Nordau's *Degeneration* for the first time, the degeneracy of the descendants can bring about the extinction of a family line. This process of extinction may also be explained by the Darwinian concept of the 'tree of life', based on the law of 'natural selection': species do not remain the same: they either become extinct, continue to exist or "split into multiple descendent" ones.<sup>1</sup> As such, given their degenerative tendencies, the offspring in the novels under examination have no choice other than to become extinct.

The reasons the biological degeneration leads to social decline in the case of the Parnis family, whereas, in the case of Skliros, it brings about both the moral and social decline of the family are greatly interesting. Petsalis, for his part, seems to believe that the degeneration of the families and the social class they belong to are closely associated.<sup>2</sup> Since the thematic focus of the novel is the degeneration of the upper-middle-class Parnis family, one is invited to suppose that Petsalis is sceptical about the fortunes of the upper middle class of his time.

For his part, Terzakis, in his article "Ελεύθερα ιδανικά" ("Free ideals", 1932), clearly criticises the contradictions and the transformations of Greek bourgeois ideology: not only does he believe that its principal characteristics are "hypocrisy" and "narrow-mindedness", but also contends that the "idolatrous symbols of failed liberalism", the foundations of the bourgeois ideology, namely "the Family, the Home, and the Church, have decayed".<sup>3</sup> To his mind, the main reason for their

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<sup>1</sup> Waters 2003: 117–119.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1935: 66 and 186.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1932c: 233.

decay is the fact that “bourgeois ideology used these principles as a means to prevail and endure”.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude taken by Petsalis and Terzakis may also be seen within the context of the political developments taking place between 1932 and 1934, the years during which the trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* and the novel *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* were written. The events triggering the resurgence of the conflict between the two bourgeois parties, the Liberal and the People’s Party, were the elections on September 26, 1932, and on March 5, 1933.<sup>2</sup> Venizelos’ electoral defeat, in turn, was followed by a military coup organized by Nikolaos Plastiras (6 March), with the intention of preventing the People’s Party from forming the new government, and posing further threats to the already unstable political scene in Greece.<sup>3</sup> In view of these facts, both Petsalis and Terzakis “witnessed”, as K. A. Dimadis underlines, “the political and moral decline of Venizelism”, and their concern for the turn of the events and the role the two bourgeois parties would play in the political life from March 1933 onwards was growing.<sup>4</sup> Against this backdrop, Petsalis’ anxiety about the bourgeoisie and Terzakis’ criticism of bourgeois ideology can be understood.

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932c: 233.

<sup>2</sup> Clogg 1986: 127; Elefantis 1979: 154–155; Mavrogordatos 1983: 40–44; Vournas 1998: 348–352.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 348–354; Clogg 1986: 128; Elefantis 1979: 155; Mavrogordatos 1983: 45; Mazower 1991: 24–25; Papadimitriou 2012: 47; Vratsanos 1936: 260–265.

<sup>4</sup> Dimadis 2004: 2–3. Here one should be reminded that the coups on March 1, 1935 and on October 10, 1935 facilitated the restoration of a monarchy, whereas the state of deadlock after the elections on January 26, 1936 paved the way for the imposition of a dictatorship. For more details, see Clogg 1986: 128–131; Elefantis 1979: 156–157 and 249–250; Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002: 131–132; Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010: 95 and 102–103; Mavrogordatos 1983: 48–54; Mazower 1991: 25–27, 282–283 and 286; Papadimitriou 2012: 76–77; Vournas 1998: 367–370, 372, 374, 456 and 458. According to Dimadis, the argument for young Venizelist prose-writers’ (such as Angelos

Finally, one last remark about ‘degeneration’, the thread by which the novels of the subsection are woven, must be made here. ‘Degeneracy’, as already stated, was viewed “as a morbid deviation from an original healthy type”, and as such, it became a measurement of “the health of the individual”.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, the rhetoric of ‘fit’ and ‘unfit’, conveying the ideas of ‘health’ and ‘vigorousness’ on the one hand, and those of ‘sickness’ and ‘weakness’ on the other, was embedded in the notion of ‘degeneration’. In the novels under examination, this marriage of ‘degeneration’ and the ‘fit-unfit’ discourse is evident either in the case of the physically and mentally ill whose state is usually compared and contrasted to that of the healthy (Phoivos Vramis vs. Kriton Karamalis and Petros Parnis vs. Maria Parni); or in the case of those degenerate-unfit who, due to their mental constitution, are condemned, in Nordau’s way of thinking, to extinction (Andreas Skliros,

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Terzakis, Thanasis Petsalis-Diomidis, and George Theotokas) awkwardness is further strengthened, when one considers their turn towards the past. In fact, the first form of Terzakis’ historical novel *Η πριγκηπέσσα Ιζαμπώ* appeared in the newspaper *Η Καθημερινή (I Kathimerini)* between November 7, 1937, and January 1, 1938, with the revised version coming out in book form in 1945. Likewise, after the outbreak of the Second World War, Theotokas conceives and publishes his young-adult novel *Λεωνής* (1940), which takes place in Constantinople in the midst of the First World War; and finally, Petsalis authors his two-volume historical novel *Οι Μαυρόλυκοι. Το χρονικό της Τουρκοκρατίας, 1565–1799* (1947–1948; *Μυθιστόρημα ενός έθνους*) during the Occupation by Axis forces. Resorting to national/popular tradition –indicating their fear for a second world war as well– aimed to shed light on those elements that would contribute to social cohesion, as well as on the role the bourgeoisie played during the Ottoman Occupation. It should also be stressed that the question of ‘national identity’ and the ideology of ‘Greekness’ were central to Greek intellectual elites, authors, and poets’ thoughts and discussions in the 1930s. However, “such quests were not new in themselves, but after 1922 they gained a new dimension”. See Dimadis 2004: 1–4, 15, 19, 25, 30–31, 37–39, 41–48, 53–55, 58–62, 74–75, 77–95, 102, 104–105, 108–110, 143, 154, 204–207, 218, 227–228, 230, 233–239, 244–247, 250–251, 265–269, 273, 277–278 and 280–283; Hokwerda 2013: 199–201; Tziouvas 1989; Tziouvas 1997: 35–37

<sup>1</sup> Hurley 2004: 71; Morel 1857: 5; Nordau 1895: 16.

Stefanos Skliros, and Petros Parnis) or, as will be seen more clearly in the following section, in the case of those deemed biologically dangerous to collective welfare (*H νόχτα του εκφυλισμού* and *Αποικιοί*). This preference for the fittest over the unfit is generally indicative of the mounting concern for efficiency, especially after the First World War, and suggests the desire for a regenerated, healthier, and more efficient society. At the same time, the strong emphasis placed on the ‘unfitness’ of some offspring (Andreas Skliros, Stefanos Skliros, and Petros Parnis) is explained, as discussed above, by the authors’ thoughts about the social class to which their protagonists belong.<sup>1</sup> Yet, on the whole, this discussion about degeneration and fitness-unfitness naturally leads to eugenics, the product of the fin-de-siècle morbid fears.

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<sup>1</sup> In Greece, as will be shown, the fear for the biological quality of the Greek ‘phyli’ caused this concern about efficiency.

## 1.2 Eugenics

### 1.2.1 The rise and the international resonance of eugenics

Francis Galton (1822–1911), widely regarded as the father of eugenics, coined the term ‘eugenics’ in his book *Inquiries into human faculty and social development* (1883), a summary of his studies on “the varied hereditary faculties of different men” and on “the great differences in different families and races”.<sup>1</sup> Particularly, Galton, while dealing with a variety of subjects associated with “that of the cultivation of race”,<sup>2</sup> felt the need to use “a brief word” suggesting “the science of improving stock, which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had”.<sup>3</sup> Thus he invented the term ‘eugenic’, deriving from the Greek ‘ευγενής’ (‘*eugenes*’) < εὖ (well) + ‘γένος’ (‘breed’), and meaning

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<sup>1</sup> Galton 1883: 1. Apart from this treatise, there is also a two-part article published in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in 1865, which may be regarded as Galton’s ‘first proto-eugenics’ text. Essentially, in “Hereditary character and talent” Galton argued for the hereditary nature of character and talent, maintaining that mental traits, like physical ones, are subject to the Darwinian principle of natural selection. These views on the heritability of genius were established further in his book *Hereditary genius* (1869). See Dyrbye n.d.; Galton 1865: 157–166 and 318–327; Galton 1869; Griffin 2007: 438.

<sup>2</sup> Galton 1883: 24

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: n.1, p. 25. Of course, the eugenic idea of ‘selective breeding’ was not articulated in the late 19th century for the first time, since its origins, according to a belief widely held at the beginning of the 20th century, went back to Hellenic antiquity and culture. Those who first aired this opinion were eugenicists “from the German-speaking countries and the National Socialists in particular” (for example, Fritz Lenz, Alfred Ploetz, and Alfred Hauswirth) and maintained that eugenic methods, such as infanticide and euthanasia, had first been performed in ancient Sparta. This view of “the ancient Hellenic origins of eugenics” was espoused by many Greek eugenicists as well (Ioannis Koumaris, Moisis Moisisidis, Konstantinos Gardikas, Konstantinos Moutousis, and Nikolaos Drakoulidis), with the exception of Stavros Zurukzoglu. See Trubeta 2007: 132–134 and 136; Trubeta 2013: 205–206.

“good in stock, hereditarily endowed with noble qualities”.<sup>1</sup> What mainly heightened Galton’s sense of duty to “turn the utopia of breeding a regenerated human race into a reality” was a growing fear of the threats posed by degeneration.<sup>2</sup>

When talking about Galton and ‘selective’ or ‘better breeding’, Karl Pearson (1857–1935), the first holder of the Galton Chair of Eugenics at the University College of London, and Charles B. Davenport (1866–1944), “the major importer of eugenics to the United States”, should also be mentioned.<sup>3</sup> The former claimed in his *The groundwork of eugenics* (1909) that the very essence of eugenics lies in the application of the principle of natural selection in the human society: “Nature, by the death of those who cannot stand the strain of life, removes the weaker stock before it has had any, or its full quatum, of offspring”.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, “when man knows better than at present what are the qualities which fit him for his task and for his environment, he may consciously undertake what Nature has done for him by her selective death-rate”.<sup>5</sup> Under this aspect, “to prepare him [man] for this function is the true aim of the science of eugenics”, and therefore eugenics may be considered a “curative method”, since it “tends to decrease the fertility of the unfit

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<sup>1</sup> Galton 1883: n.1, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Griffin 2007: 438. Galton strongly believed that there was a strong connection between the birth rates of various social classes and both “national rise and decline”. See Galton 1909: 38–39.

<sup>3</sup> Allen 2015: 225; Leung 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Pearson: 1909a: 23.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. From this point of view, eugenics may be viewed as a typical example of “‘biologism’ or the ‘biologisation’ of society”, i.e., the tendency to “transfer biological explanatory patterns to social conditions of human life”. Embedded in this approach is, of course, the perception of society as a living organism. See Dikötter 1998: 467–468; Trubeta 2013: 3 and 4.

and to emphasise that of the fit”.<sup>1</sup> Following Pearson, Davenport regarded eugenics as “the science of human improvement by better breeding”.<sup>2</sup>

Eugenics, although it was quite frequently considered to be “a branch of the natural sciences”, in fact, had “a mongrel ancestry” in the sense that it is a “hybrid of science and myth”.<sup>3</sup> Roger Griffin, tracing the factors behind the rise of eugenics, claims that “on the scientific side” it was facilitated firstly by the efforts of anthropologists in the 18th century to classify “the different phenotypes of human beings discovered” during the geographical exploration of Europe;<sup>4</sup> secondly, by “the development of physical and cultural anthropology”;<sup>5</sup> thirdly, by the “Darwinian theories of natural selection”;<sup>6</sup> and fourthly by the Mendelian “laws of heredity”;<sup>7</sup> whereas “on the mythic side” the path for eugenics was paved by “imperialism, Eurocentrism, Social Darwinism, positivism” along with “the belief in the mission of white, male, scientific, technocratic, and bureaucratic elites to manage civilisation” and “the growing nineteenth-century obsession with decay and degeneracy”.<sup>8</sup> It was this feeling of fear for degeneration, especially after the end of

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<sup>1</sup> Pearson 1909a: 23; Pearson 1909b: 40.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of ‘eugenics’ is found in the front matter and, particularly, on the title page of his *Eugenics* (1910), where the full title of the work, including the subtitle, is given. It is then repeated in his treatise *Heredity in relation to eugenics* (1911). See Davenport 1910: 1; Davenport 1911: 1.

<sup>3</sup> Griffin 2007: 437, 438 and 439.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 437.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: 437–438. Imperialism firstly sparked a passionate “interest in the differences between white and non-white” and “an ‘us/them’ mentality”, rooted in “race psychology explaining the characteristics, cultural abilities, and mental traits of nations and peoples by analysing their racial composition”. In other words, physical traits were treated as a measure of both “mental and intellectual qualities”, which in turn were indicators for the fundamental differences between races.



the First World War, that brought about the adherence to the idea of ‘national regeneration’ that could be achieved through “programmes for social and biological improvement”, promoting the “exclusion of those deemed socially and biologically ‘unworthy’ of reproduction”.<sup>1</sup> Of course, what stood at the core of this project was the desire for “a new and better life”.<sup>2</sup> To put it differently, the War “vindicated eugenics as a philosophy of social and biological regeneration”, aiming to keep people safe from “a disappointing present” and directing them to “a rewarding future”.<sup>3</sup>

As for the promotion and establishment of eugenic thinking, the process of ‘the medicalisation of society’ from the 19th century onwards seems to have played a key role, since it primarily suggested that “non-medical problems” should be “defined and treated as medical problems”.<sup>4</sup> The result of the adoption of medical terminology was that a wide range of social phenomena were described in terms of health and illness on the one hand, and order and disorder on the other.<sup>5</sup> This new approach was reflected in the use of specific terms, such as ‘social disease’ and

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As a result, race psychology lay at the very heart of scientific racism during the first decades of the 20th century. Secondly, imperialism generated the idea of ‘racial hierarchy’ and, particularly, of ‘white superiority’, and thirdly, it fuelled “fears about miscegenation”, embedded in “discourses of ‘exclusion’/‘segregation’ and ‘integration’”. ‘Exclusion’ was based on racial inferiority, whereas ‘integration’, although it seemed feasible, was in fact difficult, as the prerequisites were rather strict. Yet both were indicative of the “medicalisation of the notion of ‘race’” and the efforts to achieve and maintain high-quality national health. See Avdela 2017: 12–15 and 17; Kallis 2007: 398–399 and 403; Klautke 2007: 23; Turda 2013: 116 and 125; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 23 and 24.

<sup>1</sup> Turda 2013: 115 and 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 126.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 113 and 115; Allen and Turda 2015: 220.

<sup>4</sup> Conrad 2007: 4; Kallis 2007: 396. In this respect, the assertion that “eugenics is a ‘modern’ way of talking about social problems in biologizing terms” seems reasonable. See Dikötter 1998: 467.

<sup>5</sup> Conrad 2007: 4; Kallis 2007: 396.

‘social pathology’, indicating that morally or socially unacceptable behaviours were perceived as “deviation from ‘health’ or as detrimental ‘sickness’”.<sup>1</sup> This “relabeling” of “physical, social, mental, and sexual” deviance signified a decisive shift in perspective in the sense that any deviant, by posing threat to individual and to society as a collective body, became a matter concerning society as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Thus, ‘social hygiene’, (“public hygiene’ or ‘hygiene of the people’”) emerged and intermingled with the discourse of ‘social disease’ and ‘social pathology’.<sup>3</sup>

In light of this new perception, the ambition to regulate individual and collective life was accompanied by the “empowerment of the state”.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the state was viewed as “the supreme guardian of individual and collective life” or as the “sole guarantor of collective life”.<sup>5</sup> As a result, “the pastoral power of the modern state” was expanded, and this expansion went hand in hand with the principle of

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<sup>1</sup> Kallis 2007: 395; Trubeta 2013: 17 and 222–223. The broad term ‘social disease’, central to the population question, was in wide use during the interwar period, and “included any kind of supposed social abnormality”, such as “malaria, trachoma, prostitution, venereal diseases (above all syphilis), hereditary propensity to criminality, insanity, alcoholism, drug addiction, epilepsy, leprosy, tuberculosis, and professional diseases”. Poverty was also enumerated among the forms of social pathology. Since “a pathological lifestyle was ascribed to carriers, or potential carriers” of hereditary social diseases, venereal diseases, criminality, and insanity were regarded as “the symbols *par excellence* of supposed hereditary social pathology”. In relation to these “abnormal and degenerated members of society”, Foucault’s socio-biological perspective is of great importance, since, in his opinion, it is not society that is divided into “upper and lower classes” but “a single race into a super-race and a sub-race”. Due to the medicalisation described above, the “exclusion and/or elimination of hereditary biological and social deviants” (‘internal enemies’) was facilitated. Ibid.: 207, 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, 228, 231, 281 and 282; Foucault 2003: 60–61; Kallis 2007: 392; Mazower 1998: 78–79; Turda 2013: 116; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 23.

<sup>2</sup> Conrad 2007: 4; Foucault 2003: 242; Kallis 2007: 392 and 395; Trubeta 2013: 223, 227, 228 and 240.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 228–229.

<sup>4</sup> Allen and Turda 2015: 220; Kallis 2007: 399–400; Turda 2013: 119 and 121.

<sup>5</sup> Kallis 2007: 400.

'bio-politics', according to which "modern states exercised their authority over nationals on the rational basis of ensuring and facilitating the continuity of life" ("state racism").<sup>1</sup> To put it differently, the state claimed the right to "exclude and eliminate" any threats with the intention of protecting and boosting the health of the community.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, on the one hand, eugenics could be regarded as "the most aggressive form of bio-power" since it exemplified the "explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations";<sup>3</sup> and on the other, as "the scientific equivalent of totalitarianism in politics" inasmuch as the intensification of state power was, of course, at variance with "liberal discourses on individual rights, self-determination,

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault 1998: 140–141, 143–144 and 149; Kallis 2007: 400 and 402; Trubeta 2013: 227, 280, 282 and 283; Turda 2013: 119. According to Foucault, firstly, 'bio-politics' originated in the 18th century and intended to "rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birthrate, life expectancy, race...", but it was from the 19th century onwards that it assumed added importance, since these problems were intensified. Secondly, "racism justifies the death-function in the economy of bio-power by appealing to the principle that the death of others makes one biologically stronger insofar as one is a member of a race or a population, insofar as one is an element in a unitary living plurality". Sevasti Trubeta interprets Foucault's "state racism" as "authoritative biologism", conveying the idea that there is a clear distinction between those who deserve to live and those who deserve to die. The collaboration between scientists and the state was of great importance, since the former valued human life, whereas the latter put the plan of exclusion and elimination into action. If this is the case, eugenicists, like the state, were guardians of individual and national health. Ibid.: 119, 120 and 122; Foucault 2003: 255 and 258; Foucault 2010: 317; Trubeta 2013: 283 and 285; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 7.

<sup>2</sup> Kallis 2007: 400.

<sup>3</sup> Foucault 1998: 140; Trubeta 2013: 283.

and the freedom of the private sphere”.<sup>1</sup> Let it be clarified that eugenics differed from personal hygiene, promoting the protection and care of every individual.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to the aforementioned multiple factors and circumstances on the one hand, Galton’s theory of selective breeding achieved such a remarkable resonance on an international level;<sup>3</sup> and on the other, eugenic movements started emerging in many countries all over the world between 1910 and 1920, with the first appearing in Germany, Britain, and the United States before 1910.<sup>4</sup> Apart from its international character, eugenics also took on a “protean” nature insofar as eugenics was exploited by supporters across the entire ideological and political spectrum.<sup>5</sup> Of course, differences existed between the various eugenic movements owing to the heredity theory they adopted (either the Mendelian or the Lamarckian), the

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<sup>1</sup> Griffin 2007: 439; Kallis 2007: 396, 400 and 404; Trubeta 2013: 263.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 229–230 and 253; Trubeta 2007: 131; Trubeta 2017: 104; Zurukzoglu 1925e: 16. Although the ambition to fight and anticipate diseases on the one hand, and to control population growth on the other, was common both to hygienists and eugenicists, it seems that the results of hygiene were immediate, whereas the outcomes of eugenics were to be seen in the long term. See Trubeta 2013: 229.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 203; Allen 2015: 224–232; Dikötter 1998: 467; Trubeta 2017: 99; Turda 2013: 112. Marius Turda characterises “the first half of the twentieth century” as “the ‘golden age’ of eugenics”. Both the establishment of eugenic societies and the organisation of international congresses are indicative of the international character of the movement. The first Eugenic Education Society was founded in 1907 in London, whereas the First International Congress of Eugenics was organised in 1912. Ibid.: 110 and 113; Allen 2015: 224; Allen and Turda 2015: 218; Griffin 2007: 439; Kallis 2007: 406.

<sup>4</sup> Allen 2015: 224.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; Allen and Turda 2015: 220; Bland 2007: 66; Dikötter 1998: 467; Trubeta 2017: 99; Turda 2013: 113 and 121; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 2. Yet, except Germany, those who advocated more passionately for eugenics were liberals. See Dikötter 1998: 469; Trubeta 2013: 17 and 258–259.

particular economic, social, and political circumstances, the “local cultural influences, such as religion and family structure”,<sup>1</sup> and the proposed solutions.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding variations on the national level, across the world these movements emerged in a period marked by great economic, social, and political uncertainty and shared fundamental commonalities, namely a widespread pessimism and a growing “concern for efficiency” –both arose from the strong conviction that “the human species was in various phases of deterioration and decline” and therefore its “biological quality was degenerating”;<sup>3</sup> the deep respect for the “symbols of the triumph of enlightenment and rationality”, i.e., “science and technology”;<sup>4</sup> “the role of middle-class experts in establishing social and political policy”;<sup>5</sup> “the ideology of ‘social engineering’”, i.e., the desire to guide and control human reproduction through selective mating and procreation with a view to achieving “the betterment of society and humanity” and “maintaining an optimal

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about the deterrent role of the Catholic Church in the enactment of any radical measures, such as “contraception, sterilization, or abortion”, and the differences between Latin and both Anglo-Saxon and Nordic eugenics, see Allen 2015: 227; Allen and Turda 2015: 220; Childs 2001: 4 and 7; Kallis 2007: 406–408; Turda 2013: 122 and 123; Turda 2017: 3, 6, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 27 and 29.

<sup>2</sup> Allen 2015: 225 and 231; Allen and Turda 2015: 220; Trubeta 2017: 99; Turda 2013: 126. It is worth underlining that during the 1920s and due to the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the rise of national socialism, these differences became even more apparent, with the German eugenic movement being “the most radical bio-medical experiment in interwar Europe”, since racial hygiene was transformed into the official ideology and state policy of the Third Reich. For more details on this issue and on the differences between the National Socialist regime in Germany and the Fascist regime in Italy. *Ibid.*: 120; Allen and Turda 2015: 222; Bauman 1991: 29–30 and 32–33; Griffin 2007: 445; Kallis 2007: 389, 390, 392, 393, 401, 402, 403 and 405–410; Mazower 1998: 78; Trubeta 2013: 246–247; Trubeta 2017: 100.

<sup>3</sup> Allen 2015: 225, 231 and 232; Kallis 2007: 397

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 396 and 397; Allen 2015: 225 and 232; Dikötter 1998: 468; Turda 2013: 126; Weindling 1989: 321.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*; Allen 2015: 232; Allen and Turda 2015: 219; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2010: 23.

balance between quality and quantity”;<sup>1</sup> the priority given to “the common good” in the sense that those who posed a serious threat to the welfare of the community must be sacrificed in terms of either discrimination or elimination, both suggesting “restrictions on their individual rights and lives”;<sup>2</sup> and “the ideal of a healthy nation” dovetailed with the ambition to “construct the quasi-mythical ‘new man’”.<sup>3</sup>

This prioritisation of collective wellness over individuals’ reproductive rights was revealing about eugenics’ “technocratic understanding of progress” (evolution should not be left to chance but should occur with intervention in reproduction), which was congruent with the “biologising vision of society”.<sup>4</sup> This intervention itself abolished the dividing line between the private and public sphere.<sup>5</sup> Although eugenicists were dedicated to the well-being of “the nation, the whole society, the race or humanity”, it was “nation and national society” that stood at the core of eugenic rhetoric, since the “nation” was perceived as “the simplest form of communality” on the one hand, and it was considered “able to produce consensus”

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<sup>1</sup> Allen 2015: 225, 230 and 231; Allen and Turda 2015: 219; Mazower 1998: 78; Trubeta 2013: 16, 203, 212 and 279; Weindling 1989: 325. The social engineering project is, essentially, a clear manifestation of the desire for the “utopian gardening state” in that “a people can only reach spiritual and moral equilibrium if a well-conceived breeding plan stands at the very centre of its culture”. Although the gardening-state plan was not implemented only in Germany, it was there, as stated above, that the most radical version was to be found. This tendency to “create utopias” with a view to escaping from an unbearable present is described as “revitalization movement emerging at times of ‘marked cultural change and its accompanying psychological stress’”. See Bauman 1991: 30–39; Darré 1978: 115; Griffin 2007: 427, 430, 440–442 and 446–450; Turner 1982: 212.

<sup>2</sup> Kallis 2007: 391, 395 and 398; Mazower 1998: 78; Trubeta 2013: 204, 232, 263 and 279–280; Turda 2013: 115, 116 and 125.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 111, 117, 120, 122 and 126.

<sup>4</sup> Dikötter 1998: 468 and 469; Trubeta 2013: 204.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 239; Mazower 1998: 78.

on the other.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the adjective ‘national’ preceded the noun ‘eugenics’ is rather indicative of this way of thinking.<sup>2</sup>

It was in the context of these national renewal and rebirth projects that eugenics was viewed as “a new secular (scientific) religion”.<sup>3</sup> For his part, Galton advocated that “it must be introduced into the national conscience, like a new religion. It has, indeed, strong claims to become an orthodox religious tenet of the future, for eugenics co-operate with the workings of nature by securing that humanity shall be represented by the fittest races”.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in the interwar years “the nation” turned out to be “a modern laboratory of social and biological engineering”.<sup>5</sup>

The prerequisite for the advancement of the population in terms of quality and quantity was the design and enactment of both positive and negative eugenic policies, “promoting the proliferation of ‘good stock’” and restricting the reproduction of ‘defective stock’ respectively.<sup>6</sup> As a result, during the interwar period, there was heated debate worldwide about the introduction of either positive or negative measures.<sup>7</sup> The most notorious negative eugenic policy was that of sterilisation provoking much discussion in relation to the “social and medical categories” that must “be subjected” to it and the nature of the measure, i.e., whether sterilisation “would be voluntary or compulsory”.<sup>8</sup> In view of these facts, it is not

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<sup>1</sup> Trubeta 2013: 280; Turda 2013: 111–112 and 113.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 111–112; Pearson 1909a; Pearson 1909b.

<sup>3</sup> Childs 2001: 4; Griffin 2007: 437; Turda 2013: 120 and 125.

<sup>4</sup> Galton 1904: 5.

<sup>5</sup> Turda 2013: 125.

<sup>6</sup> Allen and Turda 2015: 219 and 220; Gates 1920: 11; Kallis 2007: 395; Lynn 2001: 11, 15 and 135; Trubeta 2013: 285; Wilson 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Turda 2013: 123.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 118–119; Allen and Turda 2015: 219.

difficult to imagine how sex, marriage, and procreation became matters of state concern in the interwar period.<sup>1</sup>

Turning my attention to the Greek case, the emergence of eugenic thinking followed the trend of the times on the one hand, and it was closely associated with the establishment of anthropology as a discipline in Greece, thanks to the activities of Clon Stefanos (1834–1915) and Ioannis Koumaris (1879–1970), on the other.<sup>2</sup> The focus of this scientific field was “man not as an individual but as a collective, as part of a larger group”, while its main subjects of interest were issues related to eugenics, population and race.<sup>3</sup> The Greek Anthropological Society (June 1, 1924) played a pioneering role in the dissemination of anthropological discourse and promotion of discussions on these matters.<sup>4</sup> For example, Stavros Zurukzoglu (1896–1966) was among the first eugenicists to give a talk on eugenics in the Greek Anthropological Society in May 1925.<sup>5</sup> Koumaris, on his part, in line with the view put forward after the end of the First World War that anthropology and population science were closely related, entertained the opinion that eugenics aimed at the

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<sup>1</sup> Childs 2001: 13; Foucault 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Trubeta 2007: 123 and 124.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 123 and 126; Trubeta 2013: 2. The first to support and promote racial theory in Greece was Petros Vlastos (1879–1941), greatly influenced by Arthur de Gobineau. In his opinion, the advancement of the Greek race could be achieved by eugenic means, and thus he placed considerable emphasis on the issue of marriage. See Asimakopoulou 2017: 202–205 and 211; Ermonas 1908; Matalas 2017: 215–219, 222–223 and 228–230; Vlastos 1912; Vlastos 1914a: 4; Vlastos 1914b: 67–68.

<sup>4</sup> Trubeta 2007: 123, 126, 130 and 136.

<sup>5</sup> Soon after being aired during the Society’s session, his views became widely known, since they were published under the title “Η ευγονία” in the journal *Υγεία* (*Ygeia*) a month later. See Ibid.: 131; Trubeta 2013: 248–249; Zurukzoglu 1925b: 121–124; Zurukzoglu 1925c: 146–148; Zurukzoglu 1925d: 265–267.



betterment of humans through selection.<sup>1</sup> It was within this Association that science dovetailed with politics intending to gradually improve the Greek ‘phyli’.<sup>2</sup>

As for the eugenic projects at whose core stood the idea of regeneration, they aimed to handle two burning issues that Greece faced, i.e., the “social question and overpopulation”, connected to those of “social stratification and distribution of resources”.<sup>3</sup> As such, eugenics from the 1920s onwards went hand in hand with the process of the “industrialisation and modernisation of society”.<sup>4</sup> To put it differently, eugenics “was embedded in socio-political reformist projects that advanced the establishment of welfare institutions in Greece” on the one hand, and “sought to cope with the rise of internal social differentiation and stratification” on the other.<sup>5</sup> Even though the interwar Greek case was different from that of other European countries confronted with the problem of declining birth rates, “the

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<sup>1</sup> Koumaris 1925: 100; Trubeta 2007: 130; Trubeta 2013: 248.

<sup>2</sup> Trubeta 2007: 123 and 136.

<sup>3</sup> Trubeta 2013: 16–17 and 208. The ‘social question’ arose in the late 19th century due to “the precarious living and working conditions of the lower social strata and the emerging working class”, whereas at the beginning of the 20th century it acquired additional dimensions because of “the growth of the working class and the growing poverty in the urban centres”. What further complicated matters was the arrival of refugees after the Asia Minor Catastrophe, since “social and state institutions were unprepared and unable to meet the challenge” of their rehabilitation. For these reasons, welfare institutions developed relatively rapidly after 1922. As for the issue of ‘overpopulation’ in interwar Greece, the “high birth rate among the rural population” and the considerable increase in the total population due to territorial and demographical changes between 1912 and 1922 (the incorporation of new territories after the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 and the arrival of refugees after the Asia Minor Catastrophe) created the impression of an overpopulated country, as domestic resources were not enough to cover the needs of the whole population. This difficult situation was further exacerbated due to “increasing urbanization”, closely associated with both “unemployment in the cities” and “the decline of agrarian production in the countryside, despite agrarian reforms”. Ibid.: 208, 209 and 211–212.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 17, 207, 217, 225 and 264; Turda 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Trubeta 2013: 16, 145, 204, 208, 217 and 252.

population discourse” was adopted “by Greek scholars and politicians”, due to the fear of degeneration.<sup>1</sup> It was against the mood of the time that the quality of the population was prioritised over quantity.<sup>2</sup>

More specifically, it was circulated among those reflecting on the population issue that, on the one hand, the Greek population, in spite of its annual rise, would decrease in the long run;<sup>3</sup> and on the other, it “would inevitably degenerate” because of insufficient resources and “the higher birth rate among the poorest classes”.<sup>4</sup> In light of these assertions, instead of improving the conditions responsible for the inequality, eugenicists proposed the reduction in the number of needy individuals

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Robert Malthus was among the first ones to address in the 18th century the issue of incongruity between the increase in the number of births and decrease in the available resources (*An essay on the principle of population*, 1798). On the contrary, in the 20th century, concerns were expressed about the fall in the birth ratio. As such, the population discourse was indicative of the anxiety about degeneration and of the ambition to achieve a balance between quality and quantity by birth control. On this basis the “emphasis on pro-natalism” was reasonable. See Kallis 2007: 397; Malthus 1798; Mazower 1998: 78; Trubeta 2013: 211; Weindling 1989: 325.

<sup>2</sup> Trubeta 2013: 212 and 223. For example, Moisis Moisisidis, considering the evidence indicating the degeneration of Greek ‘phyli’, gave top priority to the quality of births and regarded birth control as a means of arresting degeneration. As a result, the fittest members of society would increase in number, and the ideal of crafting a healthier nation would seem achievable. For his part, Apostolos Doxiadis, fearing the degeneration of the ‘phyli’, because of increased birth rates among lower classes and a decline in birth rate in upper classes, and caring for both the quantity and quality of population, was in favour of controlling human reproduction and enacting state biological policies in relation to marriage and family. Gregorios Hatzivasiliou, having identified the reasons for the decline of the ‘phyli’, argued for both quality and quantity in relation to births. In light of these views, it is not difficult to assume that “the vision of the betterment, the perfection of the community”, and the use of the notion of ‘phyli’, which was central to Greek eugenic discourse, conveyed a sense of communality and generated consensus, were common among those treating issues relating to population in terms of ‘bio-power’. See *Ibid.*: 212–214, 217–222, 228, 280–281 and 284–285; Doxiadis 1928a: 95–99; Doxiadis 1928b: 49–51; Doxiadis 1930a: 1; Doxiadis 1930b: 1; Doxiadis 1933: 45–47; Hatzivasiliou 1925: 257–266; Moisisidis 1932: 26.

<sup>3</sup> Trubeta 2013: 212.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

“by restricting their biological existence”.<sup>1</sup> In other words, their intention was to “manage inequality through birth control and eugenic selection”, and therefore the “revision of the institutional framework for the family and marriage” was necessary.<sup>2</sup> Within this context, ‘eugenics’ was presented as a ‘population policy’ suggesting the effort to “control human population” in relation to “population parameters as total size, the maintenance of demographic stability, and birth and morality rates” on the one hand, and enacting “legislation” or devising “other official means” on the other.<sup>3</sup> Raising public awareness through the popularisation of the eugenic principles was of equal importance, and as such, lectures delivered by experts “in non-medical circles” and articles in newspapers and journals were the main means used for “enlightenment campaigns” vis-à-vis reproduction and ‘social diseases’.<sup>4</sup> The ultimate goal was “the transformation of external obligations into internalised values”.<sup>5</sup>

However, at the heart of these eugenic projects lay the debate on the possible negative eugenic measures, such as “premarital medical examinations” and “sterilisation of the potential carriers of social disease”.<sup>6</sup> The point causing

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<sup>1</sup> Trubeta 2013: 17, 210 and 212. Viewing decline in the biological stock of certain social strata as necessary to avoid degeneration points to the conclusions that the “social question is interpreted in terms of the biological reproduction of the population”, and individuals are assessed on the grounds of their biological quality. Ibid: 210.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 16, 207, 210 and 212–213.

<sup>3</sup> Allen and Turda 2015: 218. The population, of course, is treated as “a discrete biological entity, the body of the society” and “a unity closely affiliated to projects of modernisation”. See Trubeta 2013: 207 and 285.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 230 and 233.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 231.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 17 and 232–233. The reference to the views expressed is not comprehensive. For an all-embracing account of this public dispute about negative eugenics and the attempts to introduce

considerable disagreement was mainly the nature of the policies, i.e., whether they would be voluntary or compulsory.<sup>1</sup> For example, Ioannis Koumaris preferred the voluntary examination of prospective bridegrooms, whereas Michael Yianniris, Moisis Moisisidis, Apostolos Doxiadis, and Nikolaos Drakoulidis were in favour of making it obligatory.<sup>2</sup> As for sterilisation, Simonidis Vlavianos and Moisis Moisisidis, with a view to dealing with degeneration, supported voluntary sterilisation with permission from either the individuals or their relatives;<sup>3</sup> while Konstantinos Moutousis, having the betterment of the human stock in mind, was a proponent of mandatory sterilisation of those of bad biological quality.<sup>4</sup> Stavros Zurukzoglou deserves special attention, since at first he advocated for ‘consensual sterilisation’;<sup>5</sup> whereas, after 1930, he favoured compulsory sterilisation of those who would probably give birth to children of lower quality.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, George Ap. Katopodis objected to sterilisation on the grounds that this measure would not be feasible in Greece.<sup>7</sup> ‘Degenerate individuals’ were the point of contention vis-à-vis their sterilisation and marriage in the sense that some eugenicists, like Stavros

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legislation on marriage and procreation on a large scale with the aim of promoting national welfare, see Trubeta 2013: 233–239 and 239–246.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.: 235.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 184–185, 222, 233, 234 and 260; Doxiadis 1931: 3; Drakoulidis 1932b: 3–4; Koumaris 1931: 1; Moisisidis 1930: 17–19; Trubeta 2007: 132–133.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 134–135; Moisisidis 1934: 19 and 67–68; Trubeta 2013: 234 and 235; Vlavianos 1933: 4.

<sup>4</sup> Moutousis 1933: 867 and 872–873; Trubeta 2007: 133; Trubeta 2013: 235–236.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 248; Trubeta 2007: 132; Zurukzoglou 1925d: 266.

<sup>6</sup> Trubeta 2013: 255. This shift in his perspective may be associated with the passing of the Nazi Sterilisation Law (The Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases). Generally, it was due to this law that the debate on “eugenics in Greece intensified”. See Ibid.: 236 and 255; Allen and Turda 2015: 220; Childs 2001: 11; Kallis 2007: 389; Trubeta 2007: 134; Turda 2017: 6.

<sup>7</sup> Katopodis 1934: 1; Trubeta 2007: 134; Trubeta 2013: 237. Apart from any practical difficulties, public opposition should be regarded as the main deterrent to imposing such a radical measure.

Zurukzoglu, claimed that they should be allowed to marry but should voluntarily abstain from procreation;<sup>1</sup> while others, like Simonidis Vlavianos, believed that marriages between such individuals should be banned.<sup>2</sup> Yet George Vlavianos was convinced that a marriage ban was not an adequate measure for controlling reproduction, since, in this way, procreation outside marriage would be encouraged.<sup>3</sup> In his opinion, forbidding marriages by law should be combined with sterilisation of criminals and those suffering from mental diseases.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Moisis Moisisidis held that spouses should be selected according to eugenic criteria so that the best possible conditions for childbearing are created.<sup>5</sup> Generally, the moderates were against enforcing a ban on marriage and believed that the “medically pertinent” should be persuaded through discussion not to marry and have children;<sup>6</sup> while others were of the opinion that a combination of “consultation and voluntarism” on the one hand, and state action and intervention on the other was necessary.<sup>7</sup>

To conclude, in this subsection, firstly, I referred to those who reflected on the issue of ‘selective’ or ‘better breeding’, namely ‘eugenics’, in the late 19th and early 20th century; secondly, I explored the circumstances under which eugenics emerged and became an international movement; and thirdly, I focused specifically on the Greek case. These details are not irrelevant to the aims of the next subsection, where

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<sup>1</sup> Trubeta 2007: 132; Zurukzoglu 1925: 266d.

<sup>2</sup> Trubeta 2013: 234 and 236–237; Vlavianos 1933: 4.

<sup>3</sup> Trubeta 2013: 238; Vlavianos 1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; Trubeta 2013: 238.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 235; Moisisidis 1933: 20–28. For Drakoulidis, health propaganda could be achieved through lectures, popularised pamphlets, sermons, and films. See Drakoulidis 1932d: 4.

<sup>6</sup> Trubeta 2013: 234.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

I attempt to detect the presence of eugenic beliefs and practices in the novels discussed. Particularly, I hope to show that the importance of eugenics for regeneration is highlighted in *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού* and *Άποικοι*; whereas in both *Γερέζ και αδύναμες γενεές* and *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, intermarriage is tested as another way of overcoming degeneration. Yet the question remains why such a remedy fails.

### 1.2.2 Family and eugenics

With the vision for a regenerated, healthier, and more efficient society in mind, Xenopoulos tends to make eugenics an important part of his work. ‘Degeneration’ naturally paves the way for thoughts of ‘eugenics’, and the expectation for better progeny underlies the decision to get married and have children. This is a crucial issue broached by the writers of the interwar period, and Xenopoulos follows the practice of his contemporaries when he chooses to both entertain and act as a moral guide in his fiction, which he also does in *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*.

Against the backdrop of Phoivos and Meropi’s degeneracy, it is interesting to note the reactions of the former’s relatives (his cousins and his father) to their decision to get married. On hearing the news, Foula is taken aback and feels sad, but she does not reveal to him the real reason for her anxiety and fear.<sup>1</sup> Yiannis expresses himself more openly: he thinks that only Meropi could love Phoivos, since they both have the same silhouette and suffer from neuropathy.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Kostas Vramis worries a lot about his son’s decision and refuses to give him his full

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 88.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 89–90. At a later time, Phoivos will realise that they both have sensitive nerves, and they are ill and degenerate. It is because of these commonalities that Meropi and Phoivos are suitable for each other. After arriving at this conclusion, he can explain his cousins’ reactions. Ibid.: 97.

consent, as he strongly believes that a great misfortune will strike Phoivos, should he not reconsider.<sup>1</sup> To Kostas Vramis' mind, children are a blessing for couples, and yet, in their case, having children is bound to be a source of sorrow.<sup>2</sup> Such fear is by no means ungrounded, as the father had consulted a doctor who had warned him that Phoivos' children would be mentally ill.<sup>3</sup>

The emphasis on the characters' mental constitution clearly came from 'negative eugenics', which, as mentioned in Mark Mazower's *Dark continent*, "were obsessed by the idea of social degeneration" and "were especially preoccupied by the threat posed by the mentally ill".<sup>4</sup> Alexis Carrel on his part noted that "organic and mental constitution" was the main reason for "man's misfortune".<sup>5</sup> For this reason, those suffering from "insanity should not marry", since no one "has the right" to make "another human being" unhappy.<sup>6</sup> Doctor Nikolaos Drakoulidis and the head of the psychiatric hospital "Dromokaïtio" Michael Yianniris were of the same opinion and regarded insanity as a deterrent for intending spouses. Thus, they claimed, a

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 92–93.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 93.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 94. By the same token, the doctor in the short novel "Η επιστήμη της ευτυχίας" by Athanasios Michas advocates the ban on marriage for those with contagious diseases and the mentally ill. This is exactly the case of the protagonists: the man suffers from severe neuropathy, while the woman is hysterical. For this reason, they should not have got married. The doctor restates his belief when he is informed that this neuropathic man, after his wife's death, thinks of marrying his hysterical sister-in-law. Thus, once again, he strongly advises his patient to end his relationship with Yohana and forewarns him that he might be committed to a neurological clinic. See Michas n.d.: 68, 77 and 78.

<sup>4</sup> Mazower 1998: 97.

<sup>5</sup> Carrel 1935: 300.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 300–301.

premarital health examination and health certificate must be obligatory so that any misfortune is avoided.<sup>1</sup>

However, Phoivos decides to find out for himself whether this prediction will come true or whether it is mere fear on the doctor's part. The account of the visit to the doctor and the ensuing medical advice is fraught with 'bio-medicine' and says a lot about that bee in the bonnet, eugenics.<sup>2</sup> If Phoivos decides to get married and have children, he will either prove to be infertile or his children will be completely degenerate, with degeneracy being the stronger possibility if Phoivos chooses Meropi as his partner. The reason for this is that Meropi, as woman living in a large town and from the upper class, seems to have some kind of predisposition. By contrast, women from either the lower classes, the countryside, or less refined races have a better and stronger constitution and are regarded as more 'suitable' partners in eugenic terms.<sup>3</sup>

Such ideas reflect the views about "the fate of the body in the city".<sup>4</sup> Indeed, cities were considered to be "initiators of the chain of degeneracy" and "centres of decay", and "bodily degeneration" was associated with "social and urban crisis".<sup>5</sup> Here one is reminded of Nordau's perceptions of "fin-de-race" in the context of "the rich inhabitants of great cities and the leading classes".<sup>6</sup> More particularly, the weak nature of urban dwellers is explained by the fact that they are "continually exposed

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<sup>1</sup> Drakoulidis 1932b: 3–4.

<sup>2</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 95.

<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Phoivos' cousin suggests that Phoivos should get married to a woman coming from a strong and robust family, such as a countrywoman. *Ibid.*: 138–139.

<sup>4</sup> Pick 1989: 189–203.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 189 and 191; Hurley 2004: 72.

<sup>6</sup> Nordau 1895: 2.



to unfavorable influences which diminish their vital powers”.<sup>1</sup> This strong association between ‘city’ and ‘body’ points to “a vicious circle of causes and effects: a poisonous society (locus of both environmental and moral contaminants) infects the individual, the individual passes the infection to its offspring, and the degenerate offspring reinfects society”.<sup>2</sup> Under this aspect, degeneration came to be “a tool for measuring” not only “the health of the individual”, as already stated, but also “the moral health of society”.<sup>3</sup> The idea of large cities as “centres of decay” was also expressed by Alexis Carrel in his *Man, the unknown*.<sup>4</sup>

Meropi and Phoivos are poised to make a crucial decision: are they going to get married without having children or are they going to defy medical science?<sup>5</sup> Meropi gets pregnant and gives birth to a boy, whose head seems a little, but not evidently, unusual in its shape.<sup>6</sup> Since he represents the third generation of the Vramis family, the choice of his name becomes paramount in the sense that it should somehow hint at the family genius. Eventually, their son is given the name Apollonios, which means that both father (Phoivos) and son (Apollonios) are somehow similarly named as both names point to the god of light and sun, i.e., Phoivos Apollonas. Yet Phoivos Vramis, being what he was, had obviously not fulfilled his father’s high

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<sup>1</sup> Nordau 1895: 35.

<sup>2</sup> Hurley 2004: 69.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 71.

<sup>4</sup> Carrel 1935:158.

<sup>5</sup> The argument that having children in a marriage is not mandatory, and someone suffering from an illness can get married without having children cannot be accepted. In other words, if someone is aware of his condition and gets married, he will not hesitate to have children. See Drakoulidis 1932d: 3–4.

<sup>6</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 226–228.

expectations. Similarly, Apollonios Vramis will not ‘shine’ and will follow in his father’s footsteps.<sup>1</sup>

Soon the boy exhibits the first alarming symptoms, causing his mother’s concern and the dismay of the whole family no less than that of those outside it.<sup>2</sup> The medical report on the physical and mental state of the baby is once more eugenic-oriented;<sup>3</sup> firstly, it emphasises the irreversible condition of the child, and secondly, it reminds Meropi and the readers of the fears expressed by Phoivos’ father, as well as of the neurologist’s eugenic advice. The examination brings to light the boy’s degenerate nature and the kind of ‘stigmata’ Nordau recognises in degenerate individuals.<sup>4</sup> The baby’s constitution is also indicated by the fact that when Phoivos is about to see his boy for the first time, Meropi tries hard to present Apollonios as a human (“ανθρωπέψει”).<sup>5</sup>

After initially doubting scientific opinion, Meropi ends up having more faith in science than in God.<sup>6</sup> She reaches the conclusion that their ‘union’ was unsuccessful because she did not manage to revitalise Vramis’ ‘pedigree’, and bore a child who inherited his father’s degenerate nature, i.e., the defective neural system and mind.<sup>7</sup> Thus, since father (“μεγάλος τρελός”) and son (“μικρός ηλίθιος”) are fated to live

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<sup>1</sup> One could argue that their arrogant attitude compounded by lack of knowledge results in ‘punishment’ with the birth of a degenerate child, thus confirming the Ancient Greek tragic sequence of *hybris* (ὑβρις) → *atē* (ἄτη) → *nemesis* (νέμεσις) → *tisis* (τίσις). For their arrogance, see Xenopoulos 1994: 101–103, 156–157 and 164.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 229–231 and 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 231.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 232.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 245.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 231.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 233.

and die in an asylum, it seems that extinction inevitably awaits the Vramides.<sup>1</sup> And, since both Phoivos and Apollonios prove to be ‘unfit for living’, it may be assumed that the author is directly referring to the Darwinian and Spencerian concepts of the ‘struggle for existence’, ‘natural selection’, and ‘survival of the fittest.’<sup>2</sup>

The epilogue of the novel confirms that Xenopoulos, by following his usual method, wrote a novel with the intention of drawing a moral. More pointedly, his novel was designed as a didactic story bringing up the need for society’s physical and moral regeneration. It seems that “το πνεύμα της εποχής” (Zeitgeist) implies the moral decline of the era.<sup>3</sup> This argument is reinforced by the moral message of the novel, which draws on eugenics and suggests selection of a partner based exclusively on the state of their health.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the ‘ideal eugenic marriage’ was that between physically and mentally fit parents and the birth of “worthy children”.<sup>5</sup> With this in mind, N. N. Drakoulidis, for example, recognised the importance of the institution of marriage and focused on the essential prerequisite

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 235, 247 and 272.

<sup>2</sup> Apart from his studies at the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences at the University of Athens, his “Αθηναϊκά Επιστολαί” (“Athenian Letters”) in the Greek journal *Η Διάπλασις των Παιδών* (*I Diaplasis ton Paidon*) also serve as proof of his familiarisation with the English naturalist Charles Darwin, since, in some of his “Letters”, he mentions him and refers to his ideas. See Xenopoulos 1923a: 124; Xenopoulos 1923c: 116; Xenopoulos 1925: 292.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 274.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 275. *Το σταυροδρόμι* and *Αργώ* also include clear eugenic implications. In Petsalis’ novel, Aspasia Psellou, Alekos Parnis’ wife, is characterised as healthy in mind and body. In Theotokas’, Nikiphoros Notaras becomes acquainted with a woman in a dance club. After having sexual intercourse with her, he is curious about her identity: he wants to know whether she is bourgeois, a prostitute, an artist, or a duchess with royal blood running through her veins. Yet he concludes that her identity would only be a matter of concern if he chose to marry and have children with her. See Petsalis 1934: 115; Theotokas 1936a: 414.

<sup>5</sup> Hague 1914: xix and xxi.

for its solid foundation, i.e., partners' health.<sup>1</sup> He believed that marriage aims at the happy cohabitation of the couple, and family health promotes social health. For these reasons, he stressed that marriage must be prevented and forbidden in some cases, such as tuberculosis, syphilis, drug addiction, alcoholism, insanity, and leprosy. Moisis Moisisidis, who was on the same wavelength, claimed that selection of a partner must be based on eugenic criteria.<sup>2</sup>

This kind of eugenics is to be adopted not just only by individuals, such as Phoivos and Meropi, but also by humanity as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Everything points to the conclusion that “the night of degeneration”, i.e., biological and moral decline, can only be avoided through eugenic reproduction, which will keep humanity alive, while also contributing to its progress.<sup>4</sup> This link between the fate of an individual and humanity is underlined by Mark Mazower in the chapter “Healthy Bodies, Sick Bodies” of his book *Dark continent: Europe's twentieth century* (1998), since he mentions that, during the interwar period, “domestic health and happiness were no

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<sup>1</sup> Drakoulidis 1932a: 3–4.

<sup>2</sup> Moisisidis 1933: 20–28; Trubeta 2013: 233.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 275.

<sup>4</sup> This urgent request for the wellness and happiness of humanity to be achieved through marriage of partners who are physically and mentally healthy is also set forth in the short novel “Η επιστήμη της ευτυχίας”. The doctor of this fictional work, at the same time member of Parliament, is going to propose legislation to ban marriage for those with infectious diseases and for the mentally ill. More specifically, he advocates prospective bridegrooms be subjected to premarital health examinations carried out by psychiatrists, pathologists, and aphrodisiologists so that a health certificate is issued. At the core of his eugenic thinking stands his fear for humanity's degeneration and people's misery, and, against this backdrop, state intervention into human procreation is regarded as crucial. Still, his bill does not pass. Let it be noted that in 1925 Konstantinos Alavanos, “a deputy and physician”, was in favour of state intervention and prenuptial health certificates. His proposals, however, were rejected. The similarities between fiction and reality are striking. See Michas n.d.: 68–69; Trubeta 2013: 241.

longer merely a matter for individual choice and satisfaction” and “were part of a much broader European discourse about national and family health”.<sup>1</sup> For his part, Drakoulidis held the opinion that the birth of mentally ill children and passing on mental illnesses do not contribute to the improvement of humankind, since they go against the laws of eugenics.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of eugenics, steadily associated with degeneration and regeneration, also appears in Pavlos Floros’ novel *Άποικοί*. As already shown in the subsection “Family and degeneration”, having identified the symptoms of his nation’s degeneration and espousing the eugenics-based ideal of psychological/mental and morphological/ bodily health, Dimitris Valeris decides to establish the “Association of Nobility” (“Ίδρυμα της Αρχοντιάς”) with the intention of boosting the nobility’s biological and psychological health.<sup>3</sup> For this purpose, he not only spends money and tries to apply scientific knowledge but also invites the eugenicist Dr Peters to organise his institution. On his part, the eugenicist embraces Plato’s view on the issue of population biological decline according to which “a wise man is obliged to eliminate the ‘bad stock’”.<sup>4</sup>

Discussing their father’s dreams and actions, Meropi and Dionysis state that: “Ο μπαμπάς βάλθηκε να στηρίξει στον τόπο μας τον ηρωισμό. Και χτίζει ένα Ίδρυμα για ν’ αναθρέψει ήρωες”.<sup>5</sup> As already said, in Foucault’s socio-biological thinking, it

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<sup>1</sup> Mazower 1998: 77 and 78.

<sup>2</sup> Drakoulidis 1932c: 3–4.

<sup>3</sup> Floros 1934: 122–123. Dimitris Valeris’ faith in mental and bodily health will be definitively proved when he takes a crucial decision regarding his personal life.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 172.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 149.

is “a single race” that “is divided into a super-race and a sub-race”.<sup>1</sup> If this is the case, it may be assumed that the words ‘nobility’ and ‘heroes’ imply the fit members of society (the healthy, and those suitable for reproduction) that will contribute to the nation’s regeneration. The text might also include hints -at a deeper level- of the idea that “distinguished men appear more frequently in distinguished families than in others”.<sup>2</sup> Alexis Carrel distinguishes the children of “superior” families from those of “inferior” ones: “Children born in families of superior people are more likely to be of a superior type than those born in an inferior family”.<sup>3</sup> Galton on his part believed that firstly, “it seems to be the tendency of high civilisation to check fertility in the upper classes”, and secondly, “the latter class are apparently analogous to those which bar the fertility”.<sup>4</sup>

As for the organisational document of Valeris’ Association, it reveals the institution’s intentions and aims.<sup>5</sup> Here, it is worth noting the marriage between positive and negative eugenics: on the one hand, the establishment of advisory offices consulting couples, the protection of strong members of society, the encouragement of procreation among the healthy, and upbringing the ‘fit’ for the common good are typical examples of positive eugenics.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, restriction of procreation through contraceptive measures and exclusion of the

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault 2003: 60–61; Trubeta 2013: 281.

<sup>2</sup> Carrel 1935: 297.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 253.

<sup>4</sup> Galton 1904: 3.

<sup>5</sup> Floros 1934: 173, 175, 214 and 278.

<sup>6</sup> The establishment of advisory offices is generally numbered among the necessary measures so that the general improvement of the nation in terms of hygiene and health can be achieved; intending spouses will be examined for free and will be consulted on marriage and procreation. See Drakoulidis 1932c: 3–4; Drakoulidis 1932d: 3–4; Koumaris 1931: 1; Trubeta 2013: 185 and 239–246.

‘unfit’ from guardianship may be seen as characteristic cases of negative eugenics, while explicit preference for the whitest individuals is calculated to prevent miscegenation.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of ‘selective breeding’ lies behind this extreme and harsh measure, i.e., the control over reproduction. Against this backdrop, mentioning the two arguments Dimitris Valeris puts forward to support the necessity of the measure is of great importance and confirms the antithesis between ‘health’ and ‘illness’ as one commonly used in the interwar period. Firstly, birds kill the weak and unhealthy members of the flock that lag behind, and secondly, doctors are hard on unhealthy individuals condemned to death.<sup>2</sup>

At this juncture, one should bear in mind that regeneration of either a nation or a race through selective breeding came to be at the core of eugenics. For Galton, ‘eugenics’ was “the science dealing with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race” and “with those that develop them to the utmost advantage”.<sup>3</sup> He believed that the “most merciful form of eugenics” was the one “watching for the indications of superior strains or races, and favouring them [so] that their progeny shall outnumber and gradually replace that of the old one”.<sup>4</sup> Alexis Carrel on his part, holding the opinion that “the disastrous predominance of the weak” can be

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<sup>1</sup> As already emphasised, imperialism facilitated the formation of the idea of ‘white superiority’ and the emergence of the discourses of ‘exclusion’/‘segregation’ and ‘integration’, both suggesting the “medicalisation of the notion of ‘race’” and the efforts to improve the quality of the nation’s health. As for the reactions against Dimitris Valeris’ “*Ἰδρυμα της Αργοντιάς*” (“Association of Nobility”), to which the failure of his project is mainly owed, see Floros 1934: 236 and 348–349. To some extent, these reactions may point to the unsuccessful attempts to introduce legislation on marriage and procreation on a large scale in Greece. See Trubeta 2013: 239–246.

<sup>2</sup> Floros 1934: 250.

<sup>3</sup> Galton 1904: 1; Galton 1909: 35.

<sup>4</sup> Galton 1883: 307.

dealt through the growth of “the strong”, supported the adoption and practical application of eugenics.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from his intention to improve his nation/his race (‘phyli’), Dimitris Valeris, the representative example of a happily-married man –his wife is beautiful, modest, and likeable, while his children are tall, healthy, majestic, and well-bred– aspires to perfect his family pedigree;<sup>2</sup> yet, like the project of “Ίδρυμα της Αρχοντιάς”, this plan fails too. On the one hand, his son Dionysis dies and as a result, his physical extinction does not leave any hope for the perfection of his pedigree.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Dimitris Valeris, having faith in the mental and bodily health, decides not to have children with Myrto, since his face is deformed, and the criterion of morphological health is not satisfied.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, without a doubt, eugenic beliefs and practices are woven into the fabric of the narrative.

With regard to the question of intermarriage, asking whether it is successful or not in tackling degeneration, the similarity between *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη* and *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* is striking.<sup>5</sup> Taking stock of the trilogy’s title (*Γερές και αδύναμες γενεές*) and plot, it is possible to suppose that Petsalis wished to

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<sup>1</sup> Carrel 1935: 296 and 299.

<sup>2</sup> Floros 1934: 9. As for the grounds on which the close relation between the idea of perfecting his family pedigree and that of improving his race (‘phyli’) is established, see the subsection “Family and degeneration”, see this treatise, p. 48–49.

<sup>3</sup> Floros 1934: 236.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 303, 318–320 and 346.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Intermarriage’ is defined as the “marriage between different strains”, i.e., “people who are from different social groups, races, or religions, or who are from the same family”. Within the present subsection, ‘intermarriage’ refers to the marriage between people from different social classes. See Cambridge Dictionary; Gates 1920: 10.



present us with an example of biological and social decline.<sup>1</sup> As Dimitra Pikramenou-Varfi notes, by intertwining biological and social data, “he may have intended to illustrate a very specific scientific conclusion, namely that biological decline is inevitable in the case of a closed social group, which resorts to intermarriage in order to survive and achieve regeneration”.<sup>2</sup> Aiming to both portray biological and social decline and emphasise the extreme necessity for intermarriage, Petsalis focused on “a typically degenerate family and described its union with another family, which is inferior in terms of social class but is physically and mentally healthy”.<sup>3</sup> His main concern seems to be “how intermarriage plays out and its impact on the biological characteristics of the offspring”.<sup>4</sup>

The first part of Petsalis’ trilogy (*Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*) is, as Kostas Papageorgiou mentions, “an introduction to *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*, and here the social and biological preconditions for the fortunes of the Parnis family are established”.<sup>5</sup> The narrative begins with the presentation of the two families, Parnis and Koukas. The first is an Athenian noble, upper-middle-class family, whereas the second is a more “plebeian” one. The Parnides enjoy high social status and power in society, while the Koukides belong to the newly enriched bourgeoisie. Stylianos

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<sup>1</sup> Panagiotopoulos 1980d: 110. The same goes for Thomas Mann’s *Buddenbrooks*, a source of inspiration for Petsalis, in which “the decline of the family” is represented “as a biologically conditioned process”. The “biological extinction of the family” is stressed by John Galsworthy and Roger Martin du Gard as well. Under this aspect, regardless of the fact that these family novels belong to different literary traditions (Greek, German, English, and French), the way the families decay is just the same. See Hönnighausen 1990: 36; Ridley 1987: 35; Ru 1992: 7, 28 and 152.

<sup>2</sup> Pikramenou-Varfi 1986: 105.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Papageorgiou 1993: 160.

Koukas, the son of the caretaker of Parnis' house and Maria's father, manages to get rich from trading, to climb the social ladder, and gain reputation in his circle.

As for the meaning of Maria Parni's 'destination', on the one hand, it consists of the experience of absolute and true love, leading to marriage and the birth of her child;<sup>1</sup> on the other, it is connected to and sheds light on the issue of intermarriage: Maria Parni, an unassuming girl and the daughter of Stylianos Koukas, a newly rich bourgeois, is "the missing link" between the weak and declining aristocracy, and the robust, full of energy and vitality, newly rich bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup> Maria's physical and mental state, as well as her healthy and 'revitalising' blood, contribute to the biological strengthening and revitalisation of her husband's family.<sup>3</sup> The offer of Maria's healthy blood to the withered organism of the Parnis family brings to mind the "ancient medical superstition" that the "young blood", due to its "virtue and power, imparts youth to an old and worn-out body".<sup>4</sup> Besides, it can be seen, in Aimilios Chourmouzos' view, "as a symbolic representation of solidarity and deep bonds between the lower and upper classes".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A bond between the families was developed for the first time when Paschalis Koukas, Stylianos' father, asked his son to honour and respect all members of the Parnis family and establish a relationship with them. The son, even though he achieves his economic and social rise, does not forget his father's advice, and asks Alexandros Parnis to marry him and Foteini Ponemenou, and to christen their second daughter, Maria. Thereafter, the Koukides always visit the Parnides once a year so that the bond cannot fade away.

<sup>2</sup> Papageorgiou 1993: 160.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1933: 226; Petsalis 1934: 19.

<sup>4</sup> Carrel 1935: 182.

<sup>5</sup> Chourmouzos 1979e: 139. In respect to the advantageous outcomes of this intermarriage, *ibid.*: 139–140. Stavros Zurukzoglou was an advocate of marriages between individuals from different social classes because the regeneration of the Greek 'phyli' was at the forefront of his mind. See Trubeta 2013: 252–253; Zurukzoglou 1925a: 169.

After the wedding, Maria's love and care is lavished on her son, Alekos Parnis, who is the 'new blood' and represents the natural continuation of the Parnis family. In Maria's opinion, Alekos owes his pride to his paternal line, which is noble and old, while his strength is drawn from his maternal lineage, which is plebeian, healthy, and abundant.<sup>1</sup> Eventually, through intermarriage, neither the noble Parnides nor the newly rich Koukides stand to lose something: Maria gives her blood, vitality, and health and gains, in return, a heavy, in social terms, family name.

Yet this intermarriage fails: Maria's healthy blood streams into the weakened Parnis family to no avail –a failure mostly illustrated by the life and qualities of Petros Parnis, the member of the fourth generation.<sup>2</sup> On a symbolic level, one could contend that the issue in *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη* is the attempt of the upper middle class to survive, while in *Ο απόγονος*, these efforts turn out to be vain, and the family degenerates and declines due to the traits of the descendant. Thus, as already observed, the trilogy may be read as the story of the decline of the Parnis family and an allegory of the waning fortunes of the upper middle classes.

In the case of *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, once again, the aforementioned concept of 'blood', aside from its link to the notions of 'degeneracy' and 'sickness', is also associated with the issue of 'intermarriage'. Menelaos Skliros' marriage to Foteini Sklirou constitutes a typical case of marriage between people from different social classes: Menelaos Skliros comes from the upper social class, while Foteini Sklirou

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1933: 226. For more details on the fact that Alekos' personal qualities are owed to his mixed blood, *ibid.*: 225.

<sup>2</sup> The case of degenerate Petros Parnis will be examined further in the subsection "Family, biological determinism, and characterisation".

is of humbler origins. The ulterior purpose of this marriage is the ‘revitalisation’ of the Skliros ‘bad’ and ‘thin’ bloodline. Essentially, by means of this ‘transfusion’, Foteini, like Maria Parni, makes an effort to save the Skliros family from decline and extinction, and in return, gains a ‘good’, in social terms, name and achieves upward social mobility.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the attempt proves unsuccessful once again, as the ‘union’ with her degenerate partner produces children who inherit their father’s degeneration. As a result, their dreadful and tragic fate is, as already pointed out, decline and extinction, since the offspring prove themselves unfit for living in their ‘struggle for existence’.<sup>2</sup> The failure of their mother’s attempt is foreshadowed from the very beginning of the narrative.<sup>3</sup>

To sum up, in this subsection, I focused on the remedies suggested (eugenics) and followed (intermarriage) with a view to dealing with degeneration. The important role of eugenics in dealing with this danger is stressed through the counterexample of Phoivos Vramis and Meropi Karamali (*Η νόχτα του εκφυλισμού*), who, despite their degeneracy, get married and have a severely mentally disabled child; and through the example of Dimitris Valeris (*Άποικοί*), who, advocating the mental and bodily health vis-à-vis childbearing, abandons his original plan to improve his family pedigree and decides not to have children with the woman he loves, since his face is deformed after an accident. As such, the eugenic message both Xenopoulos and Floros convey is that of ‘selective breeding’ resulting in the birth of healthy offspring; and it is against this backdrop that *Η νόχτα του*

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 24.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer 1864: 445.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 25.

*εκφυλισμού* is regarded as a didactic story, whereas *Άποικοι* is characterised as a ‘roman à thèse’.

Apart from the aspirations concerning the future of the Valeris family, Dimitris Valeris conceives and funds another project as well, aiming at the advancement of the larger family he belongs to, his nation/his ‘phyli’. Generally, it was the ‘nation’, “the simplest form of communality producing consensus”, that lay at the heart of the eugenic rhetoric since eugenicists primarily aimed at the welfare of society on a national level.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in the Greek case, it was the notion of the ‘phyli’, that stood at the core of the Greek eugenic discourse, as the views of those reflecting on the issue of the quantity and quality of the Greek population show.<sup>2</sup> As this is the case, Dimitris’ plan of action points directly to the mood of the time, as the improvement of the biological quality of his nation/his ‘phyli’ is central to his thoughts.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, in *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*, the ultimate goal of the proposed ‘social engineering’ project is the “betterment of society and humanity”, since on the one hand the author, by relating the story of Phoivos and Meropi, stresses the issue and the need for regeneration of society as a whole; and on the other, he seems sure that the eugenic advice on ‘selective mating’ and ‘selective breeding’ will be followed not only by individuals but also by humanity as a whole.

Thus, both in *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού* and in *Άποικοι*, it seems that the common good, –either that of the nation/‘phyli’ or of both society and humanity– lies at the

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<sup>1</sup> Trubeta 2013: 280.

<sup>2</sup> See this treatise, n. 2, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Trubeta 2013: 212.

centre of the authors' concern.<sup>1</sup> This interest in society as a collective body and in the common good was, of course, kindled by the medicalisation of society from the 19th century onwards, smoothing in turn the path for eugenics. Within this context, the special focus on health and hygiene, the exclusion or elimination of those perceived as a threat to the welfare of the national community, and the emphasis given to pronatalism could seem justified. On the whole, all these point to the anxiety about degeneration and the ambition to achieve a balance between the quantity and quality of the population by regulating both individual and collective life.

From the evidence presented in this subsection, one may assume that family plays a decisive role in negotiating degeneration only if the best possible conditions for childbearing are created, i.e., if the eugenic criteria for a partner's selection (physical and mental health) are satisfied. Believing, as it seems, that familial health—through the birth of physically and mentally healthy offspring—promotes national, social and humanity's health, both Xenopoulos and Floros deploy the knowledge acquired in the fields of biology, anthropology, and medicine, and propose a better, healthier and more ethical society.<sup>2</sup> In other words, through their narratives, they tried to make it clear that if people cultivate moral behaviours in relation to reproduction, then biological, social, and moral regeneration will be brought about. In other words, the birth of healthy children will benefit society as a whole, since in

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<sup>1</sup> Allen 2015: 225, 230 and 231; Allen and Turda 2015: 219; Mazower 1998: 78; Trubeta 2013: 16, 203, 212 and 279; Weindling 1989: 325.

<sup>2</sup> Kokkinos and Karasarinis 2017: 142–143. The means through which Dimitris Valeris aspires to achieve the betterment of his 'phyli' is the marriage of 'fit' partners and the birth of worthy, in physical and mental terms, offspring. Petros Vlastos who reflected a lot on the issue of 'phyli' placed considerable emphasis on the issue of marriage.

this way each cell of society, each family, will contribute to the collective well-being. Against this backdrop, it could easily be inferred that these two works, which eugenics permeates, are, to a great extent, indicative of the debate on eugenics in interwar Greece. As such, literature, together with articles and lectures available at the time, facilitated the popularisation of such ideas. As a result, fiction could be considered part of the ‘enlightenment campaign’ and ‘health propaganda’, which both aimed to transform external obligations into internalised values.<sup>1</sup>

*Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* and *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* present a possible way of avoiding degeneration through intermarriage. Compared to their husbands, both Maria Parni and Foteini Sklirou come from lower social classes and try to save the Parnis and the Skliros family respectively. Yet, the ‘transfusion’ of their healthy blood yields nothing. This failure is illustrated by the qualities of the descendants, Petros Parnis on the one hand, and Andreas and Stefanos Skliros on the other. Once again, this could be attributed to Terzakis’ thoughts and Petsalis’ concerns about bourgeoisie. As already discussed in the subsection “Family and degeneration”, Terzakis’ article “Ελεύθερα Ιδανικά” fiercely criticises the foundations of bourgeois ideology (family included),<sup>2</sup> whereas in Petsalis’ trilogy, there is sufficient evidence to claim that the author expresses his anxiety “about a milieu and a social class of which he has intimate knowledge, about the environment from which he came”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Trubeta 2013: 231.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1932c: 232–233.

<sup>3</sup> Furst 2006: 157; Ru 1992: 8.

## 1.3 Biological determinism

### 1.3.1 Definition

The term ‘biological determinism’ –also known as either ‘biologism’ or ‘biodeterminism’– originates from the combination of the idea of ‘determinism’, conveying the sense of “fate or necessity”, and ‘heredity’, whose “traditional conceptualizations have focused on genes and the expression of genetic code transferred during reproduction”, i.e., on the characteristics transmitted from parent to offspring.<sup>1</sup> By “implying a rigid causation largely unaffected by environmental factors”, ‘biological determinism’ suggests that “most human characteristics, physical and mental, are determined at conception by hereditary factors passed from parent to offspring”.<sup>2</sup> In other words, ‘biological determinism’ “refers to the idea that all human behaviour is innate, determined by genes, brain size, or other biological attributes” and “stands in contrast to the notion that human behaviour is determined by culture or other social forces”.<sup>3</sup> It is this “de-emphasis of the influence of social circumstances [that] points to natural limits constraining individuals”.<sup>4</sup>

The notion of ‘biological determinism’ is highly relevant to the aims of this section as it establishes a filter for reading the novels under examination. More

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<sup>1</sup> Allen 2018; Berofsky 1966: 1; Boas 1938: 16; Edwards and Byrd 2008: 460.

<sup>2</sup> Allen 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Burke and Embrick 2008: 325. Obviously, it is about the ‘nature versus nurture’ debate surrounding the role of both nature and nurture in a human’s constitution. The former is “defined in terms of inheritance, biological background, and genetic makeup”, whereas the latter “in terms of experience and learning”. It follows that some traits are acquired by birth, while others after birth. Under this aspect, nativists maintained that human traits are determined by genetic makeup, whereas empiricists deployed the argument of the ‘tabula rasa’ or ‘blank slate’ and claimed that human traits are determined by experience. See Galton 1874: 12; Pennock 2005: 512; Runco 2008: 445.

<sup>4</sup> Melo-Martin 2003: 1185.



specifically, I will be asking whether the main characters of these novels are capable of free action and of behaving in ways of their own choosing. To put it differently, I will be exploring whether the influence exerted by their genes is stronger than their will, defeating any attempt on their part to counter the fate heredity reserves for them. The answer to this question undoubtedly depends on the author's outlook, which could be either pessimistic or optimistic in relation to the escape from heredity. If the author inclines to a positive answer, regeneration seems to be an open possibility. It is, however, the way in which biologically determined families go about overcoming biological determinism that attracts my interest.

### **1.3.2 Family, biological determinism, and characterisation**

Turning my attention first to Gregorios Xenopoulos' *Η νόχτα του εκφυλισμού*, I note that the mental characteristics of the two protagonists, Phoivos Vramis and Meropi Karamali, are solely determined by hereditary factors. Phoivos' neuropathy runs in the family: neuropathy, mania, and insanity affected several members of his family, both on his father's and his mother's side, and he himself is more or less certain that he is going to end up insane.<sup>1</sup> As for Meropi, neuropathy is hereditary and a result of her coming from a 'crazy family' ('παλαβοοικογένεια') too.<sup>2</sup> As a result, hereditary factors and determinism are so tightly interwoven that biological determinism comes to the forefront. Given their degenerate nature, in their case, the interest lies in the couple's decision to act freely and against their genetic make-up. In other words, Phoivos and Meropi, despite their doctor's advice against having children, decide on a course of their own.

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 100–101.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 138 and 139.

Once again, the inviolable law of heredity, defining the mental constitution of the descendants, undermines Meropi's expectations about the evolution of the Vramis family pedigree. The author strongly emphasises the degeneracy of the father (Phoivos Vramis), thus foreshadowing the quality of his son's (Apollonios Vramis) physical and mental makeup.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, due to the degenerate nature of both father and son, the Vramis family is confronted with the danger of extinction.<sup>2</sup> Only if Phoivos had chosen, as already stressed, his partner more carefully, would he have contributed to the survival of his generation and escaped his destiny.<sup>3</sup>

It should be underlined though that the characters' unsuccessful attempt to act against heredity does not derive from the author's pessimistic views on this issue. In fact, Xenopoulos, as shown, thinks in terms of eugenics and composes his novel to convey the important message of the careful selection of a partner and the birth of healthy offspring to Greek society. To put it differently, despite the pessimism and dramatic end of the book –both father and son are kept in a psychiatric ward because of their mental illness– Xenopoulos is by no means a fatalist and firmly believes that humanity will be able to deal with degeneration through applying eugenic methods to reproduction.<sup>4</sup>

Fluctuations of mood and changes of atmosphere are prominent in each of the books of Thanasis Petsalis-Diomidis' *Γερές και αδύναμες γενεές*.<sup>5</sup> More particularly, the optimism dominating the first part of the trilogy gradually fades in those that follow. In *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*, positive feelings are mainly triggered

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 100–101.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 146.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 95.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 274–275.

<sup>5</sup> For this issue, see also Pikramenou-Varfi 1986: 100–102.

by hopes for regeneration through intermarriage. In *To σταυροδρόμι*, initial hopes and a kind of optimism start to lose momentum as the author relates the failure of the first postwar (for the readers interwar) generation to realise its dreams and to achieve its goals.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in *O απόγονος*, the prevailing mood is pessimistic, as Petsalis depicts “the morbidity” of the second postwar (for the readers interwar) generation.<sup>2</sup> The oppressive atmosphere is also heightened by numerous indications of Maria Parni’s gradual decline and impending death. As seen in the subsection “Family and eugenics”, Maria’s healthy blood yields nothing, and Petros Parnis, the offspring of the fourth generation of the Parnis family, is a typical degenerate.

However, the last two pages of the third book leave the reader with a positive impression, due to the remarkable change in Petros Parnis’ attitude.<sup>3</sup> After his grandmother’s death, the dreamy, melancholic, and languorous young boy feels the wind of change: he casts off his bond with the past and decides to chart a new course and to be in tune with the pulse of life. Eventually, the winner in the battle between heredity and self-determination seems to be the latter, as Petros finally decides to go ahead and make a stand against the fate his genetic make-up seems to have in store for him. In this case, ‘regeneration’ is an open possibility, while the answer to the crisis of his era might be the discovery of a ‘new faith’. On these grounds, one may assume that, on the one hand, the grandmother’s death bears a particularly symbolic meaning in that it marks the end of an old order and the

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<sup>1</sup> Sachinis 1992: 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 28–29.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1935: 214–215.

possible dawn of a new era,<sup>1</sup> and on the other, “fatalism”, given Petros’ decision to “start afresh”, “plays a smaller role in the novel than the dominance of the theme of decline might suggest”.<sup>2</sup>

What I have called fluctuations of mood and changes of atmosphere across the entire trilogy calls for a closer look. Although not written during the interwar period, the second part of the author’s autobiography (*Διαφάνειες. Ο μεσοπόλεμος: ο δεύτερος τόμος της ζωής μου*, 1985) has much to say about his thoughts and feelings during those years.<sup>3</sup> In addition to an account of events, this part also refers to Petsalis’ personal fortunes at the time. More specifically, the change in the author’s disposition from optimism to pessimism testifies to the instability of those years; in other words, Petsalis’ positive emotional state at the beginning of the interwar period was succeeded by premonitions that “the society in which he was living was about to fall apart”.<sup>4</sup> The events unravelling in Greece and around the world left him with a feeling that “his society was declining as the world was going through a deep moral, intellectual, political, social, and economic crisis”.<sup>5</sup> Petsalis was becoming aware that “in Greece, as well as in Europe and across the world, weak governments and indifferent bourgeoisies were tolerant of extremist policies which generated frustration and despondency in a climate of decadence”;<sup>6</sup> and for him, this was

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<sup>1</sup> One should think that Petros, the member of the fourth generation, lives with his grandmother, the representative of the second. It is due to this gap of generation that one may feel that the antithesis between ‘old and new’ is embedded in that between ‘death and life’. See Ru 1992: 159–160.

<sup>2</sup> Ridley 1987: 36–37.

<sup>3</sup> To an extent, the same goes for his essays *Αποστάξεις: επτά δοκίμια*, first published in 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 242–243.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 250 and 254.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 261.

reason enough to worry not only about humanity in general but also about his own fate.<sup>1</sup>

Such views about the world and civilisation's decline first appeared in "Εισαγωγή στη διαθήκη ενός κόσμου που πεθαίνει" ("Introduction to the testament of a dying world"), which belongs to Petsalis' collection of essays titled *Αποστάξεις* (*Distillations*, 1967). Similar thoughts were subsequently repeated in *Διαφάνειες* (1985).<sup>2</sup> Having noticed that, during the interwar period, moral, spiritual, and humanistic values were being overlooked, Petsalis remarked that the First and Second World Wars both dealt a death blow to whatever the Renaissance and its humanism had taught humanity, thus announcing "The Decline of the West".<sup>3</sup> Deep convictions about humanity being capable of achieving almost anything through science now rang hollow, because they ignored human spirit and spirituality.<sup>4</sup> For

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 250.

<sup>2</sup> What accounts for the intertextual relationship between *Αποστάξεις* and the second part of Petsalis' autobiography is the fact that the essay is titled "Εισαγωγή στη διαθήκη ενός κόσμου που πεθαίνει", while the second chapter of the autobiography bears the title "Ένας κόσμος που πέθανε" ("A world that died"). Ibid.: 59–65; Petsalis-Diomidis 1967: 13–27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 14–15; Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 60 and 244.

<sup>4</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis 1967: 16–19. Similar views were also expressed in "Θεμελιώδης αιτία της συγχρόνου κακοδαιμονίας της ανθρωπότητας" ("Fundamental cause of humanity's contemporary misfortune", 1932) where Alexandros Alexandropoulos stated that civilisation was under threat due to the great interest in material progress than in moral values. For his part, in "Η κρίσις της εποχής μας και η επιστήμη" ("The crisis of our time and science", 1932), Panagiotis Kanellopoulos entertained the view that Man turned out to be a slave to science, since the latter was overestimated and not wisely used. In "Αι φυσικά επιστήμια και η παρούσα κρίσις" ("Physical sciences and the contemporary crisis", 1932), Michael Stefanidis claimed that physical sciences were the real moral reason for the World War and the financial crisis. Finally, in "Πού βαδίζει η ανθρωπότης;" ("Where is humanity going?", 1933), Kleisthenis Philaretos put forward that civilisation faced a crisis due to the imbalance between material and spiritual life. See Alexandropoulos 1932: 556; Kanellopoulos 1932: 192; Philaretos 1933: 100–101; Stefanidis 1932: 233.

Petsalis, this was the reason humanity, despite technological progress, seemed wracked by emotional troubles.<sup>1</sup>

At this point, given the views expressed both in “Εισαγωγή στη διαθήκη ενός κόσμου που πεθαίνει” and *Διαφάνειες. Ο μεσοπόλεμος: ο δεύτερος τόμος της ζωής μου*, it may be assumed that Petsalis developed a dialogue with Oswald Spengler’s book, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes (The decline of the West)*, which presents itself as both “a philosophy of history, and “a commentary” on the author’s times.<sup>2</sup> The ‘decline’ in the title expressed Spengler’s fears for the future of Western culture. More specifically, it does not point to “something as catastrophic as a shipwreck” so much as it “conveys the metaphor of twilight or sunset”<sup>3</sup> –as if the sun was setting on Western culture.<sup>4</sup> For Spengler, “a culture dies when it has exhausted all its possibilities which arise, ripen, decay, and never return”.<sup>5</sup> In his scheme of things, the organic stages of a given culture are “youth, growth, maturity, decay” and correspond to the “age-phases” of Man, namely “childhood, youth, manhood, and old age”.<sup>6</sup> In this context, “civilization” is viewed as not only “the

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis 1967: 19, 23 and 26; Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 60 and 244.

<sup>2</sup> Spengler 1926: xv. The first volume *Gestalt und Wirklichkeit (Form and actuality, 1926)* was printed in 1918 and, after revisions, was published in 1923, followed by the second *Welthistorische Perspektiven (Perspectives of world-history, 1928)* in 1922. It was released as one-volume book in 1923 (*The decline of the West, 1932*). The proof of Petsalis’ familiarity with the book is given in his autobiography, where he states that he read *The decline of the West* and rates it as an excellent (“περίφημο”) book. Apart from Petsalis, Kostas Ouranis, as well as Dimis Apostolopoulos, were familiar with Spengler’s theory and wrote articles that were published in newspapers and journals and reached out to the general public. See Apostolopoulos 1936: 726–732; Ouranis 1933: 202; Ouranis 1934: 66; Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 251.

<sup>3</sup> Spengler 1991: vii.

<sup>4</sup> Spengler 1926: xv.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 21; Spengler 1991: xix.

<sup>6</sup> Spengler 1926: 26 and 107.

death of a culture and a consequent transformation of values”, but also “the inevitable destiny of the culture”.<sup>1</sup>

In Angelos Terzakis’ *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, it is not difficult to guess that the escape from the pattern of heredity is doomed to fail, as the readers of the novel can clearly see the emphasis put on ‘heredity’ and ‘blood’, along with ‘determinism’ in the sense of a preordained sequence of events.<sup>2</sup> The effects of heredity can be seen in the influence of the father’s degenerate nature on his sons, since the former’s immoral life, along with his ‘bad’ and ‘thin’ blood, determine the behaviour and genetic make-up of both Andreas and Stefanos.<sup>3</sup> As for ‘blood’, it is worth underlining that it takes on great importance and acquires symbolic potential; and the reader is invited to see it “as some sort of indelible mark”.<sup>4</sup> Despite the fact that readers are informed of Menelaos Skliros’ death in the introductory chapter of the novel, they soon feel that he is still present through the ‘bad’ and ‘thin’ blood inherited by his offspring. This stress on the concept of ‘heredity’, combined with the fact that no other factor seems to be involved, brings the idea of biological determinism to the fore. As a result, their mother miserably fails to impose her

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<sup>1</sup> Spengler 1926: 31; Spengler 1991: xx.

<sup>2</sup> In his review of *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, which I will be examining thoroughly in the following, Aimilios Chourmouzos stresses the dominant role of heredity in Terzakis fiction. See Chourmouzos 1979c: 164.

<sup>3</sup> A hypothetical dialogue between Andreas Skliros and his imaginary friend about heredity is of great interest. In the context of this conversation, it is claimed that the “soul is determined by heredity” (atavism), a claim which sparks a discussion concerning soul and character. The two speakers conclude that the soul is a moral power and responsible for the formation of someone’s character; still, it is sometimes less strong than character, which prevails and performs bad actions. See Terzakis 1934a: 63–65.

<sup>4</sup> Politi 2001: 59.

desires and aspirations on her sons, who prefer to live with their illness, remaining inactive, with no dreams or aspirations.<sup>1</sup>

The eventual superiority of biological determinism over the characters' wish to overcome their nature is an interesting question, and since the failure to do so is more likely than not due to Terzakis' discontent, some extra-textual as well as intra-textual information on the matter may be useful. To begin with, in his article "Ελεύθερα Ιδανικά", Angelos Terzakis argued that the beliefs and the confidence of the generation that grew up in wartime were put to the test;<sup>2</sup> "their excitement proved to be hysteria and their desires turned out to be neurosis".<sup>3</sup> Similar ideas appeared in his novel *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*. In a discussion among young people, contemporary youth is said to be ill, since they do not believe in anything, and this lack of faith is at the core of the 'le mal du siècle'.<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that a verse from the *Book of Deuteronomy*, the fifth book of the Torah and the Christian Old Testament, used as epigraph in Chapter 13, makes the same point: *Γενεὰ ἐξεστραμμένη ἐστι, υἱοὶ, οἷς οὐκ ἐστι πίστις ἐν αὐτοῖς*.<sup>5</sup> One might safely draw the conclusion that Terzakis during these years writes in a spirit of despondency and frustration, which accounts for his characterisation as a pessimist.<sup>6</sup>

Biological determinism features once again in Terzakis' *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία* (1937), and the behaviour of the Malvis family's offspring seems to have been

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 224–225 and 241.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1932c: 232.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 83.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 178.

<sup>6</sup> Pagkourelis 1982: 111. For example, Anastasis Vistonitis expresses the opinion that Gustave Flaubert and Angelos Terzakis share the same pessimism. This disposition is clearly seen in *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία* too. See Vistonitis 1989: 113.



shaped by hereditary factors, which ultimately define the characters' worldview, life choices, and destiny to such an extent that any possibility of acting against their genes is ruled out.<sup>1</sup> The daughter, Sofia Malvi, has inherited her father's temperament, mentality, and attitude towards life.<sup>2</sup> What characterises her most is the kindness and misery of people who, like herself, come from the lower social class, as well as her attachment to her home, district, and neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> Besides, she has inherited her mother's pride.<sup>4</sup> It is because of her inherited personal traits that Sofia marries Yiannis Maroukis, who belongs to the same social class as she does; and she shows her mother the door, when the latter returns –she had left the house, her husband, and her children to live at her lover's side, and asks her daughter to move in with her.

For his part, Orestes Malvis has inherited his mother's haughtiness and arrogance, aloofness, cynicism, vanity, and greediness, but also her strong desire for adventure.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he prefers “τον αέρα του κόσμου” to intellectual excellence, beauty, and moral virtue, and he admits that he would be prepared to sacrifice everything for “αέρας του κόσμου”, if need be.<sup>6</sup> Like his sister, Orestes cannot escape his nature and follow a course of action of his own. After obtaining his diploma, he decides to abandon his father and sister and to live abroad, as his

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937. The reader gets the impression that the family is divided into two completely different worlds, that of the father and the daughter on the one hand, and that of the mother and the son on the other. This division is also reflected in the feelings the family members harbour for each other. Yet the issue of their relationships will be examined in the chapter “Family and marriage”. See Sachinis 1978: 119–120.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1937: 26 and 114.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 24.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 225.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 26, 29–30, 42, 43, 47, 55, 59, 65, 108 and 158.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 25.

mother had promised him financial support and a fresh start in Cairo. Eventually, Orestes is ‘punished’ for his vanity: his mother’s lover, Hatzinaoum, involves him in some shady business and Orestes himself flees in order not to go to a trial.

Finally, *To δαιμόνιο* (1938) by George Theotokas (1906–1966) is about the quirky and unconventional Christophis family.<sup>1</sup> According to rumours spreading on the island, they are people of bad character, unsociable, inhospitable, and cantankerous;<sup>2</sup> they always quarrel and hurt each other, while their pretentious manner makes them obnoxious and unfriendly.<sup>3</sup> No one ever visits them and no one loves them.<sup>4</sup> Their isolated house reflects their character.<sup>5</sup>

The opinions of the islanders and two doctors about the Christophis family are of particular interest.<sup>6</sup> Those who know them claim that the family suffers from a “latent psychopathy”, which is thought to be the “outcome of unknown atavism”: the father is severely mentally ill; the mother, given to fantasies, looks deranged; and the children are expected to end up in the asylum. On their part, the doctors believe that the family is obviously mentally ill (*tarée*), suffering from egotism and

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1938. One may get a glimpse of the idea which gave rise to the novel in the second part (“*Ημερολόγιο του Δαιμονίου*”) of his *Ημερολόγιο της “Αργώς” και του “Δαιμονίου”* (*Diary of “Αργώ” and “Δαιμόνιο”*, 1939), where the author also reveals the stages of the novel’s writing and some information about the characters. As a result, the reader enters the writer’s workplace and becomes aware of the way in which he envisioned the plot for his novel. Equally revealing about both the plot and the characters is an advertisement in Andreas Karantonis’ review of the novel. See Karantonis 1938: 813; Theotokas 1939: 58.

<sup>2</sup> Theotokas 1938: 16

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 16 and 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 57.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 18.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 125.

autism, with a distorted view of reality –the reason for their being maladjusted (inadaptés) and schizoid (schizoides).

In fact, what distinguishes them from others and seems to be the reason for the family tragedy is their ‘daemon’ –first written into the father’s (Christophoros Christophis) genes and then inherited by the children (Romylos, Ifigeneia, Thomas) in such a way that reading the book, one may easily feel that the children’s behaviour is exclusively determined by hereditary factors, and personal traits, in turn, determine their life choices and destiny.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it can be assumed that intimations of heredity and biologically determined fate lurk behind the notion of ‘daemon’.

The reader first encounters a manifestation of the ‘daemon’ when Pavlos Damaskinos (the narrator and Christophoros Christophis’ student) describes his Professor of Mathematics while in class.<sup>2</sup> Generally, while teaching, his typical state is that of being in a lather: his mind is overstimulated, and inspiration comes to him in such a way as to make his students share his excitement. As a result, it is the only lesson in which they feel so tired. Only the school bell can bring him back to reality; and on realizing what had happened he feels physically exhausted.

The reader, however, becomes fully aware of his ‘daemon’ at the end of the first part of the novel, when Christophoros Christophis thinks he has made a great

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<sup>1</sup> The strong effect of the ‘daemon’ on the characters’ life is underlined by both Yiannis Hatzinis and Vangelis Athanasopoulos. A detailed description of the ‘daemon’ is given by Romylos Christophis. Generally, it is depicted as an “uncontrolled inner flame” and the root cause of the family’s distraction and extinction. This issue will be explored further in the following. See Athanasopoulos 1986: 74; Hatzinis 1938a: 300; Theotokas 1938: 68 and 127.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 36–38.

discovery.<sup>1</sup> For many centuries, nations, civilisations, and great figures have been trying to find the fundamental truth, i.e., “the secret of the world”. The Professor, with his mind full of symbols and numbers for years on end and despite his blindness, comes up with an algebraic equation which describes the spherical shape of the universe. However, he decides not to reveal this ‘truth’ and asks his former student Pavlos Damaskinos to burn his manuscripts. Having accomplished his goal as Professor of Mathematics and his narrative purpose –for Theotokas used him to introduce the hereditary ‘daemon’– Christophoros Christophis dies.

The first to inherit the paternal ‘daemon’ is Romylos Christophis, the eldest child of the Christophis family, whose profile is described from the very beginning of the novel.<sup>2</sup> Generally, Romylos is selfish, unpopular, obnoxious, pretentious, and overweening. He is also shirty and pugnacious, and sometimes he grows violent without apparent reason. As such behaviour is most common at night, everybody believes that his nerves are affected by those hours. This leads those who know him to speculate that he is haunted by ‘demons’.

There are also hints of the ‘daemon’ which possesses him, such as the obvious contradictions in his thoughts and actions.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, he wants to study science to become an important inventor; on the other hand, he has a strong desire to be a sailor travelling around the world. His love for the sea seems to be something innate, stemming from hereditary factors;<sup>4</sup> his ancestors were sailors and, to be more precise, corsairs. At times he expresses considerable interest in the arts, especially

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1938: 136–139.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 7–9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 13–14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 14 and 128–129.

poetry;<sup>1</sup> he writes bewildering poems and strongly believes that poetry and mathematics are one and the same thing, and to his mind all scientific subjects should be expounded in verse.<sup>2</sup> Such eccentricities are his way of looking and becoming different from other people. It is because his desires contradict each other that Pavlos Damaskinos and Jean Malcolm, a Canadian archaeologist, see Romylos as an unbalanced dreamer;<sup>3</sup> and yet, despite such signs of insanity, his gaze inspires feelings of sympathy, especially when he seems unable to give words to his misery and craves something he cannot pinpoint. The reason for all of his inconsistency, lack of self-discipline, and weird behaviour is the ‘daemon’ who assails him from time to time.<sup>4</sup>

Romylos eventually chooses the sea.<sup>5</sup> His daemons still pursue him there, until, in some kind of showdown, one of them pushes Romylos, acting as the ship’s radio operator, into sending out a series of false S.O.S signals all night; as a consequence, several ships rush to the rescue. The next morning, the captain, surprised by the number of vessels surrounding them, enters Romylos’ cabin to find him dead. The captain, the crew, and the narrator attribute the death to his mental condition and hypersensitive nerves.<sup>6</sup> However, the reader is rather invited to believe that Romylos was somehow fated to come to such an end.

Ifigeneia, the strange and quirky daughter of the Christophis family, is yet another character whose inner world is restless. Her ‘daemon’ has to do with her

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1938: 67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 56.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 67–68.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 126–131.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 149–150.

penchant for acting, and, like her brother, she seems set to keep to the track preordained for her by heredity.<sup>1</sup> The first time the ‘daemon’ manifests itself is when Pavlos Damaskinos visits the Christophis family, an occasion on which Ifigeneia recites Shakespeare. The next visitation takes place in the Castle, where the ‘daemon’ plays with her and her brother. The two siblings and the Canadian archaeologist give a bizarre theatrical performance, whose spectator is the narrator. It should be underlined that apart from the ‘daemon’, the love for the English poet and playwright, as well as the flair for the English language, are somehow written in her genes; in other words, the root cause of this natural ability and skillfulness is the blood of her great-grandfather, who was a pirate.<sup>2</sup> Thus, her personal qualities are innate, since they are determined exclusively by hereditary factors.

Unfortunately, Ifigeneia will follow in her brother’s footsteps. Despite faith in herself and her youthful artistic ambitions, she does not make good use of her ‘daemon’ and fails to become a great actress in the end, acting merely as a member of a small provincial troupe. Thus, she gives up hopes for a great career and bright future; and like Romylos, she ends up having no expectations or convictions. Still, she is determined to face her destiny. When Pavlos Damaskinos meets her and asks her to marry him, she refuses; it is too late for her. Her morality has ‘deteriorated’ since, in her own words, she is “a common woman”.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Ifigeneia Christophi dies, an unknown artist who never made it beyond the province and who failed to

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1938: 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 128–129.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 165.

attract interest among theatre experts or win the audience's love.<sup>1</sup> Her flame, her 'daemon' yielded nothing.

The third member carrying the paternal 'daemon' is Thomas Christophis, the youngest child born to the family. The contradictions of his nature become evident during his student years. While his teachers predict a brilliant scientific career for him, he also displays a flair for music and singing.<sup>2</sup> For a while Thomas remains undecided as to whether he wants to be a doctor or a singer. Later, he decides to study music and become a tenor, so he moves to Italy where his scientific aspirations once again clash with his talent for music. As the former prevails over the latter, he goes to France to study Medicine in Montpellier, and finally becomes one of the greatest doctors in the world. He works hard and his excellent performance in the medical field is beyond doubt. His success and discoveries lead Pavlos Damaskinos to the deep conviction that Thomas, like his father, is bent upon finding the "secret of the world".<sup>3</sup>

Damaskinos concludes that the daemon had been torturing the Christophis family for a long time;<sup>4</sup> it had made them move in various directions without reason or purpose and it had not allowed them to love each other. Thomas was the only member of the family exempted from such torture. In his case, the daemon in his kindness decided to show him what he was capable of and pushed him towards great works.<sup>5</sup> In other words, Thomas seems to be the unique example of the daemon's

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1938: 169.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 178.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 174–175.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 175.

beneficial influence.<sup>1</sup> At first, it seems that his success is the result of a change in the daemon's disposition, but then Thomas proves to be a great scientist in his own right, and is able to work for the benefit of mankind because of his hardness.<sup>2</sup> It is because of this quality that Thomas, by contrast to the rest of his family, succeeds in that through his final choice to become a scientist manages to gain control over the family daemon.<sup>3</sup>

To conclude: considering the ways in which the 'daemon' affects the Christophis family, it looks as if its members are destined to either die or enjoy the blessings of creative force.<sup>4</sup> Essentially, the story is about the battle between their 'bad' and 'good' destinies. In the end, the 'daemon' destroys almost the whole family: the father, Christophoros Christophis, and the two children, Romylos and Ifigeneia, are represented as too weak to be able to gain control over, or take advantage of, their 'daemon'.<sup>5</sup> The outcome, "a terrible and inglorious death", is inevitable.<sup>6</sup> The only exception is Thomas Christophis; yet, his 'end', to some extent, may be considered similar to that of the rest of his family, since his complete devotion to science entails

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<sup>1</sup> Hatzinis 1938a: 300. Considering the family members' relationship with the 'daemon' and their life course, George Aragis deduces that Thomas is the only character that changes throughout the novel. See Aragis 2008: 29.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Thomas does not admit that he used to sing and wanted to be a tenor. There might be three reasons explaining his behaviour: 1. scientific prejudice towards art, 2. all these artistic dreams were youthful frivolities which had to be forgotten, and 3. music was an unsatisfied desire, whose remembrance was painful. He also expresses two views about Science. Firstly, Science has neither homeland nor family, and secondly, Science is hard for those who serve it and for those who love scientists. See Theotokas 1938: 176, 182, 183 and 186.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 183–185.

<sup>4</sup> Karantonis 1938: 813.

<sup>5</sup> Thrylos n.d.: 182.

<sup>6</sup> Athanasopoulos 1986: 72.



the adoption of an austere attitude and the rejection of both his teenage memories and his birthplace (symbolic death).<sup>1</sup>

A glance at Theotokas' pronouncements will shed some light on his take regarding the fortunes of his book characters. In his essay *Εμπρός στο κοινωνικό πρόβλημα* (*Faced with the social problem*, 1932), like Petsalis, he mentions not only the end of the Renaissance and humanism but also the collapse of their values.<sup>2</sup> In his opinion, what characterised the first postwar decade was “the lack of moderation, order, and sobriety” along with the complete lack of concern about the future, as people were interested in the material rather than spiritual aspects of their lives;<sup>3</sup> and yet, at this time, “the foundations of civilisation began to shake and fear took the place of blissful indifference”.<sup>4</sup>

Taking stock of the situation, Theotokas contends that “the Great Depression was not merely a financial crisis”.<sup>5</sup> More pointedly, he believes that “the root cause of the economic meltdown was the deep spiritual and moral crisis” triggered by the imbalance between material civilisation and moral life, between material and spiritual needs.<sup>6</sup> Thus, he suggests that the ideal of the new generation should be “a new humanism”,<sup>7</sup> as he also recommends in his article “Τὰ ιδανικά της νέας γενεᾶς”

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<sup>1</sup> Athanasopoulos 1986: 75.

<sup>2</sup> Theotokas 1932: 14–15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 14–15, 17 and 43–44; Theotokas 1933a: 282. Theotokas restated this opinion in 1937, during an interview he gave to G. Perastikos. See Perastikos 1937: 14.

<sup>7</sup> Theotokas 1932: 44. Besides, in “Υπάρχει κάτι σάπιο στην Ελλάδα” (“Something is rotten in Greece”, 1933) Theotokas, by observing the social, political, and economic developments in Greece in his time, concludes that “the Asia Minor Catastrophe was a critical moment in Greek history”, and points out that “the absence of any ideals and the general atmosphere of apathy, cowardice,

“The ideals of the new generation”).<sup>1</sup> By assuming the role of the mentor to the new generation, Theotokas wonders “whether the generation of his time is going to spend its power” on the spiritual or on the material world and takes the view that “filosofare” should be preferred to “vivere”.<sup>2</sup>

Keeping in mind Theotokas’ opinions, as well as his claim that in his fiction he aimed to give an account of Greece’s social unrest at the time, it can be assumed that *To δαιμόνιο* is designed to reflect the spiritual and moral issues which weighed upon contemporary society.<sup>3</sup> In fact, as the author himself notes in the second part (“Ημερολόγιο του Δαιμονίου”) of his *Ημερολόγιο της “Αργώς” και του “Δαιμονίου”*, “the novel reflects a broader issue, namely the creative daemon of the Greek people”.<sup>4</sup> It is not a coincidence that at the end of the novel and after the remarkable success of Thomas Christophis, the Christophides are regarded, according to both the narrator and the residents of the island where the Christophis family lived, as a typical example of the Greeks’ creative abilities and intellectual capacities.<sup>5</sup> The

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pessimism, unwillingness, and defeatism may account for Greece’s decline”. See Theotokas 1933c: 199.

<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1930b: 24–25

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Athanasiadis 1992: 146; Theotokas 1986: 176.

<sup>4</sup> Karantonis 1938: 813; Theotokas 1939: 57.

<sup>5</sup> Theotokas 1938: 173–174. Against this backdrop, it could be inferred that the issue broached in Theotokas’ text mirrors -more or less- his preoccupation with the question of Greekness, “the attempt to show Europe that a genuine modern Greek culture exists”. One should also be reminded here that *To δαιμόνιο* was authored and published during Metaxas’ dictatorship. Under this aspect, Theotokas’ novel may be seen as “a regressive move, a pre-emptive response to the new authoritarian climate and more particularly to new laws of censorship”. For Konstantinos Dimadis, a fictional work like this, attests to the assumption that “in the years 1932–1936, liberalism failed” (Theotokas was a liberal). See Beaton 1999: 168; Dimadis 2004: 73–74; Hokwerda 2013: 201; Tziouvas 1997: 37; Vitti 2012: 197–198, 231 and 354–356.

same idea is also expressed in the advertisement of the book cited in Andreas Karantonis' review, where it is stated that "the theme of the novel is the 'daemon' of the Greek people, leading them either to self-destruction or to glorious creativity".<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that almost all other members of the family fail to 'fulfill' their daemon, Thomas' success is a strong sign that Theotokas is optimistic about the future, and seems to suggest that regeneration remains a possibility.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, this subsection focused on whether the protagonists can act against heredity, and on what the answer to this question suggests about the authors' view regarding biological, moral, and spiritual regeneration. The examples considered show beyond doubt that Petros Parnis and Thomas Christophis are the only characters who 'defeat' biological determinism while their families as a whole

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<sup>1</sup> Karantonis 1977b: 292. George Theotokas' novel is, in fact, the fictional representation of an issue on which he reflected in his essay *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα* (*Free spirit*, 1929) for the first time. The author, in general terms, described the way in which the 'daemon' manifests itself. References to a 'daemon' can also be found in his articles "Αἱ ἀνησυχίαι τῆς νέας γενεᾶς" ("The anxieties of the new generation", 1930) and "Τὰ ἰδανικὰ τῆς νέας γενεᾶς". And last, but not least, in *Αργώ* (1933; 1936), "all the main characters are driven", as Roderick Beaton remarks, "by a thirst for power or achievement, which here and elsewhere Theotokas termed the daemon. The allusion to Jason's mythological quest for the Golden Fleece adumbrates the common quest in which the principal characters of the novel are engaged. This quest takes a variety of forms, but all involve the attainment of an ideal that is finally revealed as unattainable". It is important to note here that the journey metaphor may point to "the attempt to create and establish a new national identity", which evolved organically "out of the critical and ideological debates that had been current throughout the 1930s", and became a dominant preoccupation of fiction writers in this period. On the other hand, the fact that the main protagonists' 'wandering' yields nothing may be read in relation to the turmoil that marked the interwar years. See Beaton 1999: 143 and 168–169; Dimadis 2004: 1; Theotokas 1930a: 23–24; Theotokas 1930b: 24–25; Theotokas 1936a: 16 and 456; Theotokas 2002: 29–33; Tziouvas 1989: 95 and 99–112.

<sup>2</sup> Tasos Athanasiadis claimed that what mainly characterised George Theotokas was his positive thinking. For Lykourgos Kourkouvelas, Theotokas' firm belief in "a spiritual restart is indicative of both his frustration over past events and his absolute confidence that things will get better in the future". See Athanasiadis 1992: 145; Kourkouvelas 2013: 51.

become extinct. Considering this, it could be argued that success in dealing with biological determinism is achieved on an individual rather than a collective level, pointing, in turn, to a process of transition from the level of biologically determined families to that of the individual who manages to escape decline and extinction. This outcome, to some extent, may be attributed to the prevalence of the individualistic outlook in the 1930s and the emphasis placed on individuality by certain authors of the time.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the concerns and anxieties expressed in their essays and articles, Thanasis Petsalis and George Theotokas share a positive outlook. This assertion is justified on the grounds of Petros' decision to move on and find something to believe in and of Thomas' successful career in science, confirming the former's will to counter the fate heredity reserves for him and the latter's will to control the 'daemon' he inherited from his father. If this is the case, regeneration seems possible. The interest, however, lies in what regeneration stands for in each case.

For Petsalis, on the one hand, dark thoughts pervaded his mind as the world witnessed a multifaceted crisis. On the other, the goal that his character Petros Parnis sets at the end of the trilogy is the search for a 'new faith'. In view of these facts, it is tempting to assume that in the case of Petsalis, regeneration may lie in the search of new values which in turn will lay the foundations for a new and better

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<sup>1</sup> Tziouvas 2011: 106, 107 and 202. Essentially, the idea of 'individualism' was put forth for the first time in Theotokas' essay *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα*, since "free and unbound individuality" was the lens through which he considered the issues he touched on, and it suggested that "each individual is unique". Ibid.: 112, 116 and 117.

world.<sup>1</sup> Theotokas thought along the same lines, since he discussed the imbalance between material and spiritual needs and the collapse of moral, spiritual, and humanistic values. Since the theme of his novel is the creative abilities and intellectual capacities of the Greek people it may be supposed that Theotokas' regeneration is a spiritual one.

Lastly, two brief comments must be added vis-à-vis Xenopoulos' and Terzakis' novels that had also been considered in this subsection. What seems to determine the structure of these three fictional works (*Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*) is the "biological-determinist interpretation of life".<sup>2</sup> In the case of Xenopoulos, this perspective is imposed, as highlighted, by his intention to stress the importance of selecting a partner according to eugenic criteria, whereas in the case of Terzakis, this approach is indicative of his pessimism pervading his literary output.

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<sup>1</sup> Yet the outbreak of the Second World War undermined Petsalis' expectations. One may claim that this outcome was to some extent expected, because the neurasthenic young hero of the novel assumes the role of finding this 'new faith'.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson 1975: 190.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I focused on fictional families with the aim of exploring the reception and incorporation of bio-medical themes and concepts into contemporary Greek fiction of the interwar period. To this purpose, the main part was divided into three sections, each devoted to a particular issue: the first to degeneration, the second to eugenics, and the third to biological determinism. In reading the fictional works in question in each section, the provision of some basic background information was of paramount importance as this established a framework within which the fictional texts could be examined.

In my attempt to find elements of degeneration, eugenic beliefs and practices, and both heredity and biologically determined fate in fictional works where the family was the primary focus in terms of both theme and structure, I arrived at some conclusions as to why bio-medical discourse intermingles with that of literature. To begin with, both *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού* and *Αποικιοί* were designed to stress the issue and the need for biological regeneration, which is expected in turn to bring about moral and social regeneration as well. Then, the trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* and the novel *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* seem to have been written with a view to voicing concerns and expressing thoughts about a particular social class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. Finally, *Ο απόγονος* and *Το δαιμόνιο* brought up the necessity of moral and spiritual regeneration in society as a whole.

Regardless of any differences, the common point among these stories is that they all suggest an ‘ailing’ society or a society in crisis. Taking this into account, firstly, it should be restated that at the beginning of the 20th century, especially after the First World War, efficiency (i.e., good physical and mental condition) was of the

highest importance, and that, because of the fears for the degeneration of the Greek 'phyli', population discourse was adopted on the part of those discussing the issue of the quality and quantity of the Greek population. Under this aspect, the presence of the antithetical pairs 'healthy' and 'sick', 'vigorous' and 'weak', 'fit' and 'unfit' in the fictional texts under consideration points to both this concern for efficiency and the desire to improve the biological quality of the population. Secondly, the turn of events in the political sphere from 1932 to 1934 may account for the fact that biological degeneration leads to the social decline of the Parnis family on the one hand, and the moral and social decline of the Skliros' family on the other. Terzakis, as shown, clearly expressed his criticism of bourgeois ideology. Thirdly, Thanasis Petsalis and George Theotokas shared an anxiety arising from the deep moral and spiritual crisis sparked by the imbalance between the material and spiritual aspects of life. With these thoughts in mind, they both put forward a proposal that moral and spiritual regeneration could be achieved through a search for new values which would replace those that had collapsed.

Of course, the way in which these issues are broached and presented in the fictional texts is indicative of the authors' outlook. For example, Gregorios Xenopoulos seems to be highly optimistic, saying with absolute certainty that the eugenic suggestion for careful selection of a partner will be adopted not only by individuals but also by humanity as a whole. Pavlos Floros appears to be a pragmatist: his protagonist's plans fail, and this failure may be related to the fact that, in Greece, attempts to enact legislation on marriage and childbearing on a large scale were unsuccessful. Angelos Terzakis was undoubtedly pessimistic, and, due to this disposition, "biological-determinist interpretation of life" appeared in both *H*

*παρακμή των Σκληρών* and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία* as the characters' escape from the fate heredity has in store for them is impossible.<sup>1</sup> As for *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, the destiny awaiting his characters may be explained by his critical attitude toward bourgeois ideology as well. Fluctuation in mood, especially from optimism to pessimism, is what characterised Thanasis Petsalis' attitude in *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*; yet hints of positive outlook were evident at the end of the trilogy. Finally, George Theotokas' optimistic view on spiritual regeneration is justified on the grounds of his protagonist's distinguished career in medicine.

Lastly, what came to the forefront in the subsection "Family and eugenics" was that family can arrest degeneration and contribute to the advancement of the human stock (biological regeneration). Essentially, it is the individual that, by mindfully choosing a partner, plays a role in the welfare of the community (society, nation, race/'phyli') through ensuring the birth of fit offspring. As for the subsection "Family, biological determinism, and characterisation", it is the individual family member that manages to counter the fate heredity reserves for him; and this success on his part was related to the importance given to individuality by certain authors of the 1930s.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson 1975: 190.



## CHAPTER TWO

### FAMILY AND GENDER: SOCIALITY, EDUCATION–WORK, AND SEXUALITY

The springboard for this chapter arises from the renewal of Greek feminism’s concern about gender issues in the interwar period. Indeed, the interwar years witnessed “the emergence of a more radical feminism” in the sense that, compared to “the small collective of the late 19th and early 20th century (‘protofeminism’), the interwar movement or the ‘first wave’ (1920–1936) was larger in terms of quantity” and “was raised under a different set of conditions, such as the change both in women’s population, i.e., the demographic balance between men and women, and in the position held by women from different social class backgrounds due to the transformation of Greek society, which had in turn been prompted by various factors, such as the First World War, the raisin crisis, external and internal migration, the arrival of refugees after the Asia Minor Catastrophe, and industrialisation”.<sup>1</sup> In particular, despite “the lack of intensity during the Balkan

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<sup>1</sup> Asanaki 1930: 153–154; Avdela 2002: 337 and 341–344; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 19; Palaiologos 1928: 7–9; Poulos 2014: 9, 30 and 116; Samiou 2003: 66–67; Tzermia-Sakellaropoulou 1945: 24; Xiradaki 1988: 32. The terms ‘feminism’ and ‘feminist’ used worldwide originate in “late nineteenth-century French political discourse” and suggest “the ideas that advocate the emancipation of women, the movements that have attempted to realize it, and the individuals who support this goal”. Their popularisation is attributed to Hubertine Auclert, a prominent figure of French feminism and a fervent proponent of women’s suffrage, who in “1882 described herself and her associates” as ‘féministes’, and it was from then on that ‘féminisme’ and ‘féministe’ crossed national borders and entered the vocabulary of western and non-western languages. The interest, however, lies in the fact that “the desire for equality predates the existence of the term feminism or the movement it has come to represent”. As for the neologism in Greek, “although ‘φεμινισμός’ (‘feminism’) appeared prior to 1900, it was not associated with women’s assertions from the very beginning”. On the contrary, “‘χειραφέτηση’ (‘emancipation’) suggested women’s claims from the late 19th century onwards and turned out to be a keyword of the women’s issue and fuelled heated debates”. It was its meaning

Wars and the First World War”, the women’s movement “regained its strength, recovered its confidence and reshaped its ideas” in the interwar period.<sup>1</sup> Thus, “the struggle for women’s rights” at the time did not only resume but also “took on the dimensions of a social issue, decisively determined the development of the women’s movement in the following years, and laid the foundation for women’s post-war position in Greek society”.<sup>2</sup>

Focusing more closely on these two “significant junctures for Greek feminism since Independence”, it is important to note that the years from the late 19th to early 20th century constitute, as the term ‘protofeminism’ attests, the prehistory of the women’s movement in Greece, whereas the main history started in 1920, when Avra Theodoropoulou founded the League for the Rights of Women, and came to an end in 1936, when Ioannis Metaxas’ dictatorship was established.<sup>3</sup> It was, however, in this pre-history period that the preliminary steps were made, and the basis for women’s awakening and emancipation was created.<sup>4</sup>

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(“emancipation’ was tantamount to the granting of political rights, and in this respect, it connoted women’s masculinisation, the rejection of motherhood, and the national disaster) that generated much of the public discussion”. Against this background, at that time “Kallirrhoe Parren did not associate ‘emancipation’ with the access to political rights, since she saw women’s vote as premature. It was at the beginning of the 1920s that ‘χειραφέτηση’ clearly pointed to women’s political rights, while ‘χειραφετημένη’ suggested the woman who enjoyed the granting of citizenship”. See Allen 2005: 3; Bryson 2016: 1; Ménard 2008: 119; Offen 2000: 19 and 183; Psarra 1999a: 410, 412, 437 and 481–482; Psarra 1999b: 90 and 96.

<sup>1</sup> Samiou 1988: 23; Stamiris 1986: 100.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Avdela 2002: 337; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 15.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela 2002: 337; Kaklamanaki 2007: 81; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 151; Poulos 2014: 9, 118 and 140; Samiou 2003: 66 and 75; Samiou 2013: 222 and 223; Stamiris 1986: 100; Xiradaki 1988: 12, 106 and 111.

<sup>4</sup> Stamiris 1986: 99.

More specifically, the first small feminist collective that was active in the last quarter of the 19th century, was consisted of “privileged women of the newly emergent educated middle class” and “fought for equal educational opportunities and civil rights”.<sup>1</sup> The most prominent figure of the Greek women’s movement in general and of ‘protofeminism’ in particular was Kallirrhoe Parren (1861–1940), thanks to whom feminism “of a ‘moderate’ kind, adapted to the strictures -or archaisms (sic)- of Greek society” of the time was introduced into Greece.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela 2006: 228; Poulos 2014: 9 and 94.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 14–15 and 95; Fournaraki 2010: 2054; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 94; Psarra 2006: 401; Sifaki 2015: 18; Vickers and Vouloukos 2007: 519; Xiradaki 1988: 12, 57 and 59. For Kallirrhoe Parren’s pioneering action, see Ibid.: 56; Allen 2005: 27; Antonopoulos 2013: 263 and 264; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 45; Dalakoura and Ziogou-Karastergiou 2015: 290; Fournaraki 2010: 2054 and 2057; Kaklamanaki 2007: 79; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 96, 110, 113, 115–116 and 172; Offen 2000: 159, 219 and 220; Poulos 2014: 94, 95, 96, 100, 116, 122 and 123; Psarra 1999a: 414–415 and 425–427; Psarra 2006: 401, 402, 403 and 406–407; Rethymniotaki et al: 2016: 26; Samiou 2003: 69; Sifaki 2015: 18; Stamiris 1986: 100. Part of Parren’s feminist project involved popularising her views through fiction. Particularly, her trilogy *Ta βιβλία της ανγής* (*H χειραφετημένη*, 1900; *H μάγισσα*, 1901; and *To νέον σύμβολαιον* –only serialised in *Efimeris ton Kyrion* between 1902 and 1903) presents, as Maria Anastasopoulou emphasises, “a new model of women, educated and independent but also maternal –capable of raising citizens willing to sacrifice everything for their nation’s security and social progress”; while also putting forth “a new gender relationship within marriage and a new, more liberal way of child-rearing”. As such, Parren’s three-part series was the medium through which Greek readership was familiarised with the Greek version of the New Woman novel –that is, fiction that was mainly concerned with marriage, motherhood, self-determination, female sexuality, bodily autonomy, and gender roles. In this context, the protofeminist authors and newspaper/journal editors Evgenia Zographou (1878–1963) and Athina Gaïtanou-Gianniou (1880–1952) merit a mention as well. Questions, such as women’s dependent and passive selves, the relationship(s) between men and women, love and marriage as women’s sole vocation, the dowry system as an institution that perpetuates women’s dependence and oppression, womanly virtue and slander, and women’s emancipation through work (“Εκείνος κι αυταί”, 1898), form the subjects of Zographou’s three short-story collections *Διηγήματα* (1896, 1898 and 1900). These narratives are mainly inhabited by young female heroines and are set in the provinces, with the exception of the stories of the third book, where the setting is Athens. On her part, Gaïtanou-Gianniou devoted herself to feminist action: apart from being, as already mentioned, the editor-in-

Moving on to the interwar period, the number of women aware of their gender inequality in political, economic, and social terms increased, and a striking characteristic of the feminist movement at the time is the plurality and variety of voices, a fact confirmed not only by the different types of feminism but also by the number of feminist journals and newspapers that existed during this period.<sup>1</sup> More particularly, four trends, in tandem with contemporary political ideologies, voiced the feminist claims during these years, namely radicals (League for Women's Rights), conservatives (National Council of Greek Women and Lyceum of Greek Women), socialists (Socialist Women's Group), and communists.<sup>2</sup> Associated with international currents, Greek women's organisations could take part in international meetings, thereby giving the overall movement an international air.<sup>3</sup>

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chief of feminist-socialist journals, she was also the founder of a socialist women's group. Yet, it was her short-story collection *Οράματα* (1908) that revealed -at the very beginning of the twentieth century- her concerns about gender inequality and women's position in society (For example, in "Ένα απομεινάρι της ζωής", the heroine is portrayed as the victim of patriarchy and social oppression). See Anastasopoulou 1997: 1; Antonopoulos 2013: 263–264; Avdi-Kalkani 1997; Gavriilidis 1907: 27–35; Heillman 2008: 93; Ioannidou 2000–2001: 145 and 146; Ioannidou 2001: 148–182 and 225; Jin 2015: 254–255; Ledger 2007: 153, 154, 156 and 157; Offen 2000: 189; Parren 1900a: 2; Parren 1900b; Parren 1901; Parren 1908: 20–21; Parren 1914: 2604; Psarra 1999: 425, 437, 460–461, 462, 466–467 and 469; Sibylla 1908; Tarsouli 1952: 336–337; Valetas 1988a:1; Valetas 1988b: 21–22; Zographou: 1896; Zographou 1898; Zographou 1900.

<sup>1</sup> Poulos 2014: 116; Samiou 1988: 24; Samiou 2003: 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 68–70; Avdela 2002: 345 and 347–348; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 35 and 38–52; Dalakoura and Ziogou 2015: 293–294; F. 1921: 3–6; Kaklamanaki 2007: 81; Kyriakidou 2002: 494–500; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 124–131, 151–155 and 185–187; Poulos 2014: 118–119 and 120; Psarra 1988: 38–43; Psarra 1992: 68–73; Rethymniotaki et al 2016: 27; Samiou 1988: 24; Samiou 2013: 106–107; Theodoropoulou 1923: 1–2.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela 1990: 198 and 199; Avdela 2002: 346; Avdela 2006: 241; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 29–30; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 172 and 185; Poulos 2014: 119 and 130; Samiou 2003: 69; Xiradaki 1988: 111.

It was against this background of greater mobilisation on the part of women “from the petite bourgeoisie and professional middle classes” that journals and newspapers flourished, with six journals (*O agonas tis gynaikas, Ellinis, Deltion tou Lykeiou ton Ellinidon, Sosialistiki Zoi, Eva Nikitria, I Feministiki*) and three newspapers (*Efimeris ton Gynaikon, Efimeris ton Ellinidon, Gynaika*) coming out between 1920 and 1936.<sup>1</sup> Mainly managed and published by both the well-established and newly established women’s organisations and addressing a particular audience, each of these journals and newspapers forged a unique identity; this led to different and sometimes conflicting opinions both on a number of hot issues and on their action plan.<sup>2</sup> Still, despite a wide range of views and disagreements, feminists shared, to a great extent, the expectation of gender equality.

What stood at the core of their struggle was the extension of the franchise to women. Lacking basic political and social rights, they realised that the only way forward was to fight for and ensure their political and legal equality, i.e., equality of political rights and equality before the law, which in turn would lay the foundations for other feminist claims.<sup>3</sup> In arguing for women’s enfranchisement, they appealed

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela 2002: 347–348; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 36–37; Moschou-Sakorafou 1990: 132–134 and 170–171; Poulos 2014: 121; Samiou 1988: 23–24; Samiou 2003: 70–71; Samiou 2013: 132; Xiradaki 1988: 113, 115–116 and 119–120.

<sup>2</sup> Samiou 1988: 24, 25, 26 and 28.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 24 and 25; Avdela 2002: 345, 349 and 350; Avdela 2006: 230 and 242; Avdela 2010: 100; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 23 and 55; Bakalaki and Elegmitou 1987: 201; Imvrioti 1923: 10; Imvrioti 1924: 12; Kaklamanaki 1984: 57–58; Kaklamanaki 2007: 82; Moschou-Sakorafou 1990: 142 and 151; Palaiologos 1928: 11–12; Poulos 2014: 9, 116, 118 and 125; Psarra 1992: 67 and 73; Rethymniotaki et al 2016: 27; Samiou 2003: 68, 71, 73, 74 and 76; Samiou 2013: 137; Samiou 2015: 140–142; Someritis 1928: 376; Svolou 1924b: 2–3; Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos 1921: 8 and 37; Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos 1923: 14;

firstly to Enlightenment values, secondly “to the Greek independence movement itself, which” in turn “drew deliberately and heavily on that of the French Revolution”, thirdly to liberalism’s ideal of equality under the law, and fourthly to “an image of a historical Greece, and Athens in particular, as the very birthplace of democracy”.<sup>1</sup>

Women’s economic dependence and their participation in the labour market on unequal terms, both of which implied women’s social inequality and inferiority, were at the top of the feminist agenda as well.<sup>2</sup> In fact, despite the increase in the number of women in the workforce, there were still women who were all but totally dependent upon the male family members, a situation which perpetuated their social subordination. Besides, even if they happened to work, their economic and social status was still inferior because they had no civil and political rights; they not only “occupied the lowest skilled and worst paid sectors of the economy” but were also barred from working in certain fields, had no chances of promotion or of

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Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos 1925: 2; Theodoropoulou 1928a: 1–3; Theodoropoulou 1932: 1–2; Thrylos 1923: 1–2; Xiradaki 1988: 138.

<sup>1</sup> Avdela 2002: 345 and 350; Avdela 2006: 241; Bryson 2016: 73; Mantzoulinou 1935: 178; Offen 2000: 218–219; Palaiologos 1928: 6; Poulos 2014: 30; Samiou 1988: 25; Samiou 2003: 68–69 and 73–74; Samiou 2013: 139–141; Tzermia-Sakellaropoulou 1945: 27.

<sup>2</sup> Anonymous 1925: 12; Antoniadou 1921: 48; Avdela 1990: 34–35, 47, 49, 53, 114–147, 154–156 and 205; Avdela 2002: 343–345 and 354; Avdela 2006: 242 and 249; Avdela 2010: 100; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 19–21, 25, 74–76 and 92; Bakalaki and Elegmitou 1987: 201; Gruber 1998: 40; Imvrioti 1924: 12; Kyriakidou 2002: 491 and 494; Poulos 2014: 9, 118 and 120; Samiou 1988: 25; Samiou 2003: 66–67 and 71–72; Samiou 2015: 142; Someritis 1928: 377; Svolou 1924a: 18; Svolou 1924b: 3–4; Svolou 1928: 7; Svolou 1929b: 1–2; Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos 1921: 8 and 19–36; Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos 1923: 14; Theodoropoulou 1923: 2; Theodoropoulou 1926: 215; Theodoropoulou 1928c: 1–2; Theodoropoulou 1931: 1–2.

participation in any competition, and were the first to be fired.<sup>1</sup> Apart from women's emancipation through work and female workers' rights, the issue of protective legislation for women (for example, exclusion from jobs deemed as hazardous to women's health or prohibition of night work) in tandem with that of working married women and of working mothers attracted feminists' attention and generated much public discussion.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, other weighty matters were central to feminist thought as well, such as the improvement of education opportunities; women's and children's sex-trafficking and the abolition of state-regulated prostitution; the double-standards, i.e., the gender-based attitude to sexual behaviour which condoned male sexist practices; the establishment of legal paternity for illegitimate children; the elimination of

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<sup>1</sup> Soland 2000: 169.

<sup>2</sup> Anonymous 1925: 12; Antoniadou 1921: 47–48; Avdela 1990: 51–54, 147–148, 198–200 and 202–203; Avdela 2002: 354–357; Avdela 2006: 247–249; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 75; Kyriakidou 2002: 494, 500–501 and 506; Lampridi 1927: 282–283; Samiou 2003: 71–72; Svolou 1924b: 3; Svolou 1930: 1–2; Svolou 1931: 3; Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos 1921: 8, 18 and 22; Theodoropoulou 1926: 216–217; Theodoropoulou 1931: 1; Theodoropoulou 1933: 1–2. Further proof of women's economic dependence and degradation was the institution of dowry, the practice of giving a sort of compensation (such as money or property) to the groom who had to shoulder the burden of his newly-formed family on his own. In other words, the dowry was the contribution of the not-working-for-a-living daughter/bride to the conjugal fund, which in turn constituted a source of financial security. As such, the dowry system contributed to the establishment and perpetuation of a gender hierarchy according to which women were restricted to the private sphere that was identified, as will be stressed in the following, with women's reproductive role. Besides, this custom turned dowry into a measurement of women's value and marriage into an economic negotiation and beneficial alliance. Against this backdrop, feminists argued that women's emancipation through work would eliminate gender inequality inside the family and put an end to the tradition that humiliated women. Finally, the institution of dowry was abolished in 1983 (Law 1329/83). See Alexopoulos 1937: 128; Palaiologos 1928: 15; Parren 1904: 1–2; Pharmas 1926: 136–137; Presvelou and Riga 2013: 169; Skouteri-Didaskalou 1984: 160, 171, 186, 246, 251 and 256; Svolou 1924a: 18.

inequality between spouses and the advancement of the legal status of the woman-mother and woman-wife in a marriage context; and last but by no means least, the consolidation of peace in the Balkans.<sup>1</sup>

All in all, by calling attention to gender issues, such as “the relationship of gender to public and private, to power and lack of power, and to the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’”, as well as to gender roles and relations in Greece at the time, interwar feminism re-emphasised gender inequality and resumed the fight for the advancement of women’s position in Greek society.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, it shed light on the power differences in the relationships between men and women and denounced the hierarchical character of gender relationships, which was reflected in the gendered division of labour, with a view to raising women’s status both inside and outside the family.<sup>3</sup>

Since ‘gender’ and the ‘gendered division of labour’ are vital to what follows, an explanation of these terms seems appropriate here. In contrast to ‘sex’, which points to a biological identity, ‘gender’ describes “the socially constructed roles that define the characteristics, appropriate behaviors, realms of activity, and roles assigned to

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous 1925: 11–12; Avdela 2002: 349 and 355; Avdela 2006: 245–247; Avdela 2010: 100; Avdela et al 2020: 315; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 21 and 23–25; Bakalaki and Elegmitou 1987: 201 and 214–215; Gruber 1998: 37–38 and 40; JAP 1921: 10–11; Kastanaki 1928: 367 and 371; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 136, 142 and 175; Palaiologos 1928: 10–11; Papadopoulos 1925: 3–5; Porphyrogenis 1931: 134; Poulos 2014: 120, 130 and 151; Samiou 1988: 25–26; Samiou 2003: 68 and 72–73; Svolou 1924a: 18; Svolou 1924c: 2–3; Svolou 1929a: 1–2; Svolou 1931: 3; Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos 1921: 8, 12–17, 21–23 and 38–45; Syndesmos Ellinidon Yper ton Dikaiomaton tis Gynaikos. 1923: 14; Theodoropoulou 1926: 214–215; Theodoropoulou 1928b: 2; Theodoropoulou 1930a: 1–2; Theodoropoulou 1931: 2; Theodoropoulou 1933: 1–2; Tourtoli 1925: 146; Xiradaki 1988: 116 and 119.

<sup>2</sup> Dubish 2019: 9.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela 2002: 358; Avdela 2010: 98.



men and women, in relationship to one another, within a given historical, cultural, and sociopolitical context”.<sup>1</sup>

The term ‘gendered division of labour’, on the other hand, conveys the idea of a strong relationship between gender and space in the sense that “the two genders (embodied in the two sexes)” are placed in different spaces (realms of action) and therefore, they are expected to perform different tasks.<sup>2</sup> In this scheme of things, men are associated with the “privileged ‘public’ sphere of paid work, government, politics, and war making”, whereas women belong to the “subordinate ‘private’ or domestic sphere of home and family that focuses on nurturing and caregiving”;<sup>3</sup> to put it otherwise, men are identified with production, women with reproduction.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, the ‘gendered division of labour’ not only establishes a gender hierarchy but also provides the basis for gender inequalities, with ‘gender’ being used as a pretext for “inclusion and exclusion at the workplace, at home, and in the political arena”.<sup>5</sup> To put it differently, women’s subordination and the ensuing lack of power and inferior status are attributed to women’s confinement to the house; and thus, from the feminist point of view, challenging this “diametrically antithetical and hierarchical system” (‘public’-‘private’) and gender roles is desirable.<sup>6</sup>

Against the backdrop outlined earlier, in this chapter I shall be discussing the representation of the ‘gender-space’ relationship in interwar fictional texts, where

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<sup>1</sup> Butler 2007: 8; Garner 2018: 1.

<sup>2</sup> Dubish 2019: 9; Lada 2010: 150 and 152; Psarra 1999a: 433; Rubio-Marín 2015: 788; Skouteri-Didaskalou 1984: 27.

<sup>3</sup> Garner 2018: 1. See also Dubish 2019: 9, 11 and 12–13; Flax 1990: 23; Muncie et al 2009: 294; Rubio-Marín 2015: 787–788; Vassiliadou 2015: 202.

<sup>4</sup> Lada 2010: 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*; Gruber 1998: 8; Muncie et al 2009: 294.

<sup>6</sup> Dubish 2019: 13 and 30; Lada 2010: 152.

the narrative develops around the life stories of daughters and sons. More particularly, I shall be asking whether the young heroines (daughters), like their mothers, remain enclosed in the ‘private sphere’, or whether, like the young heroes (sons), they cross the boundaries of life at home and join the public realm. A number of questions naturally arise here. What patterns of behaviour and aspiration are associated with each gender? Is the life course of male offspring significantly different from that of female ones? To what extent does gender inequality start inside the family? Let it be noted in advance that I will be comparing the lives of daughters with those both of mothers and sons in order to emphasise differences and similarities between women of different generations, on the one hand, and between the two genders on the other. My study will further trace not only an escalation between the representations pointing to young heroines’ compliance with traditional values and standards and those suggesting the overturn of traditional patterns of thought and action, but also any differences between the representations given by male and female authors. To put it another way, I will be exploring the extent to which interwar fiction puts forth new gendered identities in keeping with the feminist discourse of the time.<sup>1</sup>

The main part of the present chapter consists of three sections, namely “Domestic and social sphere”, “Education and work”, and “Sexuality”. The first and second explore the protagonists’ place and role within either the private or public sphere with respect to their home confinement and socialisation on the one hand, and their equality/inequality in educational and professional opportunities on the other; the

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<sup>1</sup> Here one should be reminded of Maria Sakalaki’s *Κοινωνικές ιεραρχίες και σύστημα αξιών: ιδεολογικές δομές στο νεοελληνικό μυθιστόρημα 1900–1980*, and of Eleni Lianopoulou’s *Οι Ελληνίδες πεζογράφοι του μεσοπολέμου (1921–1944)*. See Lianopoulou 1993; Sakalaki 1984.

third section examines the emergence of sexology and the considerable resonance of sexological discourse from 1890 onwards on the one hand, and the heroines' sensual temperament and relationships with their male partners on the other.

## **2.1 Domestic and social sphere**

### **2.1.1 Domesticity and socialisation**

In the present section, I examine the daughters' position within domestic and social spaces as sites of confinement and social interaction respectively, my aim being to illustrate the 'cult of domesticity', on the one hand, and the emergence of a socialised femininity on the other.<sup>1</sup> The questions that arise in this context are: What are their roles in the private realm? How are household chores and duties described, and how do young heroines spend their 'free time' inside the house? Are there any gender connotations attached to these pastimes? As for their presence in the public domain, do young females negotiate or claim their right to participate in social life, and what are their most common activities? How does the family react to their requests and pursuits outside the house? When female protagonists have a social life, do they care about their reputation, and what do other characters think about these young ladies? Do female and male figures interact with each other and if so, how is such interaction represented? And finally, how do females present themselves through fashion, and how are they viewed by others?

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<sup>1</sup> The 'cult of domesticity' was tightly interwoven with 'the cult of motherhood', both combining social and biological imperatives in that women's exclusive place of action was the house and their ultimate destiny was marriage and motherhood. To put it differently, women were expected to carry out the domestic chores and to be devoted wives and mothers. The persistence or loosening of these ideals will be examined in the second and the third section of the present chapter with regards to heroines' entrance into the labour market and their relationships with the male characters.

### 2.1.2 Domestic and social life

Dionysios Kokkinos (1884–1967) writes about the social life of his two young heroines, Elena Roumpini in *Μυστική φωλιά* (1924), where ‘μυστική φωλιά’ represents the ‘secret shelter’ of Roza’s atelier, a graduate of the School of Architecture, and the meeting point of a group of people of doubtful morality, i.e., “a nest of death” (‘a pit of vipers’).<sup>1</sup> Kora Frinta is Kokkinos’ other heroine in *Τλιγγος* (1932), where ‘ίλιγγος’ (literally, ‘vertigo’) suggests both a dance club and a loss of mental balance caused by various events experienced by the novel’s main figure.<sup>2</sup> The most obvious similarities between these two young women is the fact that they both belong to the bourgeoisie and enjoy a sense of freedom, depicted as the direct outcome of a post-war relaxation.<sup>3</sup> Elena adopts a free lifestyle either because of her father’s love for her, her mother’s physical absence (she died eight

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 17, 97 and 143.

<sup>2</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 41.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 111. Generally, Kokkinos’ fictional works brim with bourgeois characters. For Vangelis Hatzivasiliou, it is more likely than not that their carefree style of life allows the author to focus on their inner thoughts and feelings. Besides, Hatzivasiliou, in an attempt to draw a comparison between Kokkinos’ fiction and that of his own time, concludes that like the stories of Dimosthenis Voutyras, those of Kokkinos take place almost exclusively in Athens. Apostolos Sachinis on his part views Kokkinos as “the missing link between the novelists of the ’80s and those of the ’30s”. What further characterises his creative writing is the detailed descriptions and the narrative pacing, skills that must be seen in relation to his historical writings as well as to his occupation as a journalist. In fact, his *Η ελληνική επανάσταση* (1931–1935), *Οι δύο πόλεμοι 1940–1941* (1945–1946) and *Ιστορία της νεωτέρας Ελλάδος. Ιστορική περίοδος 1800–1945* (1970–1972) are remarkable pieces of historiography. Kokkinos also devoted himself to journalism: in 1908, he published his first short story in *O Noumas*, and he was the chief editor of the newspaper “Μέλλον” (“Mellon”). From that time onward, he moved back and forth between fiction and journalism; and as a matter of fact, his journalistic and literary writing styles were mixed. See Hatzivasiliou 1998: 376, 378, 379, 382–383, 385 and 386; Paraschos 1928; Sachinis 1957.

years ago), or because the times favour such freedom.<sup>1</sup> Kora for her part takes up a similar lifestyle only when Marika, an aunt who moves with the times, leaves Odessa to move in with Kora and her family.<sup>2</sup> It is Marika's broad-mindedness ("nowadays unlike birds girls should not be kept in a cage") that causes the formerly restricted Kora to change at the age of seventeen.<sup>3</sup> Yet, despite the aunt's insistence that Kora's pattern of behaviour is common to girls of her time, Mrs Frinta proves less open-minded and sticks to tradition, refusing to understand how a young girl can stay out late without being accompanied by a family member.<sup>4</sup>

Elena and Kora make frequent trips and enjoy dancing in clubs. Elena frequents far from innocuous gatherings at Roza's workshop and her aunt's house, while Kora goes to the cinema as well.<sup>5</sup> Such activities suggest that young men and women have the chance to mix "away from the watchful gaze of the family"<sup>6</sup> –a sign that gender relations are undergoing significant changes in the interwar period.<sup>7</sup> As

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 17–18.

<sup>2</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 11–12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 64 and 125. Their contrasting views may be attributed to their different life experiences, given that the aunt lived most of her life in Odessa. Ibid.: 7 and 17.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 11–12, 44 and 121; Kokkinos 1924: 18, 19, 24–26, 29, 43–44, 95 and 141. Like Elena and Kora, other upper-middle-class daughters, such as Morpho Delatolla in *Αργώ* (1936) by George Theotokas, as well as Ellen and Ntina Sklavoyianni in *Γιούγκερμαν* (1938) by M. Karagatsis (1908–1960), have an extensive and mixed-gender social life; Morpho goes on holiday to Greek islands, such as Mykonos, to spend her summer and plays tennis against a male opponent, Manolis Skyrianos; Ellen goes on a trip to Delphi accompanied by male and female friends; and Ntina enjoys herself a lot with her mixed-gender company (Efi Markopoulou, Manos Perikos, and Pavlos Telemes). See Karagatsis 1938: 269, 340 and 470; Theotokas 1936a: 357 and 358.

<sup>6</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 100–101; Kokkinos 1924: 18, 29 and 43–44; Kokkinos 1932: 11–12 and 125.

<sup>7</sup> Still, Kora believes that whatever feminists' gains may be, females will not enjoy the fullest pure male friendship; either because a man can associate with a woman only if he asks her to marry him;

Birgitte Soland underlines, “the reorganisation of gender relations” was a phenomenon to be observed in “most of Western Europe in the decade following World War I” as a result of “the changes being witnessed in women’s lives across the continent”.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding gender relations during the post-war period, Morpho’s mother, Antigoni Delatolla, in *Αργώ* remarks that in the interwar years, there are frequent cross-gender get-togethers, mostly at school but also as part of the social life, as evidenced by mixed baths, dances, and a spirit of camaraderie.<sup>2</sup> Socialising of this kind shows that the restrictive mores that previously regulated interactions between men and women have now entered a process of considerable ‘softening’.<sup>3</sup>

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or because an engaged or a married woman cannot have male friends. The issue of friendship between males and females will be rediscussed in the third section. See Kokkinos 1932: 117–118

<sup>1</sup> Soland 2000: 4.

<sup>2</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 365.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Though daughters’ entrance into the public space is not quite often without consequences in the sense that their morality is open to doubt. For example, being surrounded by wrong people tarnishes Nitsa Gazeli (*Τρίμορφη γυναίκα*, 1930) and Elena Roumpini’s reputation. See Kokkinos 1924: 70 and 93; Xenopoulos 1930: 27. Let it be stressed here that Xenopoulos is credited with contributing to the renewal of modern Greek literature, as well as “professing himself indifferent to the folkloric preoccupations that had dominated Athenian cultural life in the 1880s”, as his fiction was based “on the exploration of a more complex urban society”. In fact, the urban life of both the capital and his native island Zante, and characters across the social spectrum, as well as “more or less romantic and melodramatic plots”, dominate his works. As Roderick Beaton remarks, it is “the vast tapestry of social life and manners, the exclusively urban settings, and the consummate manipulation of the reader’s expectations in plots devised with mathematical precision [that] make Xenopoulos’ large fictional canvas a *comédie humaine* of Greece at the turn of the century” (The author himself acknowledged Honoré de Balzac, Alphonse Daudet, Charles Dickens, and Émile Zola as his masters). See Adamos 1985d: 77, 83 and 104; Beaton 1999: 100; Charis 1979b: 127; Farinou-Malamatari 1997: 324 and 325; Karantonis 1977d: 185; Sachinis 1991d: 237 and 239–241; Terzakis 1939: 48–58; Thylos 1963c: 288; Xenopoulos 1984b: 128

Similar remarks are present in Thomas Sitaras' *Η Παλιά Αθήνα ζει, γλεντά, γεύεται 1834–1938: κιμπάρικο ανάγνωσμα για μερακλήδες νοσταλγούς*, where the author, by gathering “first-hand accounts, images, vignettes, advertisements, spicy hot news, comments, entertaining stories, and satirical portraits”, intends to describe the daily life, the forms of entertainment, and the gastronomic preferences in Athens between 1834 and 1938.<sup>1</sup> What characterises the interwar period is, according to Sitaras, not only the evolution of old forms of amusement but also the appearance of new ones.<sup>2</sup> Both these developments encourage the assumption that, during those years “despite the dramatic events, such as the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Great Depression, gastronomy and entertainment reached unprecedented heights”; and this is also true of “women’s social emancipation”.

By comparing the everyday life of young women in the years of Othon’s reign (1834–1862), the Romantic Period (1862–1880) and the Belle Époque (1880–1910) on the one hand, with that of their counterparts in the interwar years (1910–1938) on the other, Sitaras concludes that in the interwar period, young women enjoyed a more free lifestyle and were more joyful. He attributes the change partly to the relaxation of social mores and conventions between the early 19th and the early 20th century and partly to the change in women’s social standing through work.<sup>3</sup> As for the ways of entertainment preferred by both young men and women, mixed

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<sup>1</sup> Sitaras 2011: 18–20 and backpage. Information on these issues can also be found in Sitaras' *Πόθοι και πάθη στην Παλιά Αθήνα 1834–1938: για μερμπάντηδες αναγνώστες και απελευθερωμένες αναγνώστριες. Αυστηρά!* (2012). See Sitaras 2012.

<sup>2</sup> For the details that follow, *ibid.*: 16, 128, 271 and 283–284; Sitaras 2011: 293, 299–300, 341, 359–363, 369, 386, 388, 390, 392–393, 399, 405 and 432–433.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 94–96, 243–244 and 341; Sitaras 2012: 13–16 and 84–85. Sitaras uses the word ‘αμπάρωμα’ which derives from the verb ‘αμπαρώνω’ (‘bolt the door’), suggesting girls’ home confinement. *Ibid.*: 13; Sitaras 2011: 95.

baths and picnics,<sup>1</sup> cinema,<sup>2</sup> and dance clubs were the most popular.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the two genders had the chance to mingle, to dance and to flirt with one another.<sup>4</sup>

The heroines' presence in the public sphere is characterised by their fine and modern external appearance.<sup>5</sup> For example, Elena wears an open-neck, bare-shouldered, short-sleeved dress and a hat,<sup>6</sup> while Liza Fronti, another female character in *Μυστική φωλιά*, usually dressed in clothes that left parts of her body exposed, looks elegant and stylish by wearing a sleeveless low-cut dress and a straw hat.<sup>7</sup> Kora not only wears a lamé-décolleté dress, a pearl necklace, creaseless gloves, sleek stockings, and a coat with a fur yoke beneath which a silky-velvet rose is attached;<sup>8</sup> she also powders her face and wears red lipstick.<sup>9</sup> Further proof of her

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<sup>1</sup> Sitaras 2011: 296, 383–386 and 432; Sitaras 2012: 129–131. Those girls who went to ‘bains-mixtes’ were regarded as modern. See Sitaras 2011: 415.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 300, 379, 407, 431 and 432. The number of tickets and cinema screens points to the popularity of this form of amusement. Ibid.: 296, 297, 364, 388 and 390.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 360–361, 371, 386 and 432; Sitaras 2012: 221 and 247. In his manual *Ηθικάί υποχρεώσεις, σεξουαλισμός και γάμος* (*Moral obligations, sexual instinct, and marriage*, 1935), Konstantinos Katsaras (Greek psychiatrist) seems to have reservations about an overactive social life, dancing, contemporary fashionable styles and mixed-gender relationships but approves of sports and trips. The value placed on sports may be seen in relation to the interwar physical culture movement (already discussed in the first chapter). See Katsaras 1935: 14–17 and 22–23.

<sup>4</sup> Sitaras 2011: 371–372, 384–385, 418–419 and 431; Sitaras 2012: 131, 221, 223 and 259–262. It was because of the unprecedented gender-mingling and the relative nudity that traditionalists saw the mixed baths as a nest of sin (“αμαρτωλά”). See Sitaras 2011: 300.

<sup>5</sup> This relationship between public space and fashion is also evident in Sitaras' study, where it is shown that young women usually displayed their fashionable looks in dancing clubs, mixed baths, Zonars patisserie and Zappeion. See Sitaras 2011: 371, 384, 390, 391–392 and 419.

<sup>6</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 33.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 66 and 101–102. Women's looks also attract the attention of the customers of an overcrowded patisserie. Ibid.: 65.

<sup>8</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 17–19. In *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*, Nitsa Gazeli looks modern by wearing a short skirt. See Xenopoulos 1930: 13.

<sup>9</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 17.



love for stylishness is the fact that she likes jewellery and regards polished chic outfits, perfume and jewellery as aids to women's beauty. Such predilections bear out her self-description as an elegant girl, as well as her view that dignity is synonymous with luxury.<sup>1</sup>

At this point, some more specific comments on female appearance are in order. Firstly, as Cheryl Buckley and Hilary Fawcett suggest, “glamour was a popular style” allowing young women to call into question “dominant constructions of femininity with a knowing disrespect”, and it was against this background that “the red-lipped, silk-stockinged young women” became “symbols of an unwelcome ‘feminine’ modernity” and were “also prescient of the rejection of an essentially patriarchal notion of femininity”.<sup>2</sup> In other words, “fashionable styles” sometimes challenged “accepted and conventional ways of shaping and covering the body by exaggerating sexual difference (a characteristic of the 1930s)”, and as a result, “interwar fashion did not clothe a neutral body, and the dominant discourses related to women were constituted around sex, the sex war, sexual freedom, sexual promiscuity, and the anxieties which this [no-neutral body] provoked”.<sup>3</sup> From this perspective, “the breasts, hips, legs, stomach, back, face, and waist were emphasised

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 19. Additional information about women's fashion (such as dress length, sleeveless and off-the-shoulder dresses, hats, gloves, beauty ornaments, perfumes, makeups, manicure, and trends in haircuts and hairstyles) in the interwar period can be found in Sitaras' books. As the author claims, Ermou Street's shops were –and still are– women's Eldorado. See Sitaras 2011: 291, 295, 369, 371, 375–376, 387, 419 and 431; Sitaras 2012: 149–153, 280 and 327.

<sup>2</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 114.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 115. In contrast to the 1930s, “undermining heterosexual gendered identities and minimising sexual difference”, such as “discarding long hair, one of the most cherished icons of femininity”, was “more typical of the 1920s”. Hints of this trend appear in “Ο ίσιος δρόμος” (1932) by Christos Levantas (1904–1975), where women visit male barbershops to cut their hair short. See Ibid.; Levantas 1932: 5; Soland 2000: 31, 33, 36 and 45.

at one stage or another during the 1920s and 1930s” with “gaunt dramatic makeup, backless gowns, androgynous tubular shifts, figure-hugging bias-cuts, square-shouldered jackets and nipped-in waists all serving to expose the sexualised body”.<sup>1</sup>

For her part, Birgitte Soland remarks that “fashionable appearances” not only allowed young women to forge their “individual and collective identity as ‘modern’ women” but also became “part of young women’s rebellion against the past”.<sup>2</sup> Yet, in the public eye, the adoption of new styles, such as “sheer silk stockings displaying ankles and calves” and “lower necklines and sleeveless tops making women’s upper bodies more visible” suggested a clear “departure from older styles of proper and attractive femininity” on the one hand;<sup>3</sup> and fell short of their “purpose of warming and protecting the body” on the other, insofar as they “revealed as much as possible” and “called attention to the body beneath the clothing” by giving the impression that even the dressed body parts “seemed more exposed and accessible than ever before”.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, the new female look seemed to “eliminate the visible difference between respectable and disreputable women” and “threaten a sexual order” which meant “male control and initiative” as against “female modesty and passivity”;<sup>5</sup> women who were “too attractive and too

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<sup>1</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 115.

<sup>2</sup> Soland 2000: 44.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 24, 25 and 44.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 25 and 26. For example, once, Elena wears a flimsy sleeveless open-bust dress and Panos Mavrostergios’ gaze is directed at her body delineated beneath the garment. Besides, modern apparel allowed women to dress and undress themselves without assistance. For instance, at her partner’s apartment, Kora takes her dress off on her own to put on a carnival costume. See Kokkinos 1924: 47; Kokkinos 1932: 34–35.

<sup>5</sup> Soland 2000: 26, 27, 44–45 and 103. For example, catching the eye of female and male patrons of the dancing club, Kora has a deep sense of her attractiveness and greatness. A theatrical dialogue between an old and a young Athenian woman staged in 1920 and cited by Thomas Sitaras is rather

sexy” now gained an advantage over men in the continuing gender war.<sup>1</sup> Fashion came to be seen as closely interwoven with “the issue of female emancipation”, as the adoption of new styles allegedly allowed women to feel “much freer and more independent both physically and psychologically”.<sup>2</sup> For their part, “fashion advocates” claimed that modern fashions were suggestive of “a renewed and reinforced femininity” enhanced by “attractiveness and erotic appeal” but without danger to “female respectability or conventional gender arrangements”.<sup>3</sup>

It is worth mentioning that, during the 1920s and 1930s “the greater availability of information” contributing to an intimate “knowledge of the latest fashions and looks” was facilitated by Hollywood cinema and by illustrations and photographs featuring in women’s magazines.<sup>4</sup> Young women were now finding it easier to be fashionable and were provided with “a visual vocabulary based on the notion that looks were made rather than born” and that “beauty and style could be seen to come in many guises, and some of these were deliberately provocative in relation to

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revealing about the blurred boundaries between respectable and disreputable women. See Kokkinos 1932: 42–43; Sitaras 2011: 316.

<sup>1</sup> Soland 2000: 26

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 40.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 30–31.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 44; Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 4 and 12. In Greece, during the interwar period there were many cinemas where Greek, as well as American and European, films were screened. At the same time, columns aimed at females and concerned with fashion, as well as dieting and physical exercise, appeared in various Greek journals and newspapers, such as *Εθνική Ζωή* (*Ethniki Zoi*), *Νεοελληνικά Γράμματα* (*Neoellinika Grammata*), and *Πρωία* (*Proïa*), and under the titles “Η ζωή της γυναίκας” (“Woman’s life”), “Στήλη των κυριών” (“Women’s column”), “Η σελίδα της γυναίκας” (“Woman’s page”) and “Μόδα” / “Μόδες” (“Fashion(s)”). Some articles on these issues also featured in the journals *Ο αγώνας της γυναίκας* (*O agonas tis gynaikas*) and *Ελληνίς* (*Ellinis*). For details about the movies, see Sitaras 2011: 379; Sitaras 2012: 124. For the journal *Ellinis*, see Nixarlidou 2013: 254–256.

gender”.<sup>1</sup> Movies were of paramount importance inasmuch as “silver-screen stars, especially from USA, created highly glamorous female images”;<sup>2</sup> besides, the increase in the number of “images in the 1920s and 1930s” sped up “the advent of new forms of consumption” and stimulated “the cultivation of the cult of appearance”, with “photography offering”, in comparison to illustration, “a much more modern and evocative method of representing fashion by the 1930s” since “in one image it could capture a number of qualities”.<sup>3</sup> In light of such publishing practices, magazines and movies proved to be “sites where desirable and potentially transgressive feminine identities were formulated”, with women “tied into elaborate patterns of consumption and individual beauty care”.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, the emergence of the fashionable styles from the end of the First World War onwards sparked the rise of the “much slimmer female beauty ideal” of Venus de’ Medici, which was strikingly different from the previous one of Venus de Milo, and aroused fears over women’s “health, beauty and reproductive capacity” because of “the excessive slimming”.<sup>5</sup> Slenderness was to be achieved not only through dieting but also through physical exercise, and it was against this backdrop

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<sup>1</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 12, 83 and 115.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 83. Under this aspect, it is no mere coincidence that heroines, adopting new looks or -as will be seen later- talking about fashion, go to or love cinema as well. Besides looking fashionable, Elena and Kora smoke, with smoking suggesting another departure from fixed conceptions of femininity. Apart from Kokkinos’ protagonists, Smaro in Aimilia Daphni’s *To tάλαντο της Σμαρώς* (1923) smokes too. See Daphni 1923: 153; Kokkinos 1924: 53; Kokkinos 1932: 27.

<sup>3</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 110; Company et al: 2016: 34.

<sup>4</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 83 and 84; Soland 2000: 44.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 41 and 47; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2011: 307. One should be reminded here that during the interwar period “governments regarded mothers as the instruments of policies designed to meet population goals” and “children as an important and dwindling national resource”. See Allen 2005: 13 and 50.

that advice on these matters frequently appeared in women's magazines.<sup>1</sup> For example, in *Το σταυροδρόμι*, Eleni Vanieri not only follows a diet but also adopts a habit of standing for twenty minutes after meals –to the dismay of her mother who does not condone such practices. Mrs Taroniti (Eleni's mother) belongs to the prewar generation of women for whom slenderness of figure was hardly a beauty requirement.<sup>2</sup>

Angelos Terzakis' *Δεσμώτες*, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία* are primarily concerned with placing their female characters within the domestic space.<sup>3</sup> In *Δεσμώτες*, Maria Galani, because of her father's death, her family's socio-economic decline, and her mother's poor health, is not only restricted to the house but also manages the household and acts as a mother substitute, taking care of both her sick, widowed mother and her brother.<sup>4</sup> Her daily routine is therefore compared to the repeated circles of the clock hands –a comparison that clearly suggests boredom and monotony.<sup>5</sup> No wonder her presence in the public sphere is limited, as Maria leaves the house only to do the shopping while she also has lost almost all contact with her friends, Agni Gardouli and Popi Georgiadi; on top of all this, she does not even go to the cinema, a popular form of entertainment in the interwar years.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Soland 2000: 41–42 and 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid: 41; Petsalis 1934: 37–38.

<sup>3</sup> Here (as well as in the sections that follow) one should be reminded of *Γυναικεία προσωπογραφία στο έργο του Άγγελου Τερζάκη* by Polyxeni Bista. See Bista 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 13, 16, 18 and 26.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 235–236.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 160, 184 and 212.

Likewise, in *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, Sofia Malvi's exclusive sphere of life and action is the family house; as a result, she devotes most of her time to the household activities and to the care of her beloved father,<sup>1</sup> while her presence in the public sphere is infrequent and insignificant.<sup>2</sup> Her social circle is also limited as, apart from the relatives and family friends visiting the Malvis family every Thursday, Sofia has only one friend, Angeliki.<sup>3</sup> Besides, despite her taste for cinema and nice dresses, she is thrifty.<sup>4</sup>

It is noteworthy that embroidering is a habit shared by Maria and Sofia.<sup>5</sup> As Alexandra Bakalaki remarks, "embroidery" was regarded as "a symbol of female subordination, obedience, purity, dedication to both family and home, and sexual inexperience".<sup>6</sup> In other words, it was seen as "a means for ensuring female submissiveness, and as a deterrent to idleness and permissiveness which women are usually inclined to";<sup>7</sup> in the same vein "embroideries were not only part of women's dowry but also proof of their skills as housewives".<sup>8</sup> It is therefore obvious that,

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 58. Her mother has abandoned them. Ibid.: 53.

<sup>2</sup> For example, she gets out of the house to carry out her religious duties on Good Friday (Epitaphios). After making the acquaintance of Yiannis Maroukis (an assistant at Meletis Malvis' law office), the frequency of her public appearances changes a bit, since they both take a walk every Sunday and go on a little trip to Daphní once. It is worth underlining that her father approves of these walks and exhorts them to go out together. Ibid.: 84 and 179.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 57. There is also considerable interest in the case of Elenitsa-Pelagia (*Γιούγκερμαν*) in that, despite the economic and social rise of her family, she remains a petit-bourgeois girl: she is home-bound, has two up to three friends, and she is resistant to changing her style and her habits (embroidering, playing the piano, cooking, and reading books). See Karagatsis 1938: 232, 267 and 270.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1937: 178.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 133 and 166; Terzakis 1932b: 125.

<sup>6</sup> Bakalaki 2011: 541, 543 and 555.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 543 and 555.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 541.

through this view of embroidering, society clearly aimed to control women's behaviour and sexuality on the one hand, and maintain the status quo on the other by preserving the long-established gender identities.

Apart from the depiction of domestic life, I will further discuss the 'cult of domesticity', supported by both female and male characters and pointing to a fixed conception of gender roles. Long-standing gender stereotypes with regard to the future of the son and the daughter of both the Galanis and Malvis families are to be found in *Δεσμώτες* and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία* respectively.<sup>1</sup> According to these age-old gender-based beliefs, as showcased in *Δεσμώτες*, the son is considered independent and a master of himself, while the daughter is regarded as weak.<sup>2</sup> In light of this view, Fotos is in control of his own destiny, and can make his life choices without any guidance; Mrs Eleni Galani feels certain that if Fotos is diligent, worthy, and honest, he will be successful and honour the family name. Thus, her only advice to him is to use his mind and to be careful so as not to be led astray.

This is not the case with the family's daughter who is subject to the decisions taken on her behalf by both her mother and brother, especially on the matter of marriage.<sup>3</sup> As Mrs Galani nears her end, she becomes increasingly worried about this urgent family matter. Equally concerned is aunt Calliope, who is the first to

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<sup>1</sup> According to Aris Berlis, "Terzakis' heroes and heroines adhere to social conventions to such an extent that the present-day reader may not feel their hesitation and rigidity". See Berlis 2008b: 194 and 203.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 31–32. Mrs Doridi, mother of the female protagonist in *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*, seems to be another supporter of marriage and motherhood as a woman's vocation. Though her case will be explored further in the next section since her view about her daughter's future is put forward when Smaro announces her decision to work.

bring up the issue of her niece's marriage and tries to talk her sister into considering Stefanos Sarmidis as a prospective husband for Maria.<sup>1</sup> Calliope makes a point of stressing to her sister the need to think carefully about her daughter's future before it is too late, as Maria will be left unprotected in the case of her mother's demise;<sup>2</sup> and when Sarmidis visits the Galanis family, she praises her niece's propriety and housekeeping abilities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 146–149.

<sup>2</sup> The feeling of insecurity about the future is harboured by Sofia Malvi as well because of the lack of dowry and her father's fragile health. See Terzakis 1937: 114.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 184. The daughter's decency and housewifery skills, as well as her dowry (a property), are used on the family's part as a means to marry her off. No doubt, Terzakis expresses his opposition to the institution of dowry. See Ibid.: 189; Bista 1998: 389 and 535. The requirement for a dowry for a young woman is "the key to the sociological and feminist analysis" of Papadiamantis' early twentieth-century novel *Η φόνισσα*, with its subtitle "Κοινωνικό μυστήριομα" ("Social novel") giving a sense of the book's content. The main character is an old woman, Fragoyiannou, who, looking back on her trials and tribulations (she has always been of service to others; she was not given a proper dowry, when she got married; and she struggled to dower and marry off one out of her three daughters), concludes that the birth of female children (especially these born to lower classes) is a cause of suffering, and killing them could relieve low-class families of a burden and young girls of their misery (Likewise, in Andreas Karkavitsas' *Η λυγερή*, female offspring are regarded as 'a heavy load' or as 'a notice of payment'; and in *Ο ζητιάνος*, dowry is presented as divesting the paternal house. The plethora of females, suggesting in turn their competition for access to male mates, together with the desire to control female population growth, point to the age-old practice of infanticide and allow the Darwinian approach to Papadiamantis' text). With these thoughts in mind, she causes the death of two newborn baby girls (her grandchild included) and of two young female children, while also leaving another girl to certain death (not to mention that she also performs abortions and uses infertility-weed, as well as male-weed, as a means for terminating/preventing and facilitating the birth of female and male offspring respectively). Papadiamantis undoubtedly mirrors the realities and values of a society (Skiathos) of which he has intimate knowledge (the myronymic law or "the law of the first daughter" – "κιουρά" or "κανακαρά" meaning "pampered" – required that the mother passed the house on to the first daughter who was dowered to such an extent that it was impossible for her sisters to be given a dowry and get married), as well as his first-hand experience (three out of his four sisters were portionless, and therefore unlikely to marry, a fact over which he might have felt a lot of guilt). As for the feminist and social



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nature of the text, Galateia Saranti and Takis Adamos view *H φόνισσα* as the reflection on and disapproval of woman's fate; while Maria Gkasouka claims that this novel "signals the beginning of the woman-friendly fiction –that is, fiction that, regardless of the authorial intent, is in fact in favour of women". According to her opinion, Papadiamantis "attributes masculine qualities to his leading heroine so that she goes beyond her gender", a fact which is reflected in her relationship with her weak husband as well (generally, men-fathers are barely present or are depicted as naïve, weak-willed and passive) suggesting in turn a challenge to the roles assigned to men and women (Georgia Farinou-Malamatari is nudged towards the same assumption and stresses that, "although Fragoyiannou puts forth women's subordination, she herself is not such a typical example"). Apart from Fragoyiannou, her second daughter Amersa merits a mention too: being a diligent woman, as well as a great weaver, and aware of married women's misery first-hand, she seems to adopt a negative attitude to marriage and remains unwed. Her unexpected view may be grounded in the fact that she, like her mother, displays masculine traits. It is therefore because of the shocking plot and the portrayal of his main character that *H φόνισσα* crosses the boundaries of ethnography and comes closer to naturalism and psychography. Christina Antonopoulou notes that "Papadiamantis notices women's marginalisation; yet he seems to regard this inequity as inevitable, a result of divine causality or natural order", so to speak, since "women's 'salvation' seems to lie in their violent annihilation instead of a shift in mentalities". For his part, Dimitris Karamvalis maintains that "Fragoyiannou kills female children, for she cannot lead a feminist struggle and overturn the social structure". And in this respect, *H φόνισσα* may be read as a sort of protest. Nina Anna Trzaska mentions that Papadiamantis, by "providing all the reasons leading Fragoyiannou to commit the murders, shifts at least part of the blame from his heroine to the inequitable patriarchal system". For Georgia Pateridou, *H φόνισσα* is "a naturalistic work through which Papadiamantis' social message as to women's lowly position in society is conveyed". Finally, Dimitris Tziouvas holds that the retrospective narrative, together with the underlying idea that "society cannot deal with its problems and the only solution is a kind of Darwinian natural selection", evoke "a sense of nostalgia for a primitive, natural stage" and justify the characterisation of *H φόνισσα* as an "antisocial novel". See Adamos 1985e: 25; Antonopoulou 2000: 28, 29, 30 and 31; Aslanidis 1988: 18, 21–22 and 29; Chalvatzakis 1977: 674; Charitakis 1941: 48–49; Farinou-Malamatari 2002: 55, 63–64 and 234; Gkasouka 1998: 151, 152–153, 158–159, 161 and 163–164; Karamvalis 2000: 144–146, 151 and 153–154; Kargakos 2006: 14, 22–23, 36–37, 41, 42, 44, 47–48 and 51–52; Karkavitsas 1896: 113 and 130; Karkavitsas 1925: 117–118; Kokolis 1993: 21; Kontos 2001: 345–346 and 348; Orfanidou 2000: 262, 263 and 264; Paganos 1983d: 99; Papadiamantis 1912: 1–2, 4–19, 27–30, 42, 45, 51, 61–62, 69 and 87; Papagiorgis 2002: 216; Papaleontiou 1997: 342 and 343; Pateridou 2002: 417–431; Phokas 1992: 98; Politi 1996a: 155, 156, 162, 164, 166, 167–168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175 and 181; Sachinis 1958: 21–23; Saranti 1981: 347 and 348; Saunier 2001: 225, 227, 244, 253–254 and 272; Stergiopoulos 1986c: 61; Triantaphyllopoulos 1978: 24 and 131; Trzaska 2021: 291, 292,

Once again, the social and cultural expectations associated with daughters and sons appear in *H μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*. Particularly, when the son of the Malvis family graduates from the Law School and is about to begin his professional activities in the public sphere, the relatives and the family friends wish Sofia a marriage to a good man.<sup>1</sup> Of course, this is not the first time they insist on the paramount importance of marriage as the young woman's ultimate goal, an insistence which consciously or otherwise destines Sofia to the private space of family and home.<sup>2</sup> Such views about women's destination are also evident in the case of Angeliki, Sofia's friend, who, despite her new-fangled ideas, her talk about cinema, fashion, society, marriage and taste for dancing, is home-bound because of special family circumstances (her father is imprisoned, her mother suffers from cancer and her brother from tuberculosis), follows the conventional path and marries a young man whom she loves.<sup>3</sup> Finally, not surprisingly, Yiannis Maroukis, in true traditionalist fashion, believes that a partner is necessary not only for household chores but also as company.<sup>4</sup>

At this juncture, it should be noted that there is a relation between the British domestic novel of the interwar years and Terzakis' fiction inasmuch as "the house and the mother come to symbolise the oppression and repression of young women's

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295, 299 and 303–304; Tziovas 2002; Vitti 1999: 40, 72 and 90; Vitti 2016: 307–308; Vlachoyiannis 1938: 10, 11 and 12; Zamarou 2000: 48 and 49.

<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 151.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 58–59 and 66.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 100–102. The fact that lower-class daughters, such as Sofia and Angeliki, like dresses and are concerned with the latest styles justifies the view that fashion, through "its presence in the mass media, was transformed into a truly global and demotic phenomenon". Supporting evidence for women's interest in fashion across the social spectrum is provided in Sitaras' study. See Pouillard 2013: 728; Sitaras 2012: 150 and 278.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1937: 161.

independent selves as they are obligated to and, in some cases, welcome the charge of houses and widowed mothers”.<sup>1</sup> In particular, according to Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei, it is in the “popular genre” of the interwar “domestic novel written by middle-class women for middle-class women about middle-class women” –for example, *The New House* (1936) by Lettice Cooper, *Mary Olivier: A Life* (1919) by Mary Sinclair, *The Unlit Lamp* (1924) by Radclyffe Hall, and *Thank Heaven Fasting* (1932) by E. M. Delafield– that the heroines are depicted as “torn between their desire for freedom and their duty to an often manipulative mother and high-maintenance house, mediated by fear of independence and the public world”.<sup>2</sup>

Creating domestic fiction from the 1920s onwards, writers, such as those mentioned above, “began to view the world, family, the house from inside the domestic sphere through the lens of housework, housekeeping, cooking, cleaning, decorating”, all pointing to “the ghostly repetition and return of domestic rituals shaping the narratives of the inter-war domestic novel” and to their suppressed individuality.<sup>3</sup> Although “interwar domestic novels inaugurated a turn to interiority, feminine subjectivity and the everyday”, they were, in essence, “a discourse of opposition” to the oppression of individuality.<sup>4</sup>

Briganti and Mezei’s article is appositely titled “House haunting” for, as they explain, “‘haunt’ is a place or abode that one frequents”, and it is because of “this

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<sup>1</sup> Briganti and Mezei 2004: 155.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 148 and 155. In interwar Britain, the “reclamation of domesticity”, “home culture”, so to speak, was strengthened against the background of the efforts to restore the pre-war gender order, overturned by females’ massive entry into the labour market. The “domestic interior” informed not only fiction but also articles and advertisements where advice on homemaking was to be found. Ibid.: 148, 151 and 153.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 160 and 161.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 160, 161 and 163.

mixing of obsession, home, and memory that houses are stories and narratives of hauntings by memories, ghosts, traces of selves and others, while stories are haunted by fictional and lived and imagined houses, which frequently mimic the psyche and bodies of their inhabitants as well as the social practices and political ideologies, the habitus of the nation”.<sup>1</sup> As for the prevailing atmosphere in Terzakis’ fictional houses, it is, as Andreas Karantonis and Aris Berlis underline, “stifling and oppressive, with dark, seedy and gloomy rooms, old furniture and murky mirrors contributing to the pervasive atmosphere and, at the same time, reflecting the psychology of those dwelling in them”.<sup>2</sup>

Before moving to *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* and *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* by Thanasis Petsalis-Diomidis, I should stress that Mrs Gardouli in *Δεσμώτες* and Mrs Sklirou in *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* prove to be feisty women, although they are

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<sup>1</sup> Briganti and Mezei 2004: 148. See also Blair 2007: 11.

<sup>2</sup> Berlis 2008b: 193 and 194; Karantonis 1937b: 790. For I. M. Panagiotopoulos, *Δεσμώτες* is a piece of symbolist writing, as well as a study of the characters’ inner world, that reminds him of Kostantinos Hatzopoulos’ symbolist novel *Το Φθινόπωρο* (1917). As for *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, it is the symbolist title that hints at the mood pervading the book. Under this aspect, one is led to assume that Terzakis’ fiction reflects, to a greater or lesser degree, the influence of northern literature. In Apostolos Sachinis view, despite the elements that point to the literary movement of symbolism, it is the plot and the contemporary issues addressed that mainly allow the characterisation of both *Δεσμώτες* and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία* as realist texts. For example, the latter offers “the image of interwar Athens, i.e., of a capital in transition from a provincial town to an urban centre”. See Berlis 2008b: 194–196; Charis 1937: 1188; Panagiotopoulos 1980e: 124–125, 126, 128, 130 and 131; Petsalis-Diomidis 1980: 11; Sachinis 1978: 21; Terzakis 1980: 2; Ziras 1978: 14. For the author’s ability to depict his heroes and heroines’ psychology, as well as the tone that prevails in his fictional works, see also *ibid.*: 15; Berlis 2008b: 204; Panagiotopoulos 1980e: 131–132; Perastikos 1938: 12; Thrylos n.d.: 86, 90 and 91. Finally, it should be underlined that setting his stories in lower-class districts, casting weak and submissive characters as his protagonists, and setting forth his existential anguish is what mainly characterises his literary production. *Ibid.*: 85 and 90; Berlis 2008b: 204; Charis 1981c: 99–100; Panagiotopoulos 1980e: 124, 131 and 132; Perastikos 1938: 12; Sachinis 1978: 21–22; Vrettakos 1984: 427–428.

restricted to the house, the hallmark of the private sphere. Mrs Gardouli seems to be the head of the family and to have the last word on each issue.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Foteini Sklirou in *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* runs the household effectively; not only does she manage the property issues, but she also plans the daily budget, enters expenses in a notebook, asks for her change back and negotiates deals with shopkeepers.<sup>2</sup> It should, however, be said that Foteini used to be in charge of her paternal house as well before getting married.<sup>3</sup>

The trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* is a springboard for exploration of the heroines' relationship with domestic, as well as public, space over the course of three generations.<sup>4</sup> In the first book, *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*, the idea of the close association of women with the private sphere is clearly expressed by Frosini Kouka, who, because of the event of her eldest daughter's engagement, entertains hopes for a happy marriage for her youngest daughter too.<sup>5</sup> Besides, despite the economic and social rise of the family, Frosini not only remains a humble pious woman surrounded solely by female relatives and devoted to her household, husband and daughters, but also betrays an old-fashioned mindset which makes it hard for her to understand how a young woman can travel abroad alone, unprotected and with no specific purpose.<sup>6</sup> Seeing that her daughter Maria is leading a 'peculiar' life, Frosini believes that she seems to be deaf to the opinion of relatives

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 92–93.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 49 and 193.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 23.

<sup>4</sup> For *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*, see also Bitsiani 2014: 80–83 and 85.

<sup>5</sup> Petsalis 1933: 33–34. Indeed, when Loukas Phokas asks Maria to marry him, Frosini wants to see her daughter being happy with her husband and her children. The same goes for her married sister, Eirini, who urges Maria to accept the marriage proposal. *Ibid.*: 65–66.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 22, 25, 26, 32, 83, 100 and 174.

and family friends, unconcerned about any aspersions that may be casted on her integrity.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, it is hard for Frosini to understand Maria's hectic social life.<sup>2</sup> Afraid that her daughter will soon get tired and will be seen as reckless and immoral, not surprisingly she enjoins upon her a second marriage.<sup>3</sup> Yet eventually, Frosini somehow gets used to her daughter having a lifestyle completely different from hers and stays calm, having faith in her righteousness.

When we look more closely at the case of the two sisters, profound differences leap to the eye. The eldest daughter displays apparent similarities with her mother. From the very beginning, Eirini is depicted as an upstanding young woman, a capable homemaker who gets married to a raisin merchant, Yiannis Lazarou.<sup>4</sup> Having shown an early preference for the calm atmosphere of home, Eirini follows her parents' pattern of thought and behaviour;<sup>5</sup> devoted to her children, husband, and household, and indifferent to social life, she is also at variance with her sister's way of living.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike Eirini, Maria, despite belonging to the pre-war generation, adopts quite modern manners, thereby setting herself against both her mother and her sister.<sup>7</sup> At the beginning, she is restricted to the house, while her parents are opposed to her

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1933: 101. For example, for Loukia Parni, Maria Kouka-Phoka is a widow with a rather active social life, and in this respect, she may not be the perfect wife for his son.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 110 and 116.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 128.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 26.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 111 and 174.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 81, 116 and 174–175.

<sup>7</sup> To a considerable extent, the sisters' different attitudes and perspectives may be attributed to their age gap and to the economic and social rise the Koukas family achieved after Maria's birth. Ibid.: 25–26.

establishing relationships outside the family circle;<sup>1</sup> and whenever she goes out, she is accompanied by her mother.<sup>2</sup> Later, as an adult, she enjoys more freedom but is not permitted to go out at night.<sup>3</sup>

Her first life-changing experience is a family trip to Rome; Maria feels that she is reborn and that an unbridgeable gap separates her from her parents.<sup>4</sup> The second turning point in her life is the death of her father.<sup>5</sup> Although she wants to be in control of her destiny, she fears that her desire for independence will be an insult to her father's memory. Yet it is only after her first husband's death that her wish for independence becomes stronger and it is at this point that, eager to escape the stifling atmosphere of home and in need of change, she decides to travel alone.<sup>6</sup> The journey broadens her mind, as do various new acquaintances, and on her return, she enjoys a more open life, frequenting charity and social events.<sup>7</sup> Thus Maria, a pre-war heroine, asserts a new kind of freedom in a period where a very active social life on the part of women was apt to be associated with deficient morality.

Female figures in both the second and the third book of the trilogy also seem to depart from pre-war standards. For example, in *Το σταυροδρόμι*, the upper-middle-class daughter Aspasia Psellou, like other girls of her age and social origin, leads a vigorous social life.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning, she visits family friends for afternoon tea

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1933: 32.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 40–41.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 47.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 48 and 51.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid: 81–83.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 85–97, 107, 109–111 and 122.

<sup>8</sup> Petsalis 1934: 81.

and attends family celebrations;<sup>1</sup> later, she takes part in charity balls in big hotels and goes on trips with friends.<sup>2</sup> In *Ο απόγονος*, Vasiliki Parni, a twenty-four-year-old upper-middle-class daughter, often invites her male and female friends over, where they hold discussions, dance and flirt.<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, much goes to show that the social life of the first and second post-war (for the readers, interwar) heroines is characterised by free association between male and female characters beyond the family control; and such freedom turns out to be “part and parcel of a freer, more exciting life”.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, at the age of twenty three Elissavet, the eldest daughter of the upper-middle-class Damakos family in *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* (1937), the first book of Petsalis’ two-part series *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*, enjoys, like her peers, considerable freedom to do as she wishes, a permissiveness she has enjoyed ever since she was a child.<sup>5</sup> For example, she goes out at night to join social gatherings at friends’ houses or to the cinema.<sup>6</sup> Unlike her, the youngest sister, Margarita, an obedient and prudent girl, has mainly been confined to the house.<sup>7</sup> When their mother decides to leave for Corfu and stay in her parental house for a while, it is Margarita who runs the household and takes care of their father, thereby confirming her strong association with the private realm.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the depiction

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1934: 81.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 78.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1935: 156–158 and 160.

<sup>4</sup> Soland 2000: 91. For example, Mrs Eleni L. Parni, Vasiliki’s mother, leaves the house when the gathering is in progress. See Petsalis 1935: 156.

<sup>5</sup> Petsalis 1937: 91.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 87 and 106.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 115–116.



of the daughters' relation with the social, as well as the private, sphere lays the foundation for exploring their relationships with males in the third section.

Lastly, special reference must be made to Antigoni Delatolla, a female protagonist in Theotokas' *Αργώ*, because of the strong personality she displays in her private sphere.<sup>1</sup> Compared to her weak and indolent husband Francisco, Antigoni is a stout, robust, majestic and active woman, giving everybody the impression that she is the head of the house.<sup>2</sup> An excellent housewife dedicated to the running of the household and to the care of her beloved persons, she also proves to be an astute businesswoman;<sup>3</sup> she insists on being informed about how her money is invested, and thanks to her vigilance many a business failure is prevented.<sup>4</sup> Besides, she passionately voices her opinion on political issues.<sup>5</sup> In fact, Antigoni Delatolla's character reflects the views of George Theotokas who, as we will be seeing in the second and third section, was a supporter of feminism and advocated gender equality.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs Delatolla has also been leading a social life since she was a young girl. Accompanied by their husbands, both Aspasia Psellou (*Αργώ*) and Eleni Grizoti (*Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*) have a social life even after their marriages.

<sup>2</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 350–351.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 351.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 351–352.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 351. Similarly, Louisa, the mother of Nanis and Kiara in *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*, governs the house and expresses her personal political beliefs –one has only to remember Xenopoulos' feminist perspective. Astroula Stratidi for her part in *Δύο αγάπες* (1924) by Dimitris Tagkopoulos writes part of Dimos Strotos' political speech; and it is because of her interest in politics that Roxani, Strotos' secret partner, characterises Astroula as a suffragette and expresses the opinion that a young lady should, first and foremost, enjoy her life. See Tagkopoulos 1924: 51–52 and 61; Xenopoulos 1984a: 282 and 356.

<sup>6</sup> Perastikos 1937: 14.

Despite these attributes and her open-mindedness vis-à-vis cross-gender socialisation, Mrs Delatolla seems to be the first to broach the issue of her daughter's future and to express more conventional views about Morpho's life after marriage.<sup>1</sup> Particularly, she believes that Morpho will stop playing the piano and will be the lady of the house while also running the household.<sup>2</sup> She also believes that marriage is a law of life insofar as a young woman exists in order to get married at the appropriate time.<sup>3</sup> Thus, after marriage her daughter is expected to conform to the ideal of domesticity; at the same time, she feels that the domestic life of new couples, compared to that of her time, has been simplified in many ways.<sup>4</sup>

To conclude, it has become clear that, among the female characters of the novels discussed, those of Terzakis' fictional works seem to be almost exclusively confined to the private sphere (Maria Galani, *Δεσμώτες*; and both Sofia Malvi and Angeliki, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*), their confinement being mostly attributed to the families' economic and social decline, as well as to the mothers' illness or absence from home.<sup>5</sup> The female protagonists, aside from running the household, take care of their family members. Against this background, the "domestic space" is identified with "the everyday, the rituals of domesticity in their cyclical, repetitive

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas: 1936a: 357.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 367. It is quite interesting that a similar view is expressed by Kiara Doxara (*Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*) claiming that many girls engage with drawing and music when they are young; but after getting married, they give up these activities. See Xenopoulos 1984a: 143.

<sup>3</sup> Theotokas: 1936a: 367.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Eirini Kouka (*Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*) and Margarita Damakou (*Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*) show a clear preference for the private place; still, the reader may feel that they both may act as their modern sisters' countertypes. Similarly, Elenitsa-Pelagia Sklavoyianni (*Γιούγκερμαν*) prefers the private to the public sphere, since she refuses to give up the habits she acquired when she was a petit-bourgeois girl and thus her profile stands in contrast to that of her modern cousins' (Ellen and Ntina).

ordinariness” on the one hand, and with the “denial of the passage of time and the fearfulness of change” on the other.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the connotations attached to domestic chores, fixed conceptions of gender identities and roles are also reflected by the practice of embroidering (“females’ subordination, compliance, virtue, commitment to both family and home, and housewifely skill”), a ‘hobby’ which both Maria and Sofia indulge in.<sup>2</sup>

However, as will be shown in the second and third sections, despite being confined to the house, at times both Maria and Sofia seem to break with traditional patterns of thought and action, and it is on the grounds of this partial shift towards a new femininity that the personalities of Mrs Gardouli (*Δεσμώτες*) and Mrs Sklirou (*Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*) may somehow be accounted for. Of course, spouses and mothers who turn out to be the head of the house are also to be found in *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη* (Mrs Louisa Doxara) and in *Αργώ* (Mrs Antigoni Delatolla), where their role reflects Xenopoulos and Theotokas’ advocacy of gender equality.

It should further be underlined that the house is the site of inequality between males and females, and the place where life expectations associated with each of the two genders are fostered; and it is through this lens that in *Δεσμώτες*, the son is regarded as being in control of his own destiny, whereas the daughter is treated as the weak and dependent member, her marriage being a matter of familial concern. By the same token, in *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, the daughter’s happy marriage is equated with the son’s graduation and professional potential.<sup>3</sup> Fixed perceptions of females’ vocation and roles after marriage can be found in *Ο προορισμός της*

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<sup>1</sup> Briganti and Mezei 2004: 161.

<sup>2</sup> Bakalaki 2011: 550.

<sup>3</sup> Daughters’ marriage clearly implies the continuation of their home confinement.

*Μαρίας Πάρνη*, as well as in *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου* and *Αργώ*. No doubt, the ‘cult of domesticity’ and ‘cult of motherhood’ lurk behind such established views, approved not only by male and female characters (Mrs Galani, aunt Calliope, Malvis’ family relatives and friends, Yiannis Maroukis, Mrs Frosini Kouka and Eirini Kouka-Lazarou, Kiara Doxara, and Mrs Antigoni Delatolla) but also by more broad-minded protagonists (Kiara and Antigoni).<sup>1</sup> In any case, much goes to show that the ideal of devoted wives and mothers remains strong.<sup>2</sup>

However, in contrast to the heroines examined so far, the great majority of young female characters, such as Elena Roumpini (*Μυστική φωληά*), Kora Frinta (*Ιλιγγος*), Aspasia Psellou (*Το σταυροδρόμι*), Vasiliki Parni (*Ο απόγονος*), Morpho Delatolla (*Αργώ*), Elissavet Damakou (*Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*), and both Ellen and Ntina Sklavoyianni (*Γιούγκερμαν*) move freely in the public sphere, thereby transgressing the age-old public/private divide and living a more social and joyful life. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Maria Kouka-Phoka (*Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*) may be seen as a pioneering figure as she travels alone and opts for a kind of socialising which does not conform to the standards of the pre-war generation to which she belongs.

This increased access to the public arena consists in popular forms of entertainment, such as dancing and house parties (Elena, Kora, Aspasia and Vasiliki), sports (Morpho), cinema (Kora and Elissavet), travelling (Elena, Kora, Aspasia, Morpho and Ellen), indulging in cross-gender encounters (Ntina) away from family control as well as flirting. Of course, women and men do not only meet

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<sup>1</sup> One should be reminded of the fact that Terzakis’ characters are to a great extent stuck to social conventions.

<sup>2</sup> This issue will be rediscussed in the following sections.

in the public but also in the private domain, with these *privé* gatherings being one of the means by which young women socialise (Elena, Vasiliki and Elissavet). The kind of social life adopted by these young women represents a radical departure from the principle of house confinement but is also a liberating gesture and a turning-point in relations between the genders; and such changes can be seen across the whole of interwar Europe. Such public visibility of women was undoubtedly also favoured by their more prominent presence in workplaces during the interwar years –a further push towards their social emancipation.

It is to be emphasised that such trends met with no strong resistance on the part of the family: in this respect, Kora’s aunt, Vasiliki Parni’s and Morpho’s mothers, Ellen’s and Ntina’s parents come off as the most open-minded. There are, however, exceptions, with Kora’s and Maria’s mothers being the most representative: Mrs Frinta cannot come to terms with a young girl being out and about on her own, and Mrs Galani reveals her conservative stance when she tells the prospective groom that Maria does not even go to the cinema. It is obvious that while “young movie goers” thought of cinema as “an inexpensive and easily accessible entertainment”, older contemporaries felt “uncomfortable with the inappropriate mingling across genders and with the cheap thrills and the loose moral standards of films”.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, as might be expected, “being in the wrong place and in the wrong company” was still a source of doubts about daughters’ proper behaviour (Nitsa Gazeli and Elena Roumpini).<sup>2</sup>

Apart from cross-gender socialisation, fashionable looks (Nitsa Gazeli, *H τρίμορφη γυναίκα*; Elena Roumpini and Liza Fronti, *Μυστική φωλιά*; and Kora

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<sup>1</sup> Soland 2000: 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 85.

Frinta, *Λιγγος*), and slenderness of figure, as well as fitness (Eleni Vanieri, *To σταυροδρόμι*), were also suggestive of the “modern” female body espoused by younger heroines insofar as fashionable dress and slimness through dieting and physical exercise were part of being modern.<sup>1</sup> This process of constructing new versions of feminine identity did not only involve the ways in which women presented themselves but also the way “they were imagined by others”.<sup>2</sup> The new trends in fashion for young women (Nitsa, Elena, Liza and Kora) meant a rejection of the past, a challenge to accepted ways of dressing the body, a deviation from what had long been regarded as “proper and attractive femininity”, a threat to gender order (“male control and initiative”/“female modesty and passivity”), and a manifestation of female emancipation.<sup>3</sup> Further, the changes that enhanced feminine attractiveness must also be seen in conjunction with a new air of sensuality, a topic I will be considering in detail in the third section. In a different vein, “slimming in pursuit of fashion” was generally perceived on the part of older women as “threatening to undermine reproductive capacity”.<sup>4</sup> It is possible to assume that such fears lie behind Mrs Taroniti’s characterisation of her daughter’s practices (dieting and standing) as foolish. It goes without saying that these stem from and are fuelled by deep-seated conceptions of gender roles and functions.

The trends that contributed to the “visual culture” of the interwar period were popularised through Hollywood films, illustrations and photographs in women’s magazines, all of which were “intrinsic to the processes of cultural production and

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<sup>1</sup> Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2011: 312.

<sup>2</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 85.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 115; Soland 2000: 24–27, 40, 44–45 and 103.

<sup>4</sup> Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2011: 299, 301 and 307.

consumption”.<sup>1</sup> Growing availability of information, especially through cinema, allowed women across the social spectrum to follow (Nitsa, *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*; Elena and Liza, *Μυστική φωλιά*; and Kora, *Τλιγγος*), or to become aware of the latest styles (Sofia and Angeliki, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*).

Finally, a brief remark must be made here about the heroines’ relationship with a typical aspect of the public sphere, namely politics. In this matter, with the exception of Mrs Louisa Doxara (*Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*), Astroula Stratidi (*Δύο αγάπες*), and Mrs Antigoni Delatolla (*Αργώ*), the vast majority showed little concern about political issues. Such lack of interest may reflect the interwar reality. Indeed, as already mentioned, what lay at the heart of feminist struggle in the interwar period was the wish to secure the voting right for women, a right which had been considerably hindered by women’s limited occasions to express their opinion and their inability or reluctance to engage the issue of civil equality, all consequences of their age-old domestic confinement.<sup>2</sup> Against this background, feminists had difficulty persuading even those who were given the right to vote.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 3.

<sup>2</sup> Avdela 2002: 349, 350 and 352; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 26; Imvrioti 1923: 10; Samiou 2003: 76; Samiou 2013: 146, 194 and 196–197; Theodoropoulou 1930b: 1–2; Theodoropoulou 1932: 1–2.

<sup>3</sup> Samiou 2013: 194–195. The result of the campaign for women’s suffrage was a bit disappointing; women were only granted the right to vote on February 5, 1930. Besides, the voting right was only given to 10% of the women’s population –to those who were 30 years old and could both read and write. Ibid.: 187–192; Avdela 2002: 352 and 357; Avdela 2006: 250; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 64, 68 and 70; Dalakoura and Ziogou 2015: 294–295; Doulgeraki 1929; Kaklamanaki 1984: 48; Kaklamanaki 2007: 68 and 82; Koromila 1934: 25–26; Mantzoulinou 1935: 178–179; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 226 and 231; Palaiologos 1928: 12; Poulos 2014: 125; Psarra 1992: 80; Rethymniotaki et al 2016: 27; Samiou 2003: 75; Svolou 1929c: 1–2; Theodoropoulou 1931: 2; Xiradaki 1988: 117 and 118; Zaïmis 1930: 2–3.

## **2.2 Education and work**

### **2.2.1 The right to be educated and to work**

Between 1920 and 1928, the feminist concern for improvement of women's educational opportunities increased, as did the rate of female literacy. Also, during the interwar years, more women entered the labour market, while central to feminist thought was the need for women to work on as equal terms as possible. Against this backdrop, my aim in this chapter is to explore the relationship between gender and education on the one hand, and gender and work on the other.<sup>1</sup> More particularly, I will be concerned with the educational profile of daughters and sons, as well as with the ways families view the question of their children's education: Do females and males share equal educational opportunities? Do girls claim their right to education? And is the family interested in daughters' and sons' education alike? Furthermore, I will be discussing differences between men's and women's entrances to and position in the workplace: Do daughters enter the labour market, and do they decide to work out of necessity or out of the desire to improve their situation? Which working positions do they occupy, and what conditions do they face in their working environments? What is their opinion about work, and what is the view of other characters about the heroines' decision to work? And finally, are working daughters compared with other types of women?

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela 1990: 35 and 148; Avdela 2002: 343; Gruber and Graves 1998: 34–35; Palaiologos 1928: 10–11; Samiou 2003: 68; Vickers and Vouloukos 2007: 520. For more details about the various actions that aimed at the reorganisation of women's education during the first three decades of the 20th century, see Dalakoura and Ziogou-Karastergiou 2015: 120–153.



### 2.2.2 Educational profile and entrance into the labour market

From the very beginning of the story *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου* by Gregorios Xenopoulos,<sup>1</sup> the reader feels that the father Tzortzis Doxaras is very much involved in the education and upbringing of his son Nanis and his daughter Kiara;<sup>2</sup> they both go to school and learn French, while Kiara attends English, German, piano, painting, sculpture, and pyrography lessons as well.<sup>3</sup> But by comparison to Nanis who apart from being a skiver also lacks intellectual concerns, Kiara is tireless, proves to be more gifted, and is possessed of superior intellectual abilities.<sup>4</sup> Because of these attributes, and, contrary to the deep-seated belief that intelligence is usually a male privilege, Tzortzis Doxaras admires his daughter and, although he believes that there are boys cleverer than Nanis, he is certain that there are no girls better than Kiara.<sup>5</sup> Unlike her brother who wants to study law and move on to political science, to live in Paris for a while, and to be appointed as attaché to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kiara receives no higher education, yet she is one of the most

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<sup>1</sup> The novels *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου* (“Εθνος”, 27/3 – 10/10/1921), as well as *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα* (“Εθνος”, 28/4 – 28/8/1922), and *Ο κατήφορος* (“Καθημερινή”, 4/7 – 17/11/1926 and “Νέα Ημέρα”, 24/11/1926 – 9/1/1927), with which I will be concerned in the following, were released in book form in 1984, 1924 (<sup>2</sup>1930), and 1928. See Farinou-Malamatari 1997: 293 and 294; Xenopoulos 1928; Xenopoulos 1930; Xenopoulos 1984a.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 20–21. Similarly recognising the benefits of systemic instruction, schooling, so to speak, Francisco Delatollas insists on his daughter’s education, and that is why Morpho is an educated upper-middle-class girl. Besides, like many other female protagonists, Morpho plays the piano as well. See Theotokas 1936a: 356 and 363.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1984a: 20–21 and 127.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 21–22, 24 and 105. This is similar to the depiction of the siblings in *Λόο αγάπες*: the son is a sluggard (he has not even finished high school), whereas the daughter is more sophisticated. It is worthy of mention the fact that the author was deeply concerned with “women’s fortune in society”. See Golfis 1930: 86; Tagkopoulos 1924: 10–11.

<sup>5</sup> Xenopoulos 1984a: 23 and 26.

cultured girls in Athens.<sup>1</sup> To an extent, such a comparison between the intellectual abilities of the two children on the father's part may be partly attributed to the author's intention to bring to the forefront, as will be shown in the next section, the inequality between the two genders with regard to sexual freedom.<sup>2</sup> And, precisely because she has remarkable capabilities, Tzortzis Doxaras is annoyed by the fact that Kiara, compared to Nanis, has fewer rights. More pointedly, he believes that her family name, her dowry, and her individual merit should protect her from preconceived notions about gender.<sup>3</sup> It is more likely than not that behind such broad-mindedness on the father's part, as will be shown later, lies Gregorios Xenopoulos' belief in gender equality.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of Aimilia Stef. Daphni's (1881–1941) novels, the interest lies in the heroines' and their family members' views on woman's work. In *To τάλαντο της Σμαρώς* (1923), Smaro is an educated young woman who wishes to devote herself to painting.<sup>5</sup> Already employed at their uncle's tobacco company in Egypt and with “Laboremus” (“Ας εργασθούμε”) as a life motto, her brother looks favourably upon

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1984a: 106, 142, 324, 365, 426 and 449. Nanis wants to be a diplomat because of this office's prestige. In other words, it is not a burning interest in this science that makes him pursue such a career. The daughters in *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*, *Ο κατήφορος* and *Γιούγκερμαν* are also very well-educated. Particularly, Nitsa Gazeli (*Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*) had been studying for some years in Switzerland and she is characterised as an educated and intellectual girl. Roza (*Ο κατήφορος*) is given a middle-class upbringing and takes piano lessons at a conservatoire as well. Finally, the daughters of the upper-middle-class Sklavoyiannis family (*Γιούγκερμαν*) had been students at the most expensive boarding schools in England. See *Ibid.*: 142; Karagatsis 1938: 160; Xenopoulos 1928: 11–12 and 163–164; Xenopoulos 1930: 26 and 219.

<sup>2</sup> Xenopoulos 1984a: 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 216–217.

<sup>4</sup> Xenopoulos 1921: 140.

<sup>5</sup> Daphni 1923: 9 and 10.

his sister's artistic aspirations.<sup>1</sup> Yiannakis believes that a girl's life goal should not be marriage but work, which can be either manual and physical, or mental and creative.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to her son's opinion, Mrs Doridi believes that a woman should rely upon a husband and that motherhood is her ultimate service to society.<sup>3</sup> As for Alexandra, the female protagonist in *Η ξένη γη* (1937), she is determined to no longer tolerate the physical abuse she experiences from her father and brother, and she openly claims that she does not need them, since she works as a cashier at Mr. Thomas' grocery, thereby being independent and able to do whatever she wants.<sup>4</sup>

Dimitris Tagkopoulos (1860–1926), “envisaging woman's emancipation from social conventions”, seems to promote a new feminine type in his novels *Θέμης Βρανάς* (1923) and *Δύο αγάπες* (1924).<sup>5</sup> There is strong evidence to support this, as,

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<sup>1</sup> Daphni 1923: 12 and 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 25.

<sup>4</sup> Daphni 1937: 168. Let it be mentioned that Aimilia Daphni mainly distinguished herself as a poet, since her poems reflect a very different temperament, an issue that will be explored further in the following section. As for her novels, they belong, according to Kostis Papageorgiou, to what may be termed ‘urban ethnography’, just because “they present the reader with stories that unfold in interwar Athenian neighbourhoods and districts”. Yet, there is a striking difference in the characters' social origins: in *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*, they belong to the middle class, whereas in *Η ξένη γη*, they come from the lower classes (For critics, *Η ξένη γη* offers an accurate representation of low-class interwar Athens). See Agras 1941a: 692–693; Agras 1941b: 631–632; Meraklis 2000: 508–511; Palamas 1969: 479–485; Papageorgiou 1998: 303, 305–306 and 307; Tarsouli 1951: 67–83.

<sup>5</sup> Golfis 1930: 86; Tagkopoulos 1923; Tagkopoulos 1924. The novel *Δύο αγάπες* is the fictional version of Tagkopoulos' play *Οι αλυσίδες* published in the journal *Ο Νουμάς* (16/12/1907 – 20/1/1908). The considerable similarities between the novel and the play indicate that the author not only was concerned with the same issues but also stayed firm in his beliefs. For example, his interest in the women's issue, as well as his concern about their fate in society, are found in his fictional works *Θέμης Βρανάς* and *Δύο αγάπες*, as well as in his dramas *Στην οζώπορτα* (1909), *Το μαύρο χέρι* (1912) and *Μυριέλλα* (1919). In Xenopoulos' view, Tagkopoulos shone in the theatre of ideas, “a form of socially conscious drama that developed” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

contrary to Maria and Themis Vranas who have raised their daughter Stella to be a housewife, Mrs Theano taught her daughters to live free and to be independent through their work, with work characterised as the most important moral purpose of life.<sup>1</sup> In *Δύο αγάπες* Astroula is about to finish *scholarcheio* and considers going to high school and university to study drawing.<sup>2</sup> Astroula also enjoys reading books, some of them in French.<sup>3</sup> An interesting difference is to be noted between her mother's and father's reactions to her wish to pursue further studies: Mrs Stratidi, regarding her daughter's activities as some kind of laziness, crosses herself, whereas Mr. Stratidis is delighted.<sup>4</sup>

Here, it is worth noting that Tagkopoulos' progressive thoughts about women's liberation, in tandem with his critical look at the social and political institutions of his time (as discussed further in the following chapter), may be viewed, according to Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou, as the direct outcome of the author's declaration in favour of the demotic language that was seen as contributing to national cohesion and

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As its name attests, “a play of ideas is generally more intellectual or philosophical than a thesis play: it exposes a problem or an issue, but rather than providing a solution, the author shows all sides of the debate, allowing the members of the audience to form their own conclusions”. As for the plot, it is built upon conflicting ideas that are embodied through the characters. See Beach 2005: 110; Parotitis 1930b: 89; Golfis 1919: 305–306; Golfis 1930: 86; Xenopoulos 1920: 353–356.

<sup>1</sup> Tagkopoulos 1923: 28–29 and 59. For example, the eldest gives piano lessons. Like the heroine in *Θέμης Βρανάς*, Astroula (*Δύο αγάπες*) makes a living through selling her paintings. Similarly, Nitsa Gazeli (*Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*) makes the best of her talents (drawings, pyrographies, translations of French novels, etc.) to earn a living. Nitsa decided to work when her father stated that she was not a master of herself in that emancipation and economic dependence do not go hand in hand with each other. *Ibid.*: 29; Tagkopoulos 1924: 89; Xenopoulos 1930: 27–29, 35 and 107–109.

<sup>2</sup> Tagkopoulos 1924: 10. ‘Σχολαρχείο’ (‘scholarcheio’) was an older type of school that may be compared with the last two grades of today's primary school and the first grade of today's high school.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 11 and 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 10.

Greek society's modernisation.<sup>1</sup> Particularly, his judgmental attitude towards society and politics, evident in his journal *O Noumas* (symbol of the language question and the demotic movement), as well as in his plays and fictional works, confirms his preoccupation with contemporary issues.<sup>2</sup> It goes without saying that as a chief editor, journalist, playwright, and author, Tagkopoulos aimed to promote new ideas and to shake off traditionalism.<sup>3</sup>

Although Galatea Kazantzaki (1881–1962) was not a self-proclaimed feminist, she was concerned with gender issues, and her narratives are mainly inhabited by female protagonists.<sup>4</sup> Through their stories, the author represents “negative aspects of life and criticises hypocrisy, inhumanity, deplorable deals, gendered exploitation, sordidness, injustice and inequality”.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, her fiction reflects “a spirit of

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<sup>1</sup> Stavridi-Patrikiou 1997: 429 and 435. Tagkopoulos made his first appearance with a collection of poems (*Πρώτοι στίχοι*, 1890) written in demotic; and thus, he was associated with the literary generation of the '80s (New Athenian School) that “breathed a new spirit into literature quite different from the spirit of romanticism of the preceding age”. See Ibid.: 428; Mastrodimitris 1982: 158.

<sup>2</sup> Stavridi-Patrikiou 1997: 426, 427, 428, 431, 433 and 443.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: 437.

<sup>4</sup> Adamos 1986: 93; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 110; Porphyris 1962: 761.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; Adamos 1986: 92–93 and 96; Diktaios 1962: 1911; Gialourakis 1982: 63; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 111; Paroritis 1930a: 111. Critics on their part agree that “what primarily characterises Galatea Kazantzaki’s fictional texts is her sharp eye and critical look”. Particularly, their urban (“11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ”, “Ναυάγια”, and “Αβυσσος”) and rural (“Ο γάμος της Αργυρούλας” and “Το κρίμα της Φωτεινής”) settings notwithstanding, these narratives suggest, to a greater or lesser degree, critical representations of the bourgeois society in a realistic manner, while also depicting the heroines’ inner world. For these reasons, Eleni Lianopoulou characterises the works set in urban environments as social/psychographic short stories. As for those that take place in Cretan villages, they exceed the limits of ethnography. See Adamos 1986: 93, 95 and 96; Charis 1981a: 32; Diktaios 1962: 1911; Gialourakis 1982: 62; Lianopoulou 1993: 124 and 135.

humanism”.<sup>1</sup> In keeping with the aims of this section, my attention is mainly focused on her educated heroines who, in their effort to enter the labour market, become victims of sexual and financial exploitation; thus, the workplace is depicted as the site of female workers’ physical abuse and gendered discrimination.

In particular, in the short story “11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ.” (*11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ. κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*, 1929), Nina is forced to look for a job because of her family’s severe economic difficulties, so every day between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. she waits in the Ministry entrance hall hoping to meet the office manager.<sup>2</sup> It is more than obvious that the latter flirts with Nina and eventually invites her over under the pretext that he wants to give her a job.<sup>3</sup> Keeping similar experiences her friends had in mind, Nina is certain that he will demand sexual favours in exchange for her appointment as an office worker.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, after being raped, Nina obtains her appointment;<sup>5</sup> but it

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<sup>1</sup> Adamos 1986: 92; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 111. The author’s humanistic view and sympathetic concern for others’ sufferings becomes even more apparent when compared to the extreme violence that prevails in her ethnographic plays *Τη νύχτα τ’ άι Γιάννη* (1921). See Kastrinaki 1997: 428–429.

<sup>2</sup> Kazantzaki 1929a: 5 and 9. The short story is valued “as an emblematic representation of the public administration by bringing its shady but real aspects to the forefront”. Worthy of mention is also the fact that two sisters –the first Greek women to graduate from the University with honours– are among the ‘wrecks’ waiting patiently in the hall. The reference to their educational profile is not just a coincidence as the number of women entering university in the interwar years slightly increased. Similarly, in *Γυναίκες* (1933) by Galateia Kazantzaki Kaiti studies at the School of Philology and Roza in *Μυστική φωληρά* is university-educated as well: she is a graduate of the School of Architecture. Ibid.: 6; Adamos 1986: 97; Avdela 2002: 343; Charis 1981a: 32; Dalakoura and Ziogou 2015: 299; Kazantzaki 1933: 39; Kokkinos 1924: 8; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 110.

<sup>3</sup> Kazantzaki 1929a: 8 and 18–19.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 20. The numerous instances of girls who ‘consent’ to have sex in exchange for a job suggest that exploitation is a common occurrence in the working environment and prepare the reader, as Petros Charis remarks, “for the heroine’s sacrifice” See Charis 1981a: 32.

<sup>5</sup> Kazantzaki 1929a: 21–22.

is because of “this cruel physical abuse that she adopts an attitude of apathy” (“glissons dessus”).<sup>1</sup>

The story of the leading character in “Ναυάγια” (*11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ. κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*), where ‘ναυάγια’ suggests ‘emotional wrecks’, shares obvious similarities with that of the female protagonist in the short story described above.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, Nina Damouli, a well-educated and well-bred daughter, falls prey to various people, both in her professional and personal life, because of her orphanhood and the socio-economic decline of her family.<sup>3</sup> Having already worked on translations for which she was never paid, she is also afraid that she would lose her job if she asked the newspaper publishers and the theatre managers for a binding preliminary contract.<sup>4</sup> Arguably, the cause of this fear is the possibility of discrimination against her gender.

At some point, Nina is about to meet a childhood friend, Mr. Zigouras, and is quite certain that he, a member of parliament, will be able to mediate for her appointment to a position.<sup>5</sup> It should also be mentioned that, on seeing her letter of recommendation (“polyglot”, “excellent education”, and “from a good family”), Thanasis, Nina’s life partner, despite his nasty habit of belittling her, wakes up to her value for the first time –quite outrageous if one remembers that Thanasis is a loafer.<sup>6</sup> It is an easy guess that Thanasis’ disparaging attitude is due to a long-held

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<sup>1</sup> Kastrinaki 1997: 430; Kazantzaki 1929a: 22; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 110; N. 1930: 30; Politis 1930: 1.

<sup>2</sup> Kazantzaki 1929e: 85–104. As Sofia Mavroeidi-Papadaki underlines, “devastated female characters mainly come into the author’s focus”. See Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 109 and 110.

<sup>3</sup> Kazantzaki 1929e: 85–86.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 86–88.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 85 and 88.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 96–98.

belief that women were born less capable than men and never had the chance to develop their potential.

After her discussion with Mr. Zigouras, Nina is confident that she will start a new life. Yet soon, her hopes are dashed; instead of the higher position she expected at the Library of the National Bank of Greece, Nina is appointed as a low-paid clerical worker (“γραφείας β’ τάξεως”). Confronted with this unexpected turn of events, she wonders whether she should accept the job offer. Nina’s situation is a clear indication of sexism in the workplace, where women used to occupy the lowest and poorly paid positions.<sup>1</sup>

Before turning my attention to Nikos Katiforis, I should briefly comment on Kazantzaki’s heroine in the short story “Αβυσσος” (*11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ. κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*).<sup>2</sup> Here, Popi, a young working girl, is content with having bought a swimsuit, a sun-umbrella, a red bandana and rubber shoes with her own money.<sup>3</sup> And although her fiancé Thanasis Doumas criticises her for spending her money unwisely, she asserts her right to use part of her earnings as she wishes.<sup>4</sup> The fact

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela 1990: 49, 205 and 245; Avdela 2002: 344; Samiou 2003: 67; Samiou 2013: 174. Dimitris Skaligeris’ assumption (*Πιγγος*) is quite indicative of the working conditions women had to face. His lover Kora considers working at a bank or in an office with a view to being independent and avoiding her marriage to Kostas Lerianos; and, in case her family insists on the matchmaking, she will leave her house and live with Dimitris. On hearing her plans, Dimitris states that women encounter many difficulties finding the right job; and he is sure that if Kora’s colleagues become aware that she moved out her family house and shares a house with her partner, they will fling themselves at her. Apart from Kora, Elena (*Μυστική φωληρά*) entertains the idea of working, given her orphanhood and her family’s financial ruin. See Kokkinos 1924: 313–315; Kokkinos 1932: 81–82.

<sup>2</sup> Kazantzaki 1929b: 113–135.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 114.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Likewise, in *Κρίσις...* (1934) by Arkadios Lefkos (1905–1983) women’s work is depicted both as boosting family income and giving women the chance to buy clothes and cosmetics on their own. In Stavros’ mind, this explains why his wife wants to work. In fact, as Avdela remarks, some



that Popi allows herself “the pleasures of independent consumer spending” points to a new and ‘modern’ self-understanding on her part but is also suggestive of a more or less transgressive conception of gender identity.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it was because of “a degree of disposable income” that women from both “the working class, as well as the middle class, were the primary market for the latest fashionable styles”.<sup>2</sup>

What is remarkable in the case of Lela Zervou, the heroine in the novel *Πιάτσα* (1930) by Nikos Katiforis (1903–1967) is not the reason for her finding a job, namely her family’s financial straits, but her position and her work environment; Lela works as a cashier at a store.<sup>3</sup> As Katherine Mullin underlines, two narratives about “shop-girls, key sexual personas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century” existed.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, they “were imagined as canny operators accomplished in the barter and brinksmanship” in that “they were practised saleswomen of their own allure, adroit at marketing charm”.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, they were thought of as “abject personifications of the degradations of commerce” in the sense that working at a shop entailed “a peculiarly personal process of

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men believed that women’s desire to buy luxuries lay at the heart of their decision to work and thus they pointed their fingers at females that chose to work. See Avdela 1990: 50; Lefkos 1934: 138–139.

<sup>1</sup> Soland 2000: 6, 17, 44 and 171.

<sup>2</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 12. For Galateia Kazantzaki, ‘libertines’ (“ελευθεριάζουσες”) are “those working women whose emancipation was not an internal urge but was born out of necessity”; and she illustrates her point with the example of “a young girl who thinks of conducting an affair with her director to be able to afford her luxuries; still, she does not dare to ask him for a pay rise”. In this context, one may feel that Kazantzaki is judging Popi’s attitude. See Kazantzaki 1928: 277–278.

<sup>3</sup> Katiforis 1930: 39 and 44.

<sup>4</sup> Mullin 2016: 2.

<sup>5</sup> Katiforis 1930: 13.

commodification and an erosion of the self, the often-fatal compromise of self in pursuit of sales”.<sup>1</sup>

By some sort of sympathy, Lela seems to share the objects’ unvoiced wish to be bought and thus, come alive.<sup>2</sup> Above all, as a cashier, Lela represents a key part of the purchase-and-sale procedure.<sup>3</sup> There is also considerable interest in the different ways Lela and her father view working women: Mr. Zervos seems to feel guilt and shame over the fact that his only daughter is forced to work, whereas Lela does not think of herself as an exception on the grounds that nowadays many girls work to boost the family income.<sup>4</sup> It is important to bear in mind that Lela’s line of work has a special significance, as *H πιάτσα* was designed as a narrative developing around the purchase-sale agreements between family members and spouses. This aspect will be taken up in the third chapter.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Katiforis 1930: 14. These counter-representations informed narratives known as ‘shop-girl fiction’ from the fin-de-siècle onwards. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 40.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 41. Apart from Lela, another ‘shop-girl’ is Nitsa who is responsible for giving the purchased items to the customers. On her part, Stavroula (*Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*), having pretty eyes and beautiful hands, works at a five-floor store in Stadiou Street and sells cosmetics. The details mentioned above account for the perception of “shop work” as being “fraught with hazards: underpay” (Lela’s father asks her daughter’s boss for increase in her salary), “overwork, the temptation of unchecked consumerism, compromising proximity to a promiscuous public”. Ibid.: 41 and 56; Mullin 2016: 2; Petsalis 1939: 26–27.

<sup>4</sup> Katiforis 1930: 56–57.

<sup>5</sup> It should be stressed in advance that Nikos Katiforis was a left-wing writer who penned fictional texts and articles for leftist newspapers and journals, such as *Νέοι Βωμοί* (*Neoi Vomoi*), *Νέα Επιθεώρηση* (*Nea Epitheorisi*), *Πρωτοπόροι* (*Protoporoi*), *Νέοι Πρωτοπόροι* (*Neoi Protoporoi*), *Ριζοσπάστης* (*Rizospastis*), *Ελεύθερα Γράμματα* (*Eleuthera Grammata*), *Επιθεώρηση Τέχνης* (*Epitheorisi Technis*), and *Αυγή* (*Avgi*). As a matter of fact, it is no mere coincidence that his fiction reflects, as will be shown clearly in the following chapter, his leftist ideology. See Argyriou 1992: 8, 10 and 14.

Critics' argument for the groundbreaking character of both “*Η ξεπάρθενη*” (1932) and *Οι παραστρατημένοι* (1935) by Lilika Nakou (1903/1904–1989) is based on the author's progressive ideas about women's emancipation, a sign of her intense interest in societal matters.<sup>1</sup> Against this backdrop, Nikitas Parisis points out that these fictional texts “not only contributed to the renewal of Greek literature but also constituted representative examples of feminist fiction”.<sup>2</sup> Apart from her fresh look

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<sup>1</sup> Melissanthi 1989: 283; Parisis 1993: 195–197. Nakou's depiction of positive female figures that deviate from the conventional standards is also stressed by Diamanti Anagnostopoulou in her study *Αναπαραστάσεις του γυναικείου στη λογοτεχνία*. See Anagnostopoulou 2010: 213–228 and 235–236. It is because of Nakou's perspective that *Οι παραστρατημένοι* is regarded as a social realist novel; however, at the same time, it may also be viewed as an early modernist text. This assertion is grounded in the author's moral neutrality (readers are left free to be favourably or otherwise disposed towards Nakou's heroes and heroines; and a sort of moral message is to be found only at the end of the novel), as well as in the fluidity of the characters' personality. No doubt, what is remarkable in the case of Lilika Nakou's *Οι παραστρατημένοι* is the fact that Nicolas Calas, a pioneering surrealist poet, writes a favourable review of an up-and-coming author's social realist book. For I. M. Panagiotopoulos, Nakou is not just a realist author that depicts her characters' inner world. What further characterises her fiction is, in his view, cosmopolitanism that should be seen in relation to the fact that she travelled a lot and lived most of her life in Switzerland and France (As she lived and worked abroad, she gained a European education, as well as a varied social circle that included Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, and Miguel de Unamuno). The author's choice to set her story in a cosmopolitan society is stressed by Petros Spandonidis as well. See Ieronymidi 1974: 48 and 55; Karantonis 1936: 83; Kokkinis 1991: 496; Korfis 1989: 288 and 289; Nakas 1979: 5, 6 and 11; Negreponitis 1989: 287; Panagiotopoulos 1980c: 159; Pappas 1989: 286; Parisis 1993: 186, 188 and 190; Prodromou 1938: 12; Spandonidis 1935b: 464 and 466; Theodoridis 1935: 1 and 2; Zabatha-Pagoulatou 1989: 298.

<sup>2</sup> Parisis 1993: 195 and 197. A thirst for women's liberation is evident in her popular novel *Η κυρία Ντορεμί* (1955) as well. This story, in contrast to her interwar narratives, is set in the Rethymno society, and thus, it may be regarded as a “social ethnography”. Her sensitivity towards those suffering the most also features in fictional works where children are cast as the main protagonists –for example, *Η κόλαση των παιδιών* (1944) is “a document of the great famine in Greece during the German Occupation” (“literature as a political action and social statement, an act of resistance”). *Ibid.*: 193; Nakas 1979: 12; Sachinis 1989: 158; Tannen 1983: 26, 44 and 99–100.

at gender issues, the autobiographical traits are also evident, according to the majority of critics, in both the short story and the novel.<sup>1</sup>

Katina, the protagonist of the short story “Η ξεπάρθηνη”, is a middle-class daughter and a former student at a Girls school, who decides to take control of her destiny at the age of eighteen: she is determined to look for a job, and she does not hesitate to leave Greece secretly and try her luck in France.<sup>2</sup> And after her return (caused by her father’s health problems) to Athens, she rents a room in Dexamini and finds a job: at first, she works at a commercial office, and then at a newspaper.<sup>3</sup>

Katina voices her opinion about the conditions under which women work in Greece.<sup>4</sup> She strongly believes that, due to men’s deep-rooted prejudices against women, life is still hard for the latter. To put it differently, although men pretend to be broad-minded, they show little respect for their female colleagues, an attitude Katina knows well as a victim of discriminatory behaviour.<sup>5</sup> She also believes that, by comparison to working girls, carefree ‘women-dolls’ may have a completely different view of life.<sup>6</sup>

Aside from Katina’s attitude and that of her colleagues, the story presents the opinions of other characters as well. For example, Mr. Chaya’s view of working women in general, and of women-writers in particular, is reminiscent of the literary

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<sup>1</sup> Hatzidaki 1983: 66; Ieronymidi 1974: 11 and 93; Karantonis 1936: 82; Korfis 1989: 288; Parisis 1993: 190; Sachinis 1989: 157–159.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1937b: 17 and 18. As she claims, the aim of finding work was not to prove she was a modern girl but to become self-sufficient. Ibid.: 18. (I cite the reprinted book published in 1937.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 21, 22–23 and 33.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 37.

<sup>5</sup> The characterisation of her work as autobiographical encourages the assumption that Nakou describes firsthand her experiences of misogyny and the hostility she received while working as a teacher and journalist, just because she was a woman. See Tannen 1983: 6, 8, 10 and 13.

<sup>6</sup> Nakou 1937b: 37.

dispute between Emmanuel Roïdis and Kallirrhoe Parren, with the latter “defending women’s right to write unhindered, denouncing the diffuse misogyny of her time, and engaging in vociferous debate with the authors and the politicians who opposed her vision of women’s emancipation”.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, given that writing was traditionally seen as a male activity, women’s desire to embark on writing fictional and non-fictional work was perceived as “a revolutionary act, posing a threat to social order”.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, “the discussion about female writers turned out to be a heated debate on women’s emancipation”, while “female writers themselves became a symbol of dangerous rebellious women”.<sup>3</sup> At the root of this public dispute about female writing was the use of the term ‘writing females’ [‘γράφουσες’] instead of ‘authors’ [‘συγγραφείς’], “a disparaging reference to women engaged in an activity or occupation traditionally associated with men”.<sup>4</sup> In light of such prejudices, it is no wonder that gender became “a criterion for grouping texts into two types, male and female” and that “women were somehow obliged to prove that, even when they wrote, they remained

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<sup>1</sup> Hatzopoulos 2019: 46–49; Parren 1896a; Parren 1896b; Psarra 2006: 402; Rizaki 2007; Roïdis 1896: 2 and 5; Roïdis 1978: 125. Likewise, in the short story “Σκοτάδια” (*Κόχυλαρ κι άλλα διηγήματα*, 1925) by Nikos I. Saravas (1906–1930) the protagonist is an emancipated woman, writing newspaper articles where she characterises men as selfish, barbaric, and beastly. She also writes a symbolic drama where she represents men as guards and women as prisoners at an overcrowded prison. At some point, the walls of the jail are demolished by women’s howling, and a bright sun exhorts them to work and live their life. This female figure may bring Kallirrhoe Parren, one of the first female journalists and writers, to mind. See Saravas 1925b: 35–41.

<sup>2</sup> Psarra 1999a: 424.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 420; Roïdis 1896: 2 and 5; Roïdis 1978: 125. For his part, Gregorios Xenopoulos felt certain that women would succeed in writing short stories. See Psarra 1999a: 422.

women”.<sup>1</sup> One of the most telling artefacts from this public debate is a satirical portrait, which appeared on May 2, 1896 in the newspaper *Σκριπ* (*Skrip*) under the title “Αι γράφουσαι Ελληνίδες– Συνέδριον διά να λάβουν μέτρα κατά του κ. Ροΐδου” (“Greek female writers get together to take action against Mr. Roïdis”) and showed a group of women listening attentively to a speech delivered by another woman.<sup>2</sup> Following Roïdis, Mr. Chaya believes that women who fight for their emancipation, raising their head, so to speak, put the future of society in danger.<sup>3</sup>

In a quite different vein, Loukia Filippou, Katina’s half-sister, expresses her respect for working women and comments positively on Katina’s literary translations.<sup>4</sup> No doubt, her approval has to do with the fact she is the President of the Greek Philanthropic Movement.<sup>5</sup> One should be reminded here that “at the end of the 19th century, there were three established women identities, namely the philanthropist, the teacher, and the writer, all pointing to the inclusion of female activities in the public domain, and to women’s familiarisation with the responsibilities of a citizen”.<sup>6</sup> Essentially, it was “their action in the public sphere that provided the foundation for their demands for citizenship”.<sup>7</sup> For her part, Kallirrhoe Parren identified “three types of women’s work, with ‘philanthropy’ and

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<sup>1</sup> Psarra 1990a: 420–422.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 425; Anonymous 1896; 1; Kaklamanaki 2007: 79.

<sup>3</sup> Nakou 1937b: 98.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 77.

<sup>5</sup> Charitable acts performed by upper-middle-class women can also be found in *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Παρρη*. See Petsalis 1933: 107.

<sup>6</sup> Avdela 2006: 235.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

‘working for a living’ being associated with the upper middle class and working class respectively”.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, Kontylo, Katina’s nanny, merits a mention: she is mystified by Katina’s newfangled ideas and unwomanly behaviour, but this is what one would expect from a woman belonging to an older generation when women neither worked outside the home nor walked alone in the street.<sup>2</sup>

*Παραστρατημένοι* is a ‘Bildungsroman’ (also known as ‘apprenticeship novel’ or ‘coming-of-age novel’) in that the narrative, as the German word ‘Bildung’ (‘personal development’ or ‘education’) suggests, is designed to “chart the protagonist’s actual or metaphorical journey from youth to maturity”, and the “developmental trajectory” brings up questions, such as “relationships to family and friends, formal/informal education, sexuality/love, and the overall goal of self-development”.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in *Παραστρατημένοι*, Alexandra Kastri, a young woman from a middle-class family, is a day-student at a boarding school in Greece, where she also takes lessons in music and French. Her love for the latter is fed by her close bond with her teacher Elizabeth Louise, and her desire to read French books.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to her

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela 2006: 238; Parren 1891: 1–2; Parren 1892: 1.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1937b: 35.

<sup>3</sup> Brändström 2009: 4 and 14; Joannou 2019: 200; Rau 2002. For Charis Theodoridis, *Παραστρατημένοι* narrates the adventure, the ‘odyssey’, so to speak, of the female protagonist. See Theodoridis 1935: 2. For the fundamentally different developmental quests of the leading characters in the male (“a ‘voyage-out’, a physical journey”) and female (“a ‘voyage-in’, a psychological journey”) Bildungsroman because of their different life experience prior to the late 19th and early 20th century, and the changes in the female trajectory because of the gradual lifting of social-cultural restraints imposed upon women’s lives, see Bluemel 2009: 116; Brändström 2009: 5–8 and 11–17; Felski 1989: 125; Joannou 2019: 203, 208–209 and 215; Labovitz 1988: 6–7, 150, 194, 251 and 253.

<sup>4</sup> Nakou 1935: 39, 49 and 59–60.

mother who dislikes books, Alexandra is a bookworm like her father.<sup>1</sup> The first book she reads is *Les chanteurs florentins (Florentine Singers)* by Jean Bertheroy, and it is thanks to this French author that she discovers the world of books and becomes possessed by a thirst for knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Unable to give up reading, after she moves to Geneva with her mother and brother, Alexandra visits the Library and reads in her free time.<sup>3</sup>

Moving to Geneva gives Alexandra the chance to join the public sphere, and, compared to her mother, she proves energetic and assertive. In fact, conscious of her mother's apathy and their arising economic difficulties, she decides to improve her French by attending lessons at a public school, but she also manages to take free private piano lessons, with a view to using her piano skills to earn a living;<sup>4</sup> and it is through her piano teacher that she finds a well-paid job at Carouse Theatre.<sup>5</sup>

Mother and daughter hold interesting views on the question of women's work. Mrs Kastri is glad to hear about her daughter taking up the job but at the same time she is of the opinion that a girl of her social status should not work at such a place, and she suggests that Alexandra should ask her father for money instead.<sup>6</sup> Still, Alexandra, the product of a different generation, has a different take on the matter

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1935: 54 and 146.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 56–57.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 230.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 188 and 194.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 199. She, however, feels ignored by the tenor she accompanies on the piano. Thus, Deborah Tannen assumes that Alexandra “wastes her considerable talents in support of others: throughout the novel Alexandra is overlooked, slighted and taken for granted”. Ibid.: 205; Tannen 1983: 64. For Alexandra's self-sacrificial behaviour, see also Ieronymidi 1974: 96; Spandonidis 1935b: 465.

<sup>6</sup> Nakou 1935: 200.



and firmly believes that owing people money is more embarrassing than her job.<sup>1</sup> Even when she loses her job and finds herself in deep financial trouble, Alexandra keeps fighting in the belief that those willing to work will eventually find a way.<sup>2</sup> It is only on one occasion that she thinks of work as “a kind of slavery”;<sup>3</sup> yet this exceptional view should be seen within the particular context it is voiced: when Alexandra sees her beloved Kostas Kimonidis dating an unknown lady, she naturally comes to think of her working duties as a hindrance to her love life –no wonder, she would rather be with Kostas than play the piano to entertain other people. Otherwise, her positive attitude to work remains firm.<sup>4</sup>

It is worth mentioning that, apart from her worrying mother, both Kostas and his sister, Eleni, have second thoughts about Alexandra’s morality because of her working environment.<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of their acquaintance, when he learns that Alexandra works at Carouse Theatre, Kostas also asks about her family in general, and her mother in particular. From his point of view, it seems strange that a Greek

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1935: 200; Nakou n.d.: 284.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1935: 342.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 308.

<sup>4</sup> By the same token, in Konstantinos Theotokis’ (1872–1923) proto-feminist and socialist novella *Η τιμή και το χρήμα* –first serialised in the journal *O Noumas* (18/8 – 29/12/1912) and published in 1914, the phrase “Δουλεντάδες και οι δύο, ποιόνε έχουμε ανάγκη” that rings throughout the text betrays the young heroine’s progressive thinking. And as a matter of fact, her flouting of traditional standards, as well as her decision to work in a factory, come as no surprise to the reader. It is important to note that Rene seems to follow the example of her diligent mother whose profile stands in contrast to that of her father (a sluggard and a drunkard); and it is a different case with the female members of Andreas’ family who are not used to working or refuse to work out of concern for their honour and respect related to their class. Under this aspect, one may assume that the question of female emancipation underpins Theotokis’ work. See Adamos 1985b: 152; Dallas 2001: 115; Davies 2017: xiii; Paganos 1983c: 112; Paganos 1983e: 183 and 190; Pagkratis 1991: 419; Sachinis 1991a: 195; Theotokis 1914; Theotokis 1921: 10, 13, 15, 27, 43, 45, 57–58, 69, 75, 93 and 98.

<sup>5</sup> Nakou 1935: 244.

mother would allow her daughter to work at such a place. Eleni Kimonidi expresses similar doubts regarding Alexandra's propriety, not only because of Alexandra's job but also because of her general attitude during Kostas' illness, given that they were not engaged.<sup>1</sup> Eleni's narrow views are understandable, since she comes from the provinces (Syros) and has never travelled abroad, except her trip to Geneva, which she makes out of necessity.<sup>2</sup> Besides, her lack of experience and knowledge of the public sphere is further explained by the fact that her life as a daughter is almost immediately followed by her conjugal life.

Comparing the profiles of Kostas Kimonidis' sisters with those of Alexandra, who works to earn a living, and Lenio, who, as will be shown, greatly values education, one can deduce that they are completely different. In fact, the Kimonidis sisters are illiterate, talkative and indolent, and they only care about fashion and having fun.<sup>3</sup> Their mother dreams of a promising marriage for her daughters, and perhaps, so do they.<sup>4</sup> Kostas' negative description of his sisters may provide an explanation for his negative views of women in general.<sup>5</sup> This further points to the figure of 'women-dolls', who, as the countertype to working girls, are central to interwar feminist criticism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou n.d.: 281.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Nakou 1935: 235–236.

<sup>4</sup> As will be shown in the chapter "Family and marriage", although Kostas somehow criticises his mother's aspiration, he enters a marriage of convenience at the end as well.

<sup>5</sup> Nakou 1935: 236. The author's sympathy for the plebians –despite her bourgeois background– may also account for such a depiction. See Nakas 1979: 5; Tannen 1983: 17.

<sup>6</sup> For this typical comparison between 'women-dolls' and working girls, see Bakalaki and Elegmitou 1987: 207.

In *Παραστρατημένοι*, the case of Lenio also suggests a radical look at women's position in Greece.<sup>1</sup> Alexandra happens to visit a large, poor family, consisting of eight members, namely the mother, the father, four sons, a daughter, and a baby; there she encounters Lenio, a ten-year-old girl. From the very beginning, Alexandra gets the impression that Lenio seems to hate the baby. The primary reason for these hostile feelings towards the infant, as Lenio admits, is the fact that she promised her mother that she would quit school and take care of the baby, so that her mother would be able to work as a seamstress and earn a living. However, she has already regretted her decision to give up her education and confesses that she would rather go to school than look after the baby.<sup>2</sup> Although Lenio is only ten years old, she has a mature perspective on life and sees education as a stepping stone to a better life. Thus, when Alexandra offers to send her books and fairy tales, Lenio is amazed and profoundly touched by her friend's offer, since she is keen on self-improvement through reading. Finally, the fact that it is the female child that leaves school hints towards the fixed ideas about gender roles, both within family and society.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1935: 120–125.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 124–125.

<sup>3</sup> The importance of women's education as contributing to national regeneration is implied in *Ο ζητιάνος*, Andreas Karkavitsas' "masterpiece and one of the best novels of the prose writing of the older days in Greece" that was published in *Estia* between April 9, and June 9, 1886, and came out in book form in 1897. The narrative, originating from the author's serialised travel notes "Κράβαρα" in *Estia (Οδοιπορικαί σημειώσεις; 1890)* and the unpublished short story "Κραβαρίτης", develops around Tziritokostas who exploits the ignorance, superstitions, and credulity of the people of the Thessalian village of Nychteremi to his advantage. Unsurprisingly, women are easy prey for the cynical beggar in the sense that he observes them carefully and discovers their weak spots. For example, he senses Panagiota's innermost desire for love and Crystallo's desperate craving for having a baby boy; and thus, he starts hawking his staff, the love-plant and the male-weed. It is therefore the young woman's strong preference for a male child and her lack of education (suggesting in turn a belief in magical means) that drive her first to give whatever it takes to acquire

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the powder promising to change the gender of the baby she is carrying, and then to commit suicide. It was, in essence, an abortive drug causing unbearable pain. (Likewise, in his novella *Η λυγερή*, Froso, unaware of her children's cause of death, blindly follows the witch's advice in order to not lose her last-born). Let it be stressed that Crystallo's obsession, as well as her hatred for her gender, are rooted in the sexist way village society in the time period of the novel views the birth of boys and girls: the former are desirable since they can support their families, whereas the latter are regarded as unwanted, for their upbringing and marriage are thought of as demanding tasks –not to mention that life is unfair to women, and therefore harder. The extent to which Crystallo is preoccupied with the idea of giving birth to a boy becomes even more apparent when she draws a comparison between men and women as to their competency: although she deems that the latter are more capable as they run the household and work in the fields, she still prefers male to female children. Much as in the case of *Η φόνισσα*, the fixation with male offspring points to women's position in rural society of the late nineteenth century. Against this backdrop, it could easily be inferred that Karkavitsas, acting as an anatomist-writer and interweaving ethnography with sociology, constructs his plot with the intention of stressing the need for women's spiritual and emotional development, a prerequisite for the nation's regeneration as well. At this point, it should be mentioned that Karkavitsas is enumerated among the first proponents of 'protofeminism' in that he encourages the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century feminists in their struggle for women's rights. His fondness and respect for Kallirrhoe Parren are obvious, as is the emphasis on women's national education: Karkavitsas puts forth feminist-friendly views in both his fictional works and articles (such as the vision of a type of woman epitomised by educated females who would mould the new generation and be their spouses' rock on the way to national regeneration). In light of all these, it is no wonder that female protagonists have a central place in his narratives. What further underlies his social concern is his interest in folk tradition (indicative of the turn to traditional beliefs, customs and stories that was signaled by Nikolaos Politis), as well as his love for his country. Acknowledgment of women's lower status notwithstanding, no revolutionary ideas about women's emancipation are to be found in his literary output, and as a matter of fact, his attitude may be regarded as moderate. Finally, much as in the case of Papadiamantis' *Η φόνισσα*, it is the raw depiction, the naked and unembellished representation, so to speak, of the leading character, as well as of the rural society, that mainly attests to the novel's naturalism. The application of the principles of realism in *Η λυγερή* (examined in the following), as well as naturalism in *Ο ζητιάνος*, points to the influence of French and Russian realist and naturalist authors, and goes hand in hand with the adoption of the demotic language on the author's part. See Adamos 1985c: 37, 38, 44 and 67; Baloumis 1999: 59, 62, 63, 146, 147, 150–151, 172, 177, 178, 183, 184, 190, 191, 253, 255 and 257; Basinou 1997: 411, 413, 414, 417, 418 and 422–423; Bohème 1911; Charis 1979a: 107, 108 and 115; Dromazos 1946: 371; Giannopoulou 2017: 23, 25, 26, 39, 41, 43, 53, 54, 65, 97–98, 99 and 100; Grecynca 1943: 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 39, 40 and 41; Karkavitsas 1896: 4–8, 41–44 and 50–52; Karkavitsas 1897a; Karkavitsas 1897b; Karkavitsas 1925: 18, 63–64, 81, 83–85, 87–92, 95, 97, 98, 100–119, 136, 171, 178–180, 187, 192 and 216–217;

Before moving to Terzakis' heroines, I wish to draw attention to an interview Lilika Nakou gave to Thanasis Nakas, published in the journal *Τομές* (*Tomes*, 1979), where she makes the point that women should not only study and work but also become mothers.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that, although Nakou is all for women's self-development through education and work, she sets great store in their role as mothers.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, her educated and working heroine in “Η ξεπάρθηνη” is a mother, a situation that hints at the author's advocacy of “the compatibility of career and motherhood”.<sup>3</sup>

In Terzakis' fiction, the daughters' educational and working profile is of considerable interest as it brings questions of gender inequality inside the family to the fore and sheds light on particular aspects of women's work. Regarding Maria Galani's education, the reader is informed that she is an educated girl who used to play the piano and that the turning point of her domestic life was the death of her mother.<sup>4</sup> Maria feels lonely in a family whose atmosphere is stifling and tense.<sup>1</sup> This

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Mastrodimitris 1982: 160, 162, 163, 171, 172, 173, 176–177, 184 and 185; Mastrodimitris 1994: 14, 19 and 21; Oikonomidis 1965: 75–85; Paganos 1983d: 95 and 99; Papadimitrakopoulos 2004: 68 and 69; Pateridou 2012: 134 and 154; Sachinis 1991b: 152, 158, 159 and 163; Sifalekis 1988: 77; Sideridou 1990: 1220, 1223 and 1224; Stavropoulou 1997: 191, 192 and 197; Stergiopoulos 1986a: 123–124, 126, 129 and 132; Varelas 2015; Vitti 1999: 40, 72 and 90–91; Vitti 2016: 310.

<sup>1</sup> Nakas 1979: 9.

<sup>2</sup> This view somehow reflects Parren's opinion that “emancipated women are still mothers”. See Parren 1908: 20; Psarra 1999a: 469.

<sup>3</sup> Allen 2005: 204. One has only to remember her anguish at the possibility of not being able to get pregnant. Indeed, Katina undergoes a spinal tap for fear of having inherited syphilis. See Nakou 1937b: 64–67.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 33 and 147; Terzakis 1932b: 122. The fact that only when Mrs Galanis dies does Maria decide to change her daily routine indicates that for Maria her mother's death may suggest the ending of her oppression and repression. In this respect, the elective affinity between Terzakis' fiction and the British interwar domestic novels is justified in that “the house and the mother”, as already stressed, “symbolise the oppression and repression of young women's independent selves”,

is what sharpens her will for survival and leads her to accept an offer for work at a stockbroker's office, thereby following the example of her close friend Agni who is already working.<sup>2</sup>

However, at first, Maria has some doubts about taking up the job and hesitates to discuss the matter with her brother with whom her relationship is strained; besides, because of her long confinement to the house, she is also nervous about moving in the public space.<sup>3</sup> Yet, in her discussion with Fotos, she seems more confident, declares that she wants to work and deploys rational arguments to convince him. In particular, she claims that by working not only will she have a pleasant time, but she will also feel useful and earn a living.<sup>4</sup> Besides, she states that nowadays young girls do enter the labour market and points to the example of her friend Agni.<sup>5</sup> Still, despite her determination, the fact that Maria informs her brother of her intention to accept the job offer and somehow asks for his permission before starting to work is in a way suggestive of her position inside the family.<sup>6</sup> Fotos on his part gives his

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since they are confined to the house and are burdened with both the housekeeping and the care of their widowed manipulative mothers. See Briganti and Mezei 2004: 155.

<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 121 and 123–124.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 120 and 126–128.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 120–121. Here one should be reminded of the heroines' fear for the public space in British interwar domestic fiction.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 132.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 128 and 134. Similarly, in Lefkos' *Κρίσις...*, when pressing financial problems arise, the wife of the male protagonist is determined to work, but she is confronted with his opposition; Stavros thinks not only of the social criticism, but also that his wife might be sexually exploited while at work. One is led to assume that a married woman and a mother wanting to work must receive her husband's consent on the one hand, and women's employment and prostitution are equated on the other –Stavros is certain that his wife will become a prostitute if she works. These views are indicative of the established conception of married women's work as a stigma. For Foula Porphyrogeni, "the hero's beliefs not only make him seem ridiculous but also suggest a clear gender

consent but makes a point of warning that he will seek further information about his sister's job.<sup>1</sup> In this context, it is worth noting that Maria remains responsible for the housekeeping and has to tidy up the house every day before going to work.<sup>2</sup> This is one of the instances where “combining paid outside work and domestic duties was a reality which many working women were confronted with in the interwar period for the first time”.<sup>3</sup>

Agni, Maria's friend (as mentioned above), works as a typist at a government agency and supports her family financially;<sup>4</sup> and although she works out of necessity, her attitude to work is positive.<sup>5</sup> In her view, nobody can be blamed for working; she also confesses that she has always liked work outside the house and

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bias”. It should also be mentioned that Stavros and his wife used to be colleagues, and Stavros on his part claims that she flung herself at him. This reminds me of T. Anastasiou's view (a parliamentarian against women's appointment at public services) who believed that women “disturbed their male colleagues' work through flirtations, red lips and lust of the eyes”. Long-standing views on the issue of women's work can be observed in *Γυναίκες* and *Γιούγκερμαν* as well. More specifically, Dimitra (*Γυναίκες*), a thirty-five-year-old petit-bourgeois countrywoman, jumps her sister Aimi for deciding to get a divorce and work as a clerk at a Ministry, and she characterises Aimi's situation as degradation. Dimitra is also ashamed of her sister Sofia, who works as a seamstress. But Aimi, believing that individuals have the right to decide for themselves, is delighted when she gets a job. Tellos Agras claims that “Aimi turns her life experience into self-confidence and independence”. Last, but not least, Aspasia and Alcmene Yiangkopoulou (*Γιούγκερμαν*), despite their advanced age, consider working with a view to unburdening their brother; still, they feel that, if they work, they will admit their downfall. Charilaos on his part is too proud to let his sisters work and expresses his opposition to their intention. Such a perspective may be associated with the male and female characters' age. See Agras 1933–1934: 157; Avdela 1990: 140–141; Karagatsis 1938: 111; Kazantzaki 1933: 17–18, 26 and 29–30; Lefkos 1934: 11–12, 22–23, 36, 41 and 86; Porphyrogeni 1935: 150; Svolou 1931: 3.

<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 134.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 184.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela 1990: 58.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 118–120.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 120.

dreamed of it even when it was not necessary for her to have a job. Thus, it was both necessity and personal desire that led her to work; and, unlike Maria who seems to find it hard to adjust to her work environment (as a result of which she knits when not pressed by a specific task), Agni has acquired ‘male’ habits, such as buying and reading newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

It should further be noted that, apart from Agni’s life, that of her youngest sister also seems to be affected by the family’s disastrous economic situation. Indeed, when the crisis breaks out, the female and male members, regardless of their capabilities, do not have equal chances for education; it is Koula that will leave school (“ως το σχολαρχείο φτάνει για κορίτσι”) and will run the household. On the contrary, even though her brother Lolis is not a brilliant student, he is the one who will keep attending school to get his high school diploma.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 187 and 206–207. For instance, in *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, it is the father and the son that read the newspaper. Dimitra Samiou’s view accounts for the acknowledgement of reading newspapers as a male practice: “informing women about their right to vote and their registration in the electoral rolls was fraught with difficulties, for women did not read newspapers”. Generally, the newspaper was a “symbol of entry into the larger world”. See Gruber and Graves 1998: 33; Samiou 2013: 194–195; Terzakis 1937: 24 and 58.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 120 and 160. Like Koula, Alexandra (*Η ζένη γη*) is a thirteen-year-old student, with a burning desire to go to and finish school. Still, her father wants her to leave school, since he does not have the means to support her; and Voula Papadeli (*Γιούγκερμαν*) coming from a family having lost its social and economic status has not finished school as well. At this point, it should be mentioned that there is an example of a boy that has never gone to school because of his father’s death and his family’s financial problems in the short story “Ο ίσιος δρόμος”. However, after having tried hard, the son manages to own a barbershop. A brief remark about the dominant elements in Christos Levantas’ (an interwar author, journalist, and publisher) fiction must be made here. The author follows in the footsteps of Dimosthenis Voutyras, and, as a result, his fictional works feature exclusively unfortunate heroes and heroines that come from a humble, unprivileged background. Realism and objectivity, as well as a sense of pity and deep concern for the characters’ sufferings and misfortunes, is what further characterises his literary output. See Charis 1932: 551–552; Daphni



Finally, the most common pattern of behaviour followed by the working daughters of the novel seems to be their resignation after their marriage.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, Dora, Fotos' colleague, is betrothed to a naval officer and after getting married she quits her job.<sup>2</sup> Maria, for her part, after Alkis' proposal, quits her job and leaves with her fiancé for Paris;<sup>3</sup> and even Agni, who has been acclimatised to the public sphere in general and to her working environment in particular, considers marriage.<sup>4</sup>

The decision to stop working after marriage is indicative of working women's practices in the interwar years.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the interwar period, women mainly "entered the labour market out of necessity", and not only was "their presence temporary", but also "their work was considered inferior and supplementary to the

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1937: 32 and 76; Diktaios 1963a: 132; Karagatsis 1938: 142 and 290; Levantas 1932: 5–6; Papadimas 1943: 104–105; Papageorgiou 1992: 161, 162, 163, 164, 168, 169, 170 and 171.

<sup>1</sup> The practice of working daughters' "withdrawal from the labour market" after marriage is not only encountered in Greece. As shown in Birgitte Soland's study, the same was true for Danish girls insofar as they "rarely chose to pursue a career at the expense of family life", and "almost all brides became full-time housewives after their wedding". See Soland 2000: 144 and 175.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 37.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 217–218 and 221. At the time when Maria accepts Alkis' marriage proposal and leaves her job, Fotos succeeds in a competition for a high position at a Ministry. These life choices are clearly indicative of society's perception of gender roles and vocations. See Ibid: 222.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 219. The same path is followed by the daughter of the upper-middle-class Georgiadis family. Popi declares that she wants to break free from the traditional beliefs and enjoy her youth and life, like her brother Alkis who left for Paris to study arts. Yet, in the end, she remains a prudent and well-behaved girl and gets engaged. Ibid.: 107 and 162; Terzakis 1932a: 74.

<sup>5</sup> Kyriakidou 2002: 496. The examples mentioned so far also include Flora Athanasopoulou (*Πλυγγος*), the anonymous female protagonist in *Κρίσις*, and Despoula (*Η ζένη γη*). Flora was working at a Ministry and left her position after her wedding; though when she is about to divorce, she considers returning to her old job with a view to being free and having her own house; Lefkos' heroine, an orphan and penniless girl, was working as an office worker before her marriage to Stavros; and finally, before getting engaged to Thanasis Farantzios, Despoula worked at a workshop where chairs were made and repaired. See Daphni 1937: 24; Kokkinos 1932: 73 and 319; Lefkos 1934: 11.

family income”.<sup>1</sup> Also, most women tended to believe that “marriage and motherhood on the one hand, and work on the other, were incompatible”, while “their vision of their future was that of getting married with a view to escaping the social degradation associated with their work”.<sup>2</sup> In fact, “this ideal conformed with the dominant ideology” according to which “marriage and motherhood were regarded as synonymous with women’s personal fulfilment”.<sup>3</sup> Besides, because of the prevailing conditions in their workplace, “they usually did not derive any satisfaction from their work, while all sorts of restrictions limited their activity in the public sphere”.<sup>4</sup> Thus, getting married and bearing children was seen “as contributing to women’s social recognition”,<sup>5</sup> while “the fear of spinsterhood haunted single working women, even though work was their only way out of economic dependency”.<sup>6</sup>

Laouretta in *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* carries the trauma of orphanhood and the stigma of illegitimacy; she lost her beloved mother at the age of ten and, being the fruit of an extramarital affair, has never had any relationship with her biological father.<sup>7</sup> The opinion of her half-brother, Stefanos Skliros, who believes that the illegitimate daughter of his father Menelaos has become a prostitute, is quite indicative of the social prejudice affecting illegitimate children.<sup>8</sup> In other words, in

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela and Psarra 1985: 22 and 92; Avdela 1990: 50 and 58; Samiou 2003: 67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 66; Avdela 1990: 49–50 and 58; Avdela 2002: 358; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 92.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela 1990: 202. To a considerable extent, the controversy surrounding women’s employment may stand at the very heart of this ideology. Ibid.: 49.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 202.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 131.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 248.

his view, prostitution is the sole option for a girl born out of wedlock whose mother was an Italian chanteuse.

Such prejudices notwithstanding, Laouretta proves to be an honest and decent girl, who has been working to earn a living since she was a child.<sup>1</sup> For the moment, she works as a manicurist and confesses that she loves working.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, she has a passion for knowledge and likes attending lessons at the School of Philology.<sup>3</sup> Taking stock of her life, she admits to Andreas that she is happy with it and prefers independence to settling down.<sup>4</sup> To put it differently, she is of the opinion that, if you are loved, you cannot think for yourself.<sup>5</sup> This is no doubt the view of a woman who has always been in control of her own destiny.

Still, the strongest sign of her moral integrity is the fact that, whenever she suffers sexual harassment in her workplace, Laouretta quits her job, thereby gaining everybody's respect.<sup>6</sup> To an extent, the author's choice to represent this orphan and illegitimate girl in such a way may be associated with feminists' concern for illegitimate children, who are generally treated by society as outcasts. Therefore, it is probably through the positive depiction of this female character that Terzakis sought to oppose social, as well as gender, stereotypes.

Lastly, in *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, compared to her brother Orestes who has received higher education, Sofia, a daughter from a lower-class family, has not even

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 135.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 138.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 158.

finished school.<sup>1</sup> It is possible to assume that this is the primary reason for her petty and uninteresting talk and for preferring embroidery and knitting to reading books.<sup>2</sup> She frankly admits that she sometimes reads to get sleepy, she dislikes heavy and difficult books, such as *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo, and is ignorant of significant writers and literary masterpieces, such as Fyodor Dostoevsky and *The Brothers Karamazov*, while preferring more popular books, such as *The Damned Daughter* and *Captured by Savages*.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, she feels no shame about not knowing French, an inadequacy which comes with her family's social background.<sup>4</sup> Sofia is also unresponsive to the intellectual stimulation attempted by Yiannis Maroukis, who has studied law and feels drawn to Hérni de Saint-Simon, as well as the Russian authors –an unresponsiveness which can be attributed to gender inequalities regarding access to education.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* and the two-part series *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* by Thanasis Petsalis offer interesting insights into the intellectual profile of male and female protagonists and into the question of gender inequalities within the family. For example, in *Το σταυροδρόμι*, Alekos Parnis is an energetic and aspiring man who, after graduating from the School of Political Sciences at the University of Lausanne, pursues a successful career in politics.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, his partner Aspasia Psellou, the daughter of Professor Michael Psellos, seems to be

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 178.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 180–181.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 182. The acquisition of skills, such as French and other foreign languages, drawing, music, and dance, was mainly associated with the upbringing of middle-class and upper-middle-class daughters ('διακοσμητική μόρφωση'). See Bakalaki 2011: 532.

<sup>5</sup> Terzakis 1937: 74 and 180–182.

<sup>6</sup> Petsalis 1933: 202 and 217; Petsalis 1934: 79.

carefree and superficial;<sup>1</sup> she avoids serious thinking and focuses on the pleasant, superficial, and positive aspects of events; and she instinctively prefers dance and sports to discussions and reading, adopting a frivolous and naïve outlook on life. The representation of her character points to the ‘woman-doll’ character type, whose sole concern is a fashionable appearance and an indolent, carefree life.<sup>2</sup> Yet Petsalis is by no means judgemental about his heroine’s attitude; he simply explores, as already mentioned, upper-middle-class mores.

In the novels of the two-part series, the reader comes across instances where young men and women are shown to have different starting points and opportunities in their lives. For example, in *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*, although both Margarita and Angelos frequent a private school for boys (to which only up to three girls are admitted), it is the son who goes on to study law at the University of Athens. At the age of nineteen, Angelos pursues further studies abroad, following in his father’s footsteps who is a lawyer and had spent a short period of time in Paris as well.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1934: 80 and 90.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Mrs Niopoulou participates in Alekos Parnis and Nikos Lazarou’s discussion and voices a simplistic view about politics. Still, she does not participate in more serious political conversations, and applies her lipstick, while Alekos and Nikos talk about the contemporary political situation. Ibid.: 66 and 68.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1937: 8–9, 41, 86 and 100–102. Likewise, Tzortzis Doxaras had been living abroad for twelve years and his son Nanis, after graduating from the Law School, continues his studies in Paris (*Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*). In *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*, an interesting analogy between the patterns followed by sons coming from upper-middle-class and provincial families as regards their educational opportunities is drawn. In particular, the narrator underlines that, compared to the affluent offspring who usually study abroad, those from rural areas, after graduating from secondary school, go to the capital to study at university. Characteristic examples of the former include Kleantis Zisiadis (*Τρίμορφη γυναίκα*) who studies architecture abroad; Panos Mavrostergios (*Μυστική φωνηλά*) who pursues further legal studies in Europe; Dimos Strotos (*Δύο αγάπες*) who firstly studies law and then travels abroad; Alkis Georgiadis (*Δεσμώτες*) who studies arts in Paris; and George Mazis (*Γιούγκερμαν*) who studies psychoanalysis in Vienna. By contrast, indicative

Characteristically, Mr. Damakos' special interest in his son's education goes back to when Angelos was still a child.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, in *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*, the lives of the daughters of the agricultural Doanos family are, compared to those of the sons, radically different.<sup>2</sup> More particularly, the oldest son Kanelos leaves the province to study law in Athens; having achieved economic and social rise, he funds his youngest brother's studies and employs him after his graduation; he further provides a dowry for his unmarried sister –the other two are already married with children– in order to enable her to get married. This is clear evidence of the aspirations considered appropriate for male offspring, who are expected to receive higher education and pursue a career by contrast to female ones who can only expect a family life as wives and mothers.<sup>3</sup>

To sum up, in the matter of education, there are differences between well-educated daughters from middle-class and upper-middle-class families (Kiara Doxara, *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*; Nitsa Gazeli, *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*; Smaro Doridi, *Το талантτο της Σμαρώς*; Roza, *Η μυστική φωνηά*; Astroula Stratidi, *Δύο αγάπες*; Roza, *Ο κατήφορος*; Nina and two anonymous sisters, “11π.μ.–1 μ.μ.” and Nina

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examples of the latter include Nikos (*Το талантτο της Σμαρώς*) who comes from a Greek island and studies law in Athens, and Kanelos Doanos (*Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*). The brothers Nikiphoros and Alexis Notaras, and Manolis Skyrianos (*Αργώ*) are in higher education, all studying, like their fathers, law at the University of Athens. See Daphni 1923: 18; Karagatsis 1938: 38 and 176; Kokkinos 1924: 9; Petsalis 1937: 9; Tagkopoulos 1924: 5; Terzakis 1932a: 74; Terzakis 1932b: 217; Theotokas 1936a: 15–16, 28, 30, 33 and 358; Xenopoulos 1930: 11–12; Xenopoulos 1984a: 9, 205 and 324.

<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1937: 82–83.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1939: 35–38.

<sup>3</sup> Even Eleni Grizoti (daughter from an upper-middle-class family) only finishes high school and does not study at university. On the contrary, her husband works in his father's business. See Petsalis 1937: 146; Petsalis 1939: 66 and 73.

Damouli, “Ναυάγια”; Katina, “Η ξεπάρθηνη”; Maria Galani and Koula Gardouli, *Δεσμώτες*; Kaiti, *Γυναίκες*; Alexandra Kastri, *Παραστρατημένοι*; Morpho Delatolla, *Αργώ*; Margarita Damakou, *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*; the daughters of the Sklavoyiannis family, *Γιούγκερμαν*; and Eleni Grizoti, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*), and those from lower-class families. The latter neither attend nor finish school because of their families’ economic difficulties (Laouretta, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*; Lenio, *Παραστρατημένοι*; Alexandra Zacholi, *Η ξένη γη*; Sofia Malvi, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*; and Voula Papadeli, *Γιούγκερμαν*). It is, of course, notable that some daughters attend university (Nitsa Gazeli, Roza, the anonymous sisters, and Kaiti).

In this context, it should be stressed that the high number of educated young female protagonists may be related to the rise in the percentage of literate women during the 1920s (30% in 1920 and 41% in 1928), a fact which can be attributed to “the expansion of primary education in tandem with the advancement of secondary and higher education”.<sup>1</sup> All in all, there is evidence that the daughters’ educational profile is undoubtedly better than that of their mothers, the only, and quite striking, exception being Maria Parni (*Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*) who is a well-educated pre-war woman.<sup>2</sup> Still, despite the increase in the number of women entering university, the rate of women graduating compared to men was still low, as the texts examined in this subsection suggest.<sup>3</sup>

More particularly, compared with the young heroines, almost all sons coming either from middle-class and upper-middle-class families (Nanis Doxaras, *Ο γιος*

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela 2002: 343; Gruber and Graves 1998: 34–35; Palaiologos 1928: 10–11; Samiou 2003: 68; Vickers and Vouloukos 2007: 520.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1933: 20 and 22–23.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela 1990: 47; Avdela 2002: 344; Dalakoura and Ziogou-Karastergiou 2015: 299; Samiou 2003: 67.

μου κι η κόρη μου; Kleanthis Zisiadis, *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*; Panos Mavrostergios, *Μυστική φωλιά*; Dimos Strotos, *Δύο αγάπες*; Alkis Georgiadis, *Δεσμώτες*; Alekos Parnis, *Το σταυροδρόμι*; Nikiphoros and Alexis Notaras, and Manolis Skyrianos, *Αργώ*; Angelos Damakos, *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*; and George Mazis, *Γιούγκερμαν*), or from low-class and provincial families (Nikos, *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*; Yiannis Maroukis and Orestes Malvis, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*; and Kanelos Doanos, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*) have the opportunity to pursue university studies.<sup>1</sup> Also, significantly, compared to low-class men and those from rural areas, middle-class and upper-middle-class male offspring have the opportunity to study or to continue their studies abroad. By contrast, middle-class and upper-middle-class women neither study nor live abroad (Nitsa Gazeli is the only exception here) nor travel alone, and their presence abroad is exclusively framed as part of family trips (Kiara Doxara, Maria Galani and Eleni Grizoti).<sup>2</sup> Katina and Alexandra Kastris who, either out of necessity or because of a personal decision, leave their country and work abroad, are special cases. Young women, such as Nitsa, Katina and Alexandra, may be said to overrule gender standards, thereby broadening their intellectual horizons.

Before taking up the question of young working heroines, families are depicted as environments rife with gender discrimination inasmuch as men and women, regardless of their capabilities and desires, are hardly given equal opportunities (Koula and Lolis, Popi and Alkis, *Δεσμώτες*; Lenio and her brothers, *Παραστρατημένοι*; Margarita and Angelos, *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*; Orestes Malvis

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<sup>1</sup> Only the hero of “Ίστος δρόμος” does not even go to school because of his orphanhood and his family’s financial problems.

<sup>2</sup> Before their economic and social decline, Galanides used to travel a lot.



and Yiannis Maroukis on the one hand, and Sofia Malvi on the other, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*; Kanelos Doanos and his brother on the one hand, and their sisters on the other, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*). Under these conditions, men are prepared for a professional career, whereas women remain confined to the house, with the younger ones “harbouring feelings of wasted potential” and the elder ones being directed towards marriage.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the family may also be seen as encouraging women’s development in that certain members (especially older men) place special emphasis on women’s education and upbringing (Tzortzis Doxaras, *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*; Thomas Stratidis, *Δύο αγάπες*; and Francisco Delatolla, *Αργώ*). For their part, young women often prove more capable than their male counterparts (Kiara Doxara and Nanis Doxaras, Astroula Stratidi and Kostis Stratidis), thus calling into question the deep-seated beliefs about the intellectual abilities of each gender.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, such transgressive tendencies are in keeping with feminist thinking that men and women are born with the same potential, and that the fixed conception of gender roles denies women the ability to fully explore and exploit their own potential. It should further be emphasised that it is no coincidence that these progressive ideas are found in Xenopoulos, Tagkopoulos and Theotokas’ fictional texts, since Xenopoulos and Theotokas were supporters of gender equality and Tagkopoulos advocated a better life for women through transcendence of social conventions.

As for women’s employment, the views expressed by working daughters or by various male and female characters are of great interest. For those who take a more

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<sup>1</sup> Joannou 2019: 212.

<sup>2</sup> Here one should also be reminded of Nina Damouli (“Ναυάγια”), a skilful young lady, who is almost always belittled by her idle partner.

liberal stance, work, not marriage, should be a girl's purpose in life (Yiannakis Doridis, *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*); work is not only a means for living free and gaining individual independence but also the most significant and moral aim in life (Mrs Theano, *Θέμης Βρανάς*); in no way should work be the cause for pointing your finger at anyone (Agni Gardouli, *Δεσμώτες*); everybody should be a master of herself/himself (Aimi, *Γυναίκες*); it is not taking up a job but owing people money that is shameful; therefore, working is the way forward (Alexandra Kastri, *Παραστρατημένοι*). Here, Loukia Filippou merits a special mention in that she expresses respect not only for Katina but for all working women (“Η ξεπάρθενη”), and the same goes for Laouretta who openly declares that she loves working (*Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*). This progressive outlook –evident in all these cases– suggests the emergence and acknowledgement of working women as a new feminine type, mainly epitomised by younger modern heroines (daughters) who flout the age-old dichotomy of private vs. public and challenge conventional expectations, as well as long-established gender identities.

Traditionalist attitudes on the other hand clearly indicate a rigid persistence in traditional family values and gender role arrangements. For example, a girl's vocation should be marriage with a view to performing her ultimate social service, namely motherhood (Mrs Doridi, *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*); getting a divorce and working as a clerk suggests degradation, and being a seamstress is shameful (Dimitra, *Γυναίκες*); giving a married woman permission to work is a cause for social criticism, and women's employment is tantamount to prostitution (Stavros, *Κρίσις...*); working women in general and women-writers in particular pose a threat to social order (Mr. Chaya, “Η ξεπάρθενη”); a girl of high social status should ask

her father for money than work (Mrs Kastri, *Παραστρατημένοι*); a girl's working environment may reflect her morality (Kostas Kimonidis and Eleni Kimonidi, *Παραστρατημένοι*); and working women, apart from being proof of a family's decline (Aspasia and Alcmene Yiangkopoulou, *Γιούγκερμαν*), also hurt the pride of its male members (Charilaos Yiangkopoulos, *Γιούγκερμαν*).<sup>1</sup>

It should be clear that, firstly, both positive and negative ideas about the place and role of women support the argument that the interwar was a transitional period, as new and age-old views about women's work coexisted. Secondly, Lilika Nakou's novels ("Η ξεπάρθενη", *Παραστρατημένοι*) were designed as narratives of women's liberation, while Galateia Kazantzaki's and Dimitris Tagkopoulos' novels (*Γυναίκες* and *Θέμις Βρανάς*) promote the idea of women's emancipation from social conventions. Thirdly, narrow-mindedness may variously be attributed to age (Mrs Doridi, Mrs Kastri, Kontylo, Aspasia, Alcmene, and Charilaos Yiangkopoulos); stubborn pride (Mr. Zervos, Stavros, Mrs Kastri, Aspasia, Alcmene, and Charilaos); class (Dimitra, Aspasia, Alcmene, Charilaos); misogyny (Kostas Kimonidis, Mr. Chaya); or to a limited experience of the outside world (Mrs Doridi, Dimitra, Mrs Kastri, Eleni Kimonidi, Kontylo, and both Aspasia and Alcmene Yiangkopoulou). Fourthly, the priority given to daughters' prospective roles as spouses and mothers is indicative of the persistence of the 'cult of domesticity', while male heroes' views, whether positive or misogynistic, can be seen within the interwar context,

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<sup>1</sup> One should also bear the examples of Mr. Zervos (*Πιάσσα*) and of Kontylo ("Η ξεπάρθενη") in mind. Lela's father feels guilty and ashamed, since his only daughter is forced to work, and the nanny feels uncomfortable with Katina's decision to work. Both cases are indicative of rigid beliefs and awkwardness about new feminine roles.

where male supporters, as well as opponents of the feminist struggle, existed side by side.

Thus far, my inquiry into “working women” has shown that the motives and conditions under which women choose to enter the labour market are: their families’ financial problems (Nina, “11 π.μ.–1 μ. μ.”; Nina Damouli, “Ναυάγια”; Lela Zervou, *Πιάτσα*; Agni Gardouli, *Δεσμώτες*; Alexandra Kastri, *Παραστρατημένοι*); orphanhood combined with financial problems (Laouretta, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*); the female protagonist, *Κρίσις*); the desire to be self-sufficient, independent and masters of themselves (Nitsa Gazeli, *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*; Katina, “Η ξεπάρθενη”; Alexandra, *Η ξένη γη*); change of their life routine (Maria Galani, *Δεσμώτες*); and love for work regardless of whether it is necessary or not (Agni Gardouli, *Δεσμώτες*).<sup>1</sup>

It emerges that women generally hold the lowest paying jobs; they are clerical workers (Nina, “11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ.”; Nina Damouli, “Ναυάγια”; Flora Athanasopoulou, *Τλιγγος*; Dora, Maria Galani and Agni Gardouli, *Δεσμώτες*; Aimi, *Γυναίκες*; the female heroine, *Κρίσις...*; Katina, “Η ξεπάρθενη”), cashiers and shop-girls (Lela Zervou and Nitsa, *Πιάτσα*; Alexandra, *Η ξένη γη*; Stavroula, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*); they exploit their talents and skills (Nitsa Gazeli, *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*; Smaro, *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*; Mrs Theano’s daughter, *Θέμης Βρανάς*; Astroula Stratidi, *Δύο αγάπες*; Alexandra Kastri, *Παραστρατημένοι*); they are manual workers (Laouretta, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*; Despoula, *Η ξένη γη*); and finally, they enter fields

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<sup>1</sup> Elena Roumpini (*Μυστική φωλιά*), Kora Frinta and Flora Athanasopoulou (*Τλιγγος*), and both Aspasia and Alcmene Yiangkopoulou (*Γιούγκερμαν*) also consider working for the reasons mentioned above. The argument supporting their decision is sometimes the fact that nowadays more and more young girls work (Lela Zervou, *Πιάτσα*; Maria Galani, *Δεσμώτες*).

traditionally belonging to men, working, for instance, as journalists (the heroine, “Σκοτάδια”; Katina, “Η ξεπάρθηνη”).

It is worth noting that the type of work these characters take on should be seen in relation to the fact that none have a university degree (Nitsa is the exception) and that the right to vote, regarded as a means both for ensuring political and legal equality and for fighting gender discrimination in the workplace, was granted in 1930 and only to those above 30 who could read and write. As it happens, although female characters in these texts are mostly literate, they are also mostly under 30. The high number of clerical workers and shop girls, on the other hand, reflects the fact that from the 1920s onwards more and more women worked in shops, banks, private businesses, and public services.<sup>1</sup>

What seems to be important is that, whatever their motivation, the lives of working young women differ significantly from those of their mothers. Unlike the latter, they distance themselves from the culture of domesticity and, much like comparable male characters, they open themselves up to the wider world. Naturally, it is because they enter the public sphere that the instances of young working daughters suggest new representations of femininity, which stand in contrast to their ‘house-bound’ mothers;<sup>2</sup> but even so, families turn out to be sites of gender

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<sup>1</sup> Avdela 1990: 37.

<sup>2</sup> What further attests to the importance of women’s entrance into the labour market during the interwar period is the type of women’s occupation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For example, women work in the fields and take care of animals (*Ο ζητιάνος*, *Αγάπη στο χωριό* and *Ο πύργος του ακροπόταμου*); they produce embroideries and clothes at home (*Η φόνισσα*, *Ο πύργος του ακροπόταμου* and “Τάσω”); they are teachers (*Η φόνισσα*); they work in factories (*Η τιμή και το χρήμα*); they are domestic servants (“Τάσω”); and finally, they work in tobacco warehouses (“Στο σκοτάδι”). I should underline that outside-the-house duties, such as cultivating the fields and caring for animals, were thought of as part of their domestic chores; embroidering and dressmaking were

inequality once again, for, as dependent family members, prospective female workers (daughters, sisters, wives) must have the permission of male members (fathers, brothers, husbands) before they can start work (Maria and Fotos, *Δεσμώτες*; Thomas and his wife, *Κρίσις...*).

It is important to emphasise that working daughters are not only compared to their mothers but also to their upper-middle-class counterparts who are seen as ‘women-dolls’ (Katina and upper-middle-class daughters, “Η ξεπάρθενη”; Alexandra and Lenio on the one hand, and Kostas Kimonidis’ sisters on the other, *Παραστρατημένοι*). It may therefore be assumed that interwar fictional works were designed as narratives promoting the positive type of working girl.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, apart from a job, what further contributed to the moulding of a modern identity for working young women was their ability to spend part of their income to buy whatever luxuries they desired for the first time with their own money (Popi, “Αβυσσος”; anonymous women, *Κρίσις...*) and thus follow fashion much like their middle and upper-middle-class counterparts.

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perceived as congruent with women’s nature; teaching was a common female profession: it was “the only acceptable career open to women”, since it was viewed as “an extension of child rearing”; the domestic service market was associated with sexual and financial exploitation; and being a tobacco or a factory worker was a low-status occupation that did not require a certain set of skills or formal education. Finally, it is, of course, no mere coincidence that factory workers are seen in Theotokis’ novel, since it is set in a semiurban area. See Allen 2005: 64; Avdela 1990: 17, 35, 36–37 and 43; Avdela 2002: 339 and 341; Avdela 2006: 232; Kaklamanaki 1984: 48; Kaklamanaki 2007: 67; Kladouchou 2010: 195; Kyriakidou 2002: 493; Pepelasis-Minoglou 2007: 521; Samiou 2003: 67

<sup>1</sup> One has only to remember Laouretta (*Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*): although she is an illegitimate orphan and uneducated working girl, she has a thirst for knowledge and deserves the readers’ respect because of her uprightness. As for the countertype of ‘woman-doll’, it is also found in *Το σταυροδρόμι* (Aspasia Psellou, Mrs Niopoulou), since, as already known, Petsalis depicts the upper-middle-class mores.

However, despite the shift towards a new type of femininity, the cult of domesticity and motherhood remained strong insofar as working daughters almost always quit their job after marriage (Lela Zervou, *Πιάσσα*; Flora Athanasopoulou, *Τλιγγος*; Maria Galani and Agni Gardouli, *Δεσμώτες*, Stavros' wife, *Κρίσις...*; Despoula, *Η ξένη γη*), which means that they eventually conformed to the dominant ideology. Yet, even if their presence in the labour market was more or less temporary, and even if, generally speaking, they would not completely part with traditional patterns associated with their gender, their life was quite different from that of their older contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly, the workplace also proves to be a place where women are treated on the basis of their gender. Such discrimination is reflected in cases of physical abuse (Nina and her friends, “11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ.”; Kora Frinta, *Τλιγγος*; Laouretta, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*), financial exploitation (Nina Damouli, “Ναύαγια”), self-commodification (Lela Zervou, *Η Πιάσσα*; Stavroula, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*), and various forms of biased behaviour (Katina, “Η ξεπάρθενη”). It is tempting to speak here of a vicious cycle, where gender stereotypes originate in society, are reproduced within families and vice versa.

A final point: whereas, after resigning from their job, some female characters reproduce their mothers' patterns (marriage and motherhood), most of the male characters, after receiving a university education, enter the public realm and tend to have distinguished careers, while those from upper-middle-class families quite often

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from the persistence of gender stereotypes, representations of working mothers are not observed in the fictional texts under consideration, with Katina (“Η ξεπάρθενη”) somehow being the exception to the rule (she is a single mother), since the issue of working mothers was a matter of controversy during the interwar period.

follow in their fathers' footsteps in terms of professional activity. In light of all these, one may conclude that, although the gendered division of labour was significantly challenged in the interwar years, it was not completely overturned, since, to a considerable extent, women were still associated with the domestic sphere of nurturing and caregiving, whereas men remained in the public sphere of paid work, government, and politics.



## 2.3 Sexuality

### 2.3.1 Fin de siècle and the emergence of sexology

The interwar period is generally regarded as “an intensely sexualised era” in the sense that discussions on and about sex (sexual activity) and female sexuality, which initially broke out during the fin de siècle and were “confined to a small elitist group”, came to the forefront of the public arena.<sup>1</sup> What mainly facilitated the emergence and the dissemination of radical perceptions of sexual life and of women’s sexuality was “the rise of sexology in the 1890s” and the considerable resonance of sexologists’ writings in tandem with the women’s movement, both being concerned with gender issues.<sup>2</sup>

Innovative conceptions of women’s sexuality in “the late nineteenth-century medico-scientific and social-culture discourses” not only sparked off a dispute over the validity of “the old doctrine of the inherent absence in women of sexual desire” but also promoted the acknowledgment of “sexual desires and pleasure as legitimate rights for a woman” and “as a crucial path” to a well-balanced life and “to a better society”;<sup>3</sup> as a result, “women’s sexuality was rationalised”.<sup>4</sup> The influential views of the father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) were of crucial importance in changing attitudes towards sex, as were those of “other sexologists and birth control campaigners” who presented arguments for the contributory role of

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<sup>1</sup> Jin 2015: 254. This escalation in the discussibility of sexual relations and women’s capacity for sexual pleasures from the late 19th century onwards is clearly underlined in the *History of sexuality. The will to knowledge* (1978) by Michel Foucault. Ibid.: n.10, p. 269; Foucault 1998: 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Heillman 2008: 91; Jin 2015: 254; Modellmog 2014: 267 and 270.

<sup>3</sup> Heillman 2008: 91; Jin 2015: 254, 255 and 258.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 255.

sex to one's mental health.<sup>1</sup> However, according to some feminist historians, this discourse partly “normalised women's sexuality” and partly “consolidated their heterosexual roles as wife and mother”, since “women's sexuality was connected with motherhood” and was thus “utilised to underpin an ideology of reproduction”.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the situation in Greece, the publication of treatises (mentioned below) relating to sex education in the interwar years is of great interest. All these manuals shared the acceptance of the primacy of both sexuality and sexual desire on the one hand and the control over sexual activity on the other. In other words, they attached special importance to sexual drive while “crystalising the dominant model of marital sexuality”.<sup>3</sup> One is invited to assume that this concern for legitimising sex only within marriage may be associated with the emphasis placed, as already shown in the first chapter, on health and hygiene in the interwar period. Marital sex in these years tends to be discussed under the labels of hygiene and morality.

In particular, in his study *Η σεξουαλική διαπαιδαγώγησις* (*Sex education*, 1930), Nikos Drakoulidis maintains that the sexual instinct is “the most powerful and the most important of all human instincts”;<sup>4</sup> and, in light of this fact, he advocates the necessity of sexual education, which he sees as “the solid basis for individual, social, and national morality, as well as for hygiene”.<sup>5</sup> In Drakoulidis' view, a combination of sources, such as parents, family doctors, experts, and manuals, is of

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<sup>1</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 91; Jin 2015: 255; Marriner 1974: 128; Sigmund 2015: 70–71.

<sup>2</sup> Jin 2015: 258. One should bear in mind that sexology, as well as eugenics, emerged within the same period, and thus, “population politics”, examined thoroughly in the first chapter, may also be interpreted as “masculine fears about changing sexual mores”. See Gruber 1998: 8.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela et al 2020: 317.

<sup>4</sup> Drakoulidis 1930: 3 and 33.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 17–21 and 33.

paramount importance in the enlightenment on issues pertaining to sexuality.<sup>1</sup> As might be expected, parents should also receive sex education in order to successfully carry out the task of their children's edification.<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that Drakoulidis' manual is a typical example of "a large body of literature" giving guidance to parents on "how to present the right information at the right time".<sup>3</sup> What contributed to the flourishing of such handbooks was the condemnation by feminist educators of "the prudish custom of keeping children ignorant of sexuality and reproduction".<sup>4</sup> At the heart of these advisory books lay the firm belief that parents should not "leave children to explore sexuality on their own" in that "negligence was widely believed to have disastrous consequences".<sup>5</sup>

Anna Katsigra on her part composed two treatises on sex education, *Γενετήσια αγωγή Α'. Για το κορίτσι* (*Sex Education A'. For girls*, n.d.) and *Γενετήσια αγωγή Β'. Για το αγόρι* (*Sex education B'. For boys*, 1935), aimed at girls and boys, respectively. Katsigra tries to convince young ladies who consider 'emancipation' as synonymous with 'free love' to "not regard virginity as superstition, since it is

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<sup>1</sup> Drakoulidis 1930: 22. In this process, drawing a parallel between plant and animal reproduction on the one hand, and human reproduction on the other, was regarded as a rather useful tool. For example, in *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*, the heroine is taught not only reproduction in flowering plants but also human anatomy and physiology. Ibid. 24; Daphni 1923: 70; Katsigra n.d.

<sup>2</sup> Drakoulidis 1930: 30. As in the case of Drakoulidis, the importance of sexual instinct and of children's sex education in tandem with moral edification is also stressed in Konstantinos Katsaras' treatise *Ηθικαί υποχρεώσεις, σεξουαλισμός και γάμος*. See Katsaras 1935: 17–19 and 43.

<sup>3</sup> Allen 2005: 199; Drakoulidis 1930: 22–32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 22; Allen 2005: 199.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; Drakoulidis 1930: 23. In the absence of discussion on sex matters, female children sometimes consulted domestic servants, and the results were terrible. For example, Roza (*Ο Κατήφορος*) asks her maid whether she should meet the man she is fond of at his studio flat. As it will be shown, this visit changes her life radically. Ibid.: 29; Xenopoulos 1928: 20 and 31–32.

not just an hymen but a symbol of respect to social institutions”.<sup>1</sup> As a doctor opposed to girls having sexual affairs prior to marriage, she argues for sexual morality, and contends that “girls should not indulge in ‘free love’, as women and men are not faced with the same consequences in the case of extramarital sex”;<sup>2</sup> she thereby authorises the fulfilment of female sexual desires only within marriage.<sup>3</sup> Katsigra further claims that legitimate motherhood is women’s social vocation: “if they [women] go astray, they will live a miserable life as, apart from being stigmatised, they will remain unmarried and give birth to illegitimate children who will not be supported financially by their biological fathers”.<sup>4</sup>

In her treatise on men’s sexual education, she argues that there can be no pure friendship between men and women, advises avoidance of extramarital sex and, reminding young boys of “the power of sexual instinct”, urges them “to avoid flirting and rendezvous with their female peers”.<sup>5</sup> Acknowledging that “chastity becomes even more impossible at the age of twenty four onwards”, she views “marriage as a solution to the inability to suppress sexual urges, since marriage is the foundation for a healthy and moral sexual life”.<sup>6</sup> However, if “young men have

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<sup>1</sup> Katsigra n.d.: 127 and 145; Katsigra 1935: 210.

<sup>2</sup> Katsigra n.d.: 93–95 and 121–123. Katsigra expresses her opposition to premarital sexual affairs in her article “Ελεύθερος έρωας” (“Free love”, 1936) as well. See Katsigra 1936a: 6.

<sup>3</sup> Katsigra n.d.: 125. A similar view is to be found in *Γενετήσια αγωγή Β’*: *Για το αγόρι* where she maintains that women exhibit antisocial behaviour when they indulge in premarital sex, even with the man they love. See Katsigra 1935: 195.

<sup>4</sup> Katsigra n.d.: 101, 109–110, 116 and 121.

<sup>5</sup> Katsigra 1935: 191–194. The issue of friendship between the two genders is also discussed in the article “Η φιλία των δύο φύλων” (“Friendship between the two genders”, 1936). Basically, the author cites the views of André Mavrois, Paul Valéry, and D. H. Lawrence, all pointing to the belief that men and women cannot just be friends. See Apostolopoulos 1936: 6.

<sup>6</sup> Katsigra 1935: 201, 203 and 213.

not yet achieved financial independence and therefore cannot afford to marry their young ladies, they are allowed to engage in extramarital sexual intercourse with them until they become financially independent; but they must keep their promise that they will definitely get married”.<sup>1</sup>

The centrality of female sexuality and gender relationships during the interwar period is further brought out by a letter addressed to Anna Katsigra and published in the newspaper *Νεοελληνικά Γράμματα* (*Neoellinika Grammata*) under the title “Η επιστήμη και η ζωή: Σεξουαλική διαπαιδαγώγησις της κ. Άννας Κατσίγρα. Επιστολή” (“Science and life: *Sex education* by Anna Katsigra. Letter”, 1936).<sup>2</sup> The sender is a twenty-seven-year-old woman, who, after having read the book *Γενετήσια αγωγή Α΄. Για το κορίτσι* twice, decided not to discuss such issues with her mother –although her mother was an educated and open-minded woman– but rather preferred to seek the doctor’s advice on matters that had long been treated as taboos. Before examining her thoughts more thoroughly, let me note that her case reminds me of young Danish girls who turned, as Birgitte Soland notes, to “self-proclaimed etiquette experts and advice columnists for suggestions on how to negotiate public behaviour and city life”.<sup>3</sup> It is worth mentioning that gender issues also appeared in Danish fiction from the 1920s onwards, as it “offered troubling, and often scandalous, accounts of the consequences of the much-feared blurring of gender distinctions”.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Katsigra 1935: 204 and 208.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. 1936: 11.

<sup>3</sup> Soland 2000: 5 and 83.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 5.

At the core of the young sender's concern was the issue of chastity: she wonders "whether refraining from sexual intercourse until marriage is possible in post-war society".<sup>1</sup> She first describes the position of young women and young men in the interwar society. She then goes on to remark that "by comparison with young ladies of the past, nowadays, girls are not only more aware of pleasures due to a wide variety of sources (books, theatre, cinema) but also mingle more often with members of the other sex".<sup>2</sup> As a result, girls want to have romantic and sexual experiences. On the other hand, "it is beyond doubt than men can satisfy their sexual instinct more easily; and in private discussions with the other sex, they are open-minded and acknowledge their right to free life".<sup>3</sup> Thus, "men scorn girls who seem to be more conservative and unwilling to indulge in any physical pleasure, whereas girls on their part vacillate between ending the romantic relationship and engaging in premarital or extramarital sex".<sup>4</sup> She adds that young women of her time do not only have to deal with their emotional and sexual drives, as well as pressure from men, but also with the fear of spinsterhood; "those women who followed her [i.e., Katsigra's] advice and practised chastity paid the price of their abstinence, since they ended up being alone, hysterical, and victims of bitter sarcasm".<sup>5</sup> Finally, pointing out that the sexual instinct is one of the most important human drives and that standard morality does not permit a young unmarried woman to stray from the path of abstinence, she wonders "whether a young woman who cannot marry for

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. 1936: 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Still, "in more public discussions, they denounce any revolutionary step on the girls' part, and therefore they turn out to be strict and traditionalist". Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

lack of dowry can have a moral and healthy sex life outside marriage”.<sup>1</sup> Based on the thoughts expressed in the letter, one may assume that this young woman voices concerns about sexual relationships on behalf of her female peers.

Feminists for their part, who aimed at “overthrowing the ideal of closeted, domesticated, desexualised, disenfranchised femininity”, were willing to adopt psychoanalytical and sexological discourses, which were thought to contribute to the normalisation of sexuality and sexual emancipation.<sup>2</sup> What fuelled their rage, both inside and outside Greece, was the established gender hierarchy and the double-standard attitude towards sex which gave rise to a dual-perspective approach to male and female sexuality. Society acknowledged men’s sexual experience as a normal part of their general development; and on these grounds, men “were allowed to resort regularly to (mainly paid) pre- and extramarital sex without endangering their reputation”.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, women’s sexual experience was frowned upon and was viewed as a threat to their honour; therefore “women had to preserve their moral and sexual purity at any cost”.<sup>4</sup>

Feminists fought against such a double perspective, which tended to patronise sexuality and make sexual purity the exclusive responsibility of women; and autonomy in matters of sexuality and sexual behaviour was at the heart of their struggle.<sup>5</sup> Although Greek feminists clearly directed their attention to issues relating

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. 1936: 11. In her answer, titled “Σεξουαλική διαπαιδαγώγησις: Υστερισμός και γεροντοκορισμός” (“Sex education: Hysteria and spinsterhood”, 1936), Anna Katsigra suggests to young women that they should not be afraid they will become victims of abstinence and spinsterhood. See Katsigra 1936b: 6.

<sup>2</sup> Buckley and Fawcett 2002: 91; Dekoven 2011: 215; Jin 2015: 258.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela et al 2020: 315.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ledger 2007: 157.

to gender and sexuality (double moral standard, men's promiscuity, and sex trafficking), "they did not officially address taboo subjects such as contraception and birth control through abortion, with the Socialist Women's Group being the exception to the rule".<sup>1</sup>

The details provided so far are not irrelevant to the aims of this section, where I shall explore the representation of daughters' romantic relationships in the interwar fiction in connection with sexuality, marriage, and motherhood. In shedding light on these issues, several questions need to be answered. Do young heroines conform to tradition by following socially accepted patterns and conventions or do they break new ground to the extent that makes their relationships with young men seem to challenge accepted standards? For example, are they sexually passive or do they speak out about their sexuality and openly claim their right to sexual pleasure? Do they duly accept the necessity of marriage and children, or do they contest the ideal of marriage and motherhood as a woman's natural vocation? Are there any unmarried mothers? What do the other characters in the books think about the heroines who go against traditional standards? In other words, are attitudes to sexual behaviour still affected by biased perceptions of sexuality? Finally, does medico-scientific discourse on issues relating to sex inform the fictional texts under

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<sup>1</sup> Samiou 2003: 73. For example, in the article "Ξένη γυναικεία κίνηση" ("International women's movement") published in *Ελληνίς (Ellinis)* in November 1921, there is a reference to the First International Conference taking place in Berlin, concerned with the reform of abortion law and contraceptive methods. Meanwhile, in October 1923 another article appeared in the same journal under the title "Ο ποινικός νόμος και αι εκτρώσεις" ("The penal code and abortions"). It is, in essence, a speech delivered by Marie Kunert, a Socialist member of the Prussian parliament, advocating women's right to abortion on the grounds that they are not able to raise healthy children, the dissemination of contraception, and the protection of both mothers and babies. See Anonymous 1921: 260; Rousopoulou-Stouditou 1923: 205–206.



consideration? That is to say, do female characters have a basic knowledge of sex matters, and are there references to either contraceptive techniques or abortion?

### 2.3.2 Sexuality and romantic relationships

Gregorios Xenopoulos broaches the issue of female sexuality in his three social novels (‘κοινωνική τριλογία’), *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*, *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*, and *Ο κατήφορος* with a view to scrutinising contemporary sexual mores and proposing a different sexual morality.<sup>1</sup> What all these works have in common is the presence of middle-class educated daughters who display an intensely sensual temperament;<sup>2</sup> and it is because they pursue sexual pleasures against a moral backdrop which patronises female sexuality that I draw special attention to them.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1932: 516.

<sup>2</sup> Xenopoulos 1928: 123, 147 and 334; Xenopoulos 1930: 81, 111–112, 117, 188 and 191; Xenopoulos 1984a: 64, 148 and 216.

<sup>3</sup> The ‘tragic model’, a predominant pattern in naturalist, as well as Xenopoulos’, fiction describes, according to David Baguley, “the fall into misfortune of a somewhat typical protagonist whose nobility of character, if not of rank, engages the reader's sympathy, a sympathy which becomes pity, fear or a sense of outrage when the fall takes place. The cause of the misfortune must clearly be some insurmountable power, of more general import than mere accident, chance or caprice, and the state into which the character falls must be irremediable, whether it be the irrational, the immoral, the uncontrollable, the incomprehensible, or even the unsayable, a state which threatens the very basis of the human order. It is women that fall –the motif of the ‘falling’ woman is central to naturalist thematics, [whereas] the male characters are projections of the stages of the heroine's moral decline, leading to her lapse into complete indifference and to her desire to grasp desperately at the few pleasures that life can bring. Thus, [the works] present the spectacle of the agony of the fallen woman, her decline, humiliations, her loss of self and identity after the catastrophic loss of her virginity or her honour”. As will be seen later, the fictional works with which we are concerned seem to conform, to a greater or lesser extent, to this typically naturalist tragic scheme. Yet, it is mainly because of their happy ending that neither *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου* nor *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα* can be characterised as naturalist texts –though, they may be read as ‘popular sentimental novels’ (‘novels of sensibility’) –that is, “a sub-genre, popular in the second half of the eighteenth century, which typically describes highly-charged emotions and aims to produce emotional responses in readers”. On the other hand, in *Ο κατήφορος*, the introductory note nudges the reader towards regarding the

In *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*, Tzortzis Doxaras recounts his children's sexual life from their first sexual awakening to their marriage and comes to the conclusion that, compared to his son Nanis, his daughter Kiara is underprivileged in that she is not allowed the same sexual freedom without being seen in a bad light.<sup>1</sup> More particularly, society condones Nanis' dissoluteness and indiscretions in his relationships with women (most of them seamstresses, luvvies, cocottes, married women, and virgin daughters);<sup>2</sup> as a result, he not only enjoys a free-and-easy life and a growing reputation as a womanizer, but also manages to marry a girl who brings him a large dowry.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, society is deeply intolerant of Kiara's missteps, even the minor ones, just because she is a girl.<sup>4</sup> In her case, the consequences are completely different: she acquires a bad reputation as naughty and promiscuous and encounters many difficulties in getting married.<sup>5</sup> Her consequent despair is clearly attested by her suicide attempt.<sup>6</sup> Her parents try in vain to marry

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novel as a 'roman à thèse'. It is beyond doubt, however, that Xenopoulos produces a large corpus of texts that centres upon female characters, the relationship(s) between the two genders, and the workings of the flesh, the power of sexual instinct, so to speak. See Adamos 1985d: 92–93; Baguley 1990: 99, 102 and 105; Charis 1979b: 130 and 131; Farinou-Malamatari 1997: 304–305 and 311–317; Goring et al. 2001: 295; Karantonis 1977d: 191–193; Sachinis 1991d: 241–242.

<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1984a: 7, 28, 157, 180–181, 197–198, 203–204, 215, 296–297 and 330–331. This issue is also stressed in *Ο μάγος με δώρα*, where the female protagonist brings gender injustices to the forefront. Eleni Grizoti holds that men enjoy their life without any restrictions, and when they decide to get married, they want to marry an upright woman. Her husband George Perros seems to agree with her, and he further adds that men and women are not faced with the same consequences if they choose to live freely, implying that a woman living without constraint will probably find her lifestyle an obstacle to her marriage. See Petsalis 1939: 74.

<sup>2</sup> Xenopoulos 1984a: 449.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 123–124, 206, 216, 396–397 and 450–452.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 125 and 216.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 125, 208, 211, 216, 228, 242–243, 254–262, 324–325 and 327.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 238–241.

her off with the intention of restoring her reputation;<sup>1</sup> yet it is only after the dissolution of her marriage with her first flirt, Aris Makesinis, that her name is cleared in the public eye and she can go on to marry an honest man, Michael Theodosiadis.<sup>2</sup> Arguably, it is the father's realisation that, despite common sexual drives, his daughter is discriminated against, which leads him to put forward a claim for a humane change in society's perspective on sexual morality.<sup>3</sup>

In terms of pursuit of sexual freedom, the case of the daughter in *H τρίμορφη γυναίκα* seems to be very similar to that of Kiara. Nitsa Gazeli refuses to obey her parents' restrictions,<sup>4</sup> and she desires to live freely, but the mood of the time condemns her – society has not yet fully acknowledged emancipation as a legitimate right for a woman. Thus Nitsa, kissed and fondled by various lovers, acquires a bad name.<sup>5</sup> However, Nitsa does not end up totally lost as she marries a decent, open-minded, and sympathetic man.<sup>6</sup> In his view, Nitsa, despite her previous involvements with various men, remains at heart an honest young woman who enjoyed freedom while upholding her moral principles.<sup>7</sup> This progressive thinking is based on his belief that, like men, women should have the right to experience a romantic relationship before getting married. For Nitsa's husband, any opposite

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1984a: 219–220 and 249–250.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 353, 359–360, 371, 417–424 and 427–428.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 216 and 243–244; Xenopoulos 1932: 514.

<sup>4</sup> Xenopoulos 1930: 20–27. The leading character was based, as Xenopoulos admits in the introduction of his novel, on a real person. Ibid.: 8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 5–6, 81, 100, 124–126, 130–133, 149, 151–152, 165–168, 191, 197, 225–226 and 252.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 203.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 252 and 256.

view smacks of gender discrimination.<sup>1</sup> Such liberal views on gender relationships, voiced by a male character, once again invite the reader to see Gregorios Xenopoulos as an advocate of gender equality.

What justifies this assumption is Xenopoulos' article "Το πιο μεγάλο πρόβλημα. Εξ' αφορμής ενός βιβλίου" ("A serious issue. On the occasion of a book's publication", 1932).<sup>2</sup> The burning issue of his time was prostitution ('εταρισμός'), "with 'prostitution' suggesting not only those women who offer sex for money but also those who engage in sex without being married".<sup>3</sup> Of course, the reason for this extended use of the word is gender inequality in the sense that girls -unlike boys- were totally deprived of the right to sexual freedom prior to marriage.<sup>4</sup> In Xenopoulos' view, the only solution to this problem is "women's sexual liberation from which the whole society will benefit".<sup>5</sup> In other words, "if women are granted sexual freedom, they will not be stigmatised anymore";<sup>6</sup> and therefore, "the male members of their families will not mistreat or kill them, and their future husbands will neither ask about their wives' sexual past nor bring up the question of their virginity, 'the seal of honour' ('δείγμα τιμής')," so to speak, as a prerequisite for their marriage, all pointing to a new mode of relationships between men and

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1930: 257. Similarly, Tzortzis Doxaras believes that his daughter will get married either to a man with liberal views or one that will overlook her extramarital sexual life because of her dowry. See Xenopoulos 1984a: 264–265.

<sup>2</sup> The book which Xenopoulos refers to is Anna Katsigra's sex education handbook, *Γενετήσια αγωγή Α'. Για το κορίτσι*. See Xenopoulos 1932: 511–517.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 514.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. It is because of this dominant conception of women's sexuality that Nanis has the right to sexual pleasures, whereas both Kiara and Nitsa carry the stigma of 'prostitution'. Ibid.: 514–515.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 515. Xenopoulos is opposed to Anna Katsigra, who, as already mentioned, was against women forming premarital sexual relationships. Ibid.: 511.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 515.

women.<sup>1</sup> It is “this gender equality regarding premarital sexual experience, an equality already gained in Europe and America, that will lay the foundation for stable and successful marriages”.<sup>2</sup> However, “after their marriage they should devote themselves to their husbands and children, and if they happen to do otherwise, they will face the consequences of their behaviour”.<sup>3</sup> However, here one may feel that women’s sexuality is normalised on the one hand, while their roles as wives and mothers are further consolidated on the other.

Finally, as Gregorios Xenopoulos explains in a brief introductory note, “*Ο κατήφορος* was designed as an anatomy – in the sense of a study – of a society or of an individual’s life (‘κοινωνική ή ατομική ανατομία’) and was aimed at the moralisation of young girls”.<sup>4</sup> The author’s intentions are also conveyed in the epigraph preceding the First Part of the book, where it is stated that “if he were a parent of a sixteen-year-old girl, he would suggest that she read this book, thereby ensuring that she would not deviate from the right path”.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, *Ο κατήφορος*, as the title itself suggests, with ‘κατήφορος’ meaning ‘slippery slope’, is about the downward trajectory of the life of a young heroine; and it is in this respect that her story serves as a counterexample to the young female

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1932: 515. For example, Tzortzis Doxaras admits that he has never thought of hitting or killing his daughter Nitsa, since her pursuit of sexual pleasures was natural. Kleanthis Zisiadis on his part does not care, as already shown, about his future wife’s sexual past. See Xenopoulos 1984a: 220.

<sup>2</sup> Xenopoulos 1932: 515 and 516.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 516. After marrying her husband, Kiara proves to be a dedicated wife and mother. See Xenopoulos 1984a: 458.

<sup>4</sup> Xenopoulos 1928: 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 9.

readership.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, although Roza has been raised in a family of strict values –her father is a Professor at the School of Theology of Athens University– she steadily goes astray and becomes a legal cocotte at first, and then a madam, since she turns her parental home into a brothel. At the end, the last of the men she entered a relationship with is determined to propose to her; but they will never get married, as his parents threaten to disinherit him if he marries her. Having lost her hopes for a new life, Roza marries Vasilis -her former lover and procurer- and kills herself.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the heroine’s missteps, hints of gender discrimination are evident in this novel as well. Nikos, Roza’s brother, is free to do whatever he wants; for example, he can have a rendezvous with a young girl or visit a brothel, and he enjoys talking with his colleagues about women.<sup>3</sup> Yet, at the same time, he tries to interfere with his sister’s romantic relationships, as when, despite his positive view

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<sup>1</sup> The style in which Xenopoulos’ novel is written reminds Yiannis Psycharis of *La Cousine Bette* (1846) by Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850). See Psycharis 1929: 155.

<sup>2</sup> The case of Smaro Doridi (*To τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*) is very similar to that of Roza in that, although Smaro is an educated and well-bred middle-class daughter, her life starts to go downhill, partly due to her inherent desire for physical pleasures, and partly due to her frivolity, narcissism, and vanity, and therefore she commits suicide at the end. For Tellos Agras, *To τάλαντο της Σμαρώς* is a melancholic book; Eleni Lianopoulou on her part characterises it as an “urban sentimental novel”. Let it be noted that Smaro, although she decided not to marry Filippos and broke off her relationship with him, is not such a modern girl; not only because she now views her marriage with Andreas, her current partner, as a means for regaining her reputation, but also because she did not indulge in sexual intimacy with her former partner Loukas on the grounds that she wanted him to ask her mother for her hand in marriage first. Likewise, in *Δεσμώτες*, it is because of the female protagonist’s murky past –Eva Krali has been a mistress of wealthy and old men– that her desire to start afresh is doomed to failure. Indeed, her partner Fotos Galanis does not entirely trust her, and finally, he kills her on the assumption that she cheated on him. See Agras 1941a: 692; Daphni 1923; Lianopoulou 1993: 128; Terzakis 1932b: 44–46 and 250–252.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1928: 335, 336 and 343.

of his colleague Michael Karaoglou, he does not invite him to his house, fearing that his sister may fall in love with him.<sup>1</sup>

Far from reflecting conventional views about gender and gender roles, Xenopoulos firmly believed that both men and women should have equal rights and obligations; on the other hand, he felt uneasy about what he believed were women's misconceptions of feminism;<sup>2</sup> and what he mainly objected to was female behaviour which betrayed a flawed take on the matter of emancipation. Moreover, Xenopoulos was of the opinion that "girls may move with the times and live freely; however, should they choose to be associated with unknown men, they would be racked with guilt, since those girls who behaved recklessly have regretted it ever since".<sup>3</sup> In light of these views, one may feel that Xenopoulos was genuinely concerned with women's edification and moralisation.

Following Xenopoulos, Dionysios Kokkinos closely explores the sensual life of two young daughters who succumb to the temptations of the flesh.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, in *Μυστική φωληά*, Elena Roumpini enjoys, as already mentioned in the first section, her life to the full and without any restraints;<sup>5</sup> a lifestyle that casts doubts

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1928: 336 and 345.

<sup>2</sup> Xenopoulos 1921: 140.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1923b: 268. As the narrator remarks, it is because of her superficial edification that Roza is easily led astray and does not learn from her mistakes. See Xenopoulos 1928: 161–165.

<sup>4</sup> Apostolos Sachinis and Charis Petros underscore the author's "special affinity for the heroines who admit and satisfy their thirst for sexual gratification", with the latter characterising Dionysios Kokkinos "as an erotica writer". Vangelis Hatzivasiliou, being of the same opinion, maintains that "Kokkinos' fictional texts are written in a sensuous writing style". In his view, the way female characters are presented in the author's fiction follows a certain pattern, since they are mainly depicted as wavering between morality and strong sexual desire. See Charis 1933a: 1064; Charis 1967: 1408–1409; Sachinis 1991c: 293; Hatzivasiliou 1998: 389 and 390.

<sup>5</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 17.

over her propriety. For example, both Panos Mavrostergios, who feels a deep love for her and tries in vain to change her mind, and his friend Nikos Kontaris entertain doubts about Elena's character since she neither resisted Panos nor seemed to take exception when he kissed her neck and cheek;<sup>1</sup> in their minds, such an accommodating attitude can only mean that she is used to being kissed and touched by men.<sup>2</sup>

For her part, Elena asserts her independent spirit and makes a point of not attaching too much significance to a kiss or a sexual encounter with a man she does not really like.<sup>3</sup> In fact, she goes as far as to declare that, even as a married woman, she would not hesitate to enter into a relationship with another man;<sup>4</sup> and she is prepared to even denounce love, if love meant denial of free life.<sup>5</sup> It is, of course, easy to conclude that such views are the echo of a dissolute life spent in a cynical pursuit of pleasure.<sup>6</sup> Elena comes off as an extremely frivolous, intellectually, as well as emotionally, immature young woman who misuses whatever sexual freedom she claims for herself;<sup>7</sup> and as might be expected, she pays for it with an undesirable pregnancy after an orgy, a turning point after which all her

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 18, 21, 27–29 and 141–142.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 28, 138 and 241–242.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 132. It is no coincidence that Elena reads the female authors Colette and Eugenie Marlitt; the former was known for her sensual stories, while issues including family and marriage inform the latter's fiction. Like Elena, Ellen Sklavoyianni reads *Lady Chatterley* by D. H. Lawrence (*Γιούγκερμαν*). Ibid.: 46–47 and 55; Karagatsis 1938: 340.

<sup>4</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 49.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 51–52.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 139–140.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 184, 196, 224–225 and 234.



misconceptions about life, love and human relationships dawn upon her.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the novel, suffering from melancholy, she is committed to a neurological clinic, where she gives birth to her child and then dies.<sup>2</sup>

Before moving on, it should be noted that at some point Elena thinks of having an abortion, although she eventually stops short of it.<sup>3</sup> What is important is that the sheer reference to this type of surgery in a fiction authored by a man and published in the 1920s could be read as some kind of revolutionary gesture, since abortion was

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 314, 318 and 323. Likewise, in *Γιούγκερμαν*, Efi Markopoulou, an educated attractive elegant and cosmopolitan woman, seems to be regretful for her liberty; not only did she dress provocatively, but she also flirted with young men and visited them at their apartment. As a result, she got a bad name. She further believes that it is too late to change the direction her life is taking. Arguably, her repentance might not suggest a denial of female sexuality on the author's part, given that Karagatsis acknowledged the power of sexual instinct to such an extent that "it turned out to be a predominant theme in his fiction" (for example, the reader comes across Voula Papadeli's steady sexual awakening as well). More than likely, Karagatsis is depicting the sexual mores of his time. What justifies this assumption is the fact that "many readers of the journal *Νέα Εστία* (*Nea Estia*) where the novel was being published asked the director Petros Charis to cancel their subscription, because they were afraid that Karagatsis' fiction may corrupt their daughters". Against this backdrop, it should be underlined that it is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of 'libido' – with 'libido' suggesting not only sexual urges but also the opposition between the life and the death instinct (Thanatos)– that primarily informs Karagatsis' literary output. Of course, such an influence, together with the depiction of the characters' sexual activity that takes centre stage in the narrative, are indicative of his interest in psychoanalysis as well as endocrinology (Making impulses an important part of his fiction may betray his familiarity with naturalism as well). In Pantelis Kranidiotis' view, Karagatsis may be characterised as an "apprenticed psychoanalyst" and as an "informed but amateur biologist" (Here one should be reminded that in *Γιούγκερμαν*, a male character studies psychoanalysis in Vienna). See Berlis 2008a: 294–295; Hatzinis 1981: 146 and 153–154; Karagatsis 1938: 270 and 292; Karantonis 1990b: 151; Karouzou 1981: 47; Kokkinaki 1997b: 86; Kranidiotis 1991: 30, 31, 32 and 34; Tsiropoulos 1981: 118; Vournas 1960: 83.

<sup>2</sup> Kokkinos 1924: 321 and 327.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 319.

an issue closely tied to women's sexuality and their freedom to decide for themselves, and access to abortion was among Greek feminists' demands.<sup>1</sup>

In *Τλιγγος*, Kora Frinta, a young woman leading a free life, explores her sexuality by looking for sensual and sexual encounters with men.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite her curiosity, she knows very well that, unless they tread carefully, women pay the price of freedom, hence her decision to commit herself to a full sexual relationship, only after falling in love with her partner;<sup>3</sup> and, true to her decision, she only consents to having sex with the man she is in love with, Dimitris Skaligeris.<sup>4</sup> For Kora, this is a way of asserting her independence and control over her own body.<sup>5</sup> For his part, Dimitris, an open-minded man, is not opposed to women having premarital sexual experiences and refers to the example of contemporary German women who engage in sex before marriage.<sup>6</sup>

After her first sexual experience, Kora, like Dimitris, seems to be sharply critical of traditional attitudes which keep young women in complete ignorance of sexual

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<sup>1</sup> Vickers and Vouloukos 2007: 520. The argument for the author's unconventional attitude is further strengthened when one considers that Kokkinos was a newspaper journalist as well; and as a matter of fact, it was more difficult for him to challenge acceptable social and moral standards. See Hatzivasiliou 1998: 390.

<sup>2</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 11. Kora undoubtedly acknowledges the power of the sexual instinct (for instance, she practises kissing tips found in a manual). Apart from Kora, her friend Flora Athanasopoulou is also a young woman seeking sensual pleasures, and therefore, she has sexual affairs ('free love'). Ibid.: 11, 70–71, 211, 318 and 366–367.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 13, 20 and 222. What essentially stands at the core of this view is the denouncement of double moral standards. This double perspective on genders' sexual behaviour also becomes evident when Kora asks her husband whether he will consider a woman's sexual past before being associated with her, and she receives the diplomatic answer "it depends". Ibid.: 173–174.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 13, 43 and 61–63.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 66.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 75.

matters until their ‘first night’, with tragic results.<sup>1</sup> It is, of course, no mere coincidence that a female character voices such criticism and one has only to remember that, as already noted, three Greek sex manuals were printed in the 1930s, with *Η σεξουαλική διαπαιδαγώγησις* by Nikos Drakoulidis and *Γενετήσια αγωγή Α΄. Για το κορίτσι* by Anna Katsigra being published right at the beginning of the new decade. Similar concerns are also expressed in Xenopoulos’ article “Εξ’ αφορμής ενός βιβλίου”, where the author mentions that “educators severely criticised the fact that girls did not receive sex education until they got married and had their first sexual experience, and, as a result, they would turn to ‘ξεσκολισμένες’ domestic servants and classmates for advice”.<sup>2</sup>

When her lover Dimitris leaves for Paris and her future husband Kostas Lerianos, a refined and principled man, proposes to her, it is Flora, who has had an abortion in the past, that advises Kora to see a doctor specialising in hymenoplasty, a surgical procedure young ladies of the time often resorted to before marriage.<sup>3</sup> Accompanied by Flora, regretful and embarrassed about her decision to restore her ruptured hymen and thus to deceive Kostas, Kora goes to the doctor’s office, where she is

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 66–67. On the contrary, Marika, Thanos Frintas’ sister and Yiannakis’ aunt, cares about her nephew’s enlightenment and manages to persuade her brother of the necessity for the boy’s sex education. This lack of knowledge on women’s part is also stressed in an article published in *Ethniki Zoi* under the title “Η ζωή της γυναίκος. Η σύζυγος”. See P. K. 1921b: 12; Xenopoulos 1932: 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 511. At first, ‘ξεσκολισμένη’ denoted a well-prepared female student, and then, after female students’ missteps, a sexually experienced woman. See Sitaras 2012: 267–268.

<sup>3</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 159–160 and 185. In her manual *Γενετήσια αγωγή Α΄. Για το κορίτσι*, Anna Katsigra gives examples of girls who came to her office, since they found themselves in unpleasant situations (unwanted pregnancies or ruptured hymens), while in her article “Ελεύθερος έρωας”, she cites the letter of a desperate young woman. See Katsigra n.d.: 112–114, 115–120 and 123–126; Katsigra 1936a: 6.

informed of her pregnancy.<sup>1</sup> The doctor refuses to carry out the abortion, partly because he does not have her family's consent and partly because he listens to his conscience;<sup>2</sup> however, he is willing to perform the hymenoplasty and diagnose the birth as premature in the future with the intention of maintaining the daughter's honour and protecting her family name.<sup>3</sup>

Here, one is reminded of Olivia and Etty in Rosamond Lehmann's middlebrow novel *The Weather in the Streets* (1936), where the former, on realising that she has conceived outside marriage, asks for Etty's help as the latter happens to be knowledgeable about "those underground and extremely expensive abortionists".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 185–188 and 191. Kora thinks that, even if she commits suicide, the autopsy will reveal her pregnancy, and as a result, both she and her family -despite her death- will carry the social stigma. Ibid.: 194–195.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to a self-induced abortion appears in *Παραστρατημένοι*, where Mimi, the daughter of the pension's owner in Geneva, takes medicine to terminate her pregnancy. Access to contraception and safe abortion is -more or less- the central issue in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century novel *Ο ζητιάνος*, where procreation is presented as the result of uncontrollable sexual drives, as well as non-use of contraceptive measures; and abortive drug is used as a means for terminating unwanted pregnancies. One should be reminded here that women commonly resorted to unsafe abortion methods, risking their own lives, since they were deprived of the right to abort an unwanted pregnancy and were subject to a penalty for acting otherwise. Against this backdrop, one may feel the importance of feminists' struggle for abortion and contraception rights. Objections to abortion are raised in *Ηθικαί υποχρεώσεις, σεξουαλισμός και γάμος*; the author approves of the termination of pregnancy only when a girl's honour is threatened. See Karkavitsas: 105 and 112; Katsaras 1935: 62–63; Nakou 1935: 249–251; Rousopoulou-Stouditou 1923: 205.

<sup>3</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 188–191. The tragic irony lies in the fact that Kostas, thinking of Kora as innocent, tries to open her eyes. In particular, he tells her that many fathers ignore that 'their children' were conceived outside marriage. Because of what she is "forced" to do, Kora on her part feels dishonourable. For her, relief only comes in the last pages of the novel, where she reveals the whole truth to her husband and swears that she has been a faithful spouse. Thus, Kora may be viewed as vacillating "between sinfulness and morality". Ibid.: 278–279, 326, 431 and 435–438; Hatzivasiliou 1998: 384–385.

<sup>4</sup> Jin 2015: 260. In the following, I will refer to British interwar middlebrow fiction in detail.

Olivia finds out that, since “many of their middle-class women friends have once resorted to the illegal means to terminate their pregnancies,” by undergoing this surgery, she herself will become one of them.<sup>1</sup> According to Xiaotian Jin, her decision to have an abortion should most probably attributed to “an imperative to avoid a scandal” and to “a class fear of being relegated to the working class”.<sup>2</sup>

Looking closely at the adventures of young female characters, one might ask: why is it that Dionysios Kokkinos’ narratives place sensually inclined young daughters at grips with their natural drives and instincts right at the centre of? Charis Petros for his part remarks that “no moral (i.e., message, lesson) is to be found in his fiction”,<sup>3</sup> whereas Apostolos Sachinis wonders “whether the author intended to judge the free sexual relationships between young women and men of his era and to show their tragic consequences, or to depict the mores of his time”.<sup>4</sup> I feel that Kokkinos’ fiction was primarily designed to give a panorama of contemporary mores;<sup>5</sup> and I mainly base this view on two passages from *Τλιγγος*. In the first, Kostas Lerianos expresses his belief that women’s freedom is the result of the First

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<sup>1</sup> Jin 2015: 260–261.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 261.

<sup>3</sup> Charis 1933a: 1064–1065; Charis 1967: 1409.

<sup>4</sup> Sachinis 1991c: 298. Vangelis Hatzivasiliou characterises the author’s way of looking at things as “moral neutrality”, an attitude that makes him differ from his predecessors (such as Emmanouil Roïdis, Michael Mitsakis, and Alexandros Papadiamantis) who, like himself, offer glimpses into life in Athens. See Hatzivasiliou 1998: 388–389.

<sup>5</sup> Poly Babi and Mary Kouzika in *Αποικιοί* seek to excite Dimitris Valeris. Their sensual temperament combined with the fact that they feel at ease with men makes I. M. Panagiotopoulos characterise them as “women of the world”. Therefore, Poly and Mary may be regarded as “representative examples of modern liberated women, since the novel is valued as depicting character types and mores expected to be met in the interwar years”. See Charis 1934c: 859; Floros 1934: 14 and 48–49; Panagiotopoulos 1980f: 97–98 and 99.

World War, which has turned people's life upside down.<sup>1</sup> In the second, Kora, according to the narrative, is by no means the exception to the rule in the sense that, like her, many girls live a free life in interwar Athens.<sup>2</sup>

For her part, Galateia Kazantzaki, whose fiction brims with stories about female characters, showed a considerable interest in, and explored, women's sexual nature.<sup>3</sup> Particularly, her short story "Το κρίμα της Φωτεινής" (*11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ. κι' άλλα διηγήματα*) is about sexual relationships between the two genders.<sup>4</sup> Foteini, the youngest daughter of the family, is a really beautiful woman that everyone wishes to marry. Motivated by a strong desire to fall in love with a handsome man, she becomes attracted to her first cousin Markos and thinks that, were they not relatives, they would elope. Foteini's sexual interest in Markos does not escape her sister's attention, who remarks that Foteini should not trust men at all and points out that her behaviour may bring disgrace on the family.<sup>5</sup> However, Foteini, despite being fully conscious of her lapse, indulges in sexual intimacy with Markos and punishes herself severely after realising that she is pregnant.<sup>6</sup> Not only does she give her son to a childless relative and flatly refuses to get to know him, but also lives in self-imposed isolation. She only decides to meet him when he falls ill; yet, upon her arrival, her son is dead and she herself commits suicide. It is because of such an

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<sup>1</sup> Kokkinos 1932: 111.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 125.

<sup>3</sup> Adamos 1986: 93; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 110.

<sup>4</sup> Kazantzaki 1929d: 173–187. The fact that gendered relationships are evident in her fictional texts is underlined on critics' part as well. See Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 107.

<sup>5</sup> Kazantzaki 1929d: 179.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 182–184. For the relationship between sin and remorse, see Kastrinaki 1997: 429; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 108.

attitude that Foteini may gain the readers' sympathy and be forgiven for her missteps.

Based on this storyline, one may assume that Galateia Kazantzaki viewed mixed-gender relationships from a rather conservative perspective; but at the same time, she had revolutionary ideas, as she envisaged sexual relationships transcending the traditional beliefs.<sup>1</sup> What justifies this opinion is the case of her heroine in "Αβυσσος" (*Ηπ.μ.–Ιμ.μ. κι' άλλα διηγήματα*), where Popi, a young and beautiful woman with rich sexual experience, feeling that her life is starting to go downhill, gets engaged to Thanasis Doulas. Even though she regards her fiancé as her lifesaver, she continues being intimate with other men, such as Phokas and Ntinos Balis.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the short story, her two lovers, Thanasis and Ntinos, both aware of her debauchery, scornfully laugh at her and Popi, humiliated, ends her life.<sup>3</sup> What is important here is not the author's denunciation of women's sexual freedom but her vision, just as in Xenopoulos' fiction, of a new sexual morality. As

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<sup>1</sup> Adamos 1986: 93; Gialourakis 1982: 63; Kastrinaki 1997: 424 and 425; Porphyris 1962: 761.

<sup>2</sup> Kazantzaki 1929b: 118 and 123. It is not just coincidence that Marika, Popi's friend, does not hold Popi in high regard; being a spinster, Marika is obviously Popi's countertype. As Angela Kastrinaki underlines, it is because of Popi's behaviour that "the limits between promiscuity and freedom vis-à-vis sexual relationships are fluid". Such a depiction of the heroine is not irrelevant to the author's ambivalent attitudes. In Kastrinaki's view, "Galateia Kazantzaki is concerned with the exploration of the whole spectrum of morality (prostitution, liberty, and sexual freedom) in her fictional works and plays, and she seems to vacillate between approving and disapproving of sexual liberation". As a matter of fact, Popi may be regarded as the epitome of "light-mindedness and independence", as well as of "naturalness and impropriety". See *Ibid.*: 121; Kastrinaki 1997: 432.

<sup>3</sup> Kazantzaki 1929b: 132–135. According to Petros Charis, an admirable trait of this short story is "the delineation of the heroine's psychology in that it is as accurate as a photo". Sofia Mavroeidi-Papadaki on her part characterises "Αβυσσος" as "a psychological masterpiece". Like Foteini, Popi arouses the readers' "feelings of pity and sorrow because she is a simple-minded girl that comes to a tragic end". See Charis 1981a: 33–34; Kastrinaki 1997: 432; Mavroeidi-Papadaki 1932: 108 and 110.

Galateia Kazantzaki claims in her article “Η αυτοκριτική μας” (“Our self-criticism”, 1930) published in the journal *Protoporoi*, Popi is the woman of a future time when women will not be judged by their sexual behaviour which is why Popi cannot survive in the time period of the story.<sup>1</sup>

It should not be left unmentioned that Galateia Kazantzaki touches upon gender relationships in “Ridi, Pagliaccio” (“Γέλα, παλιάτσο”) for the first time.<sup>2</sup> In this lengthy prose, the heroine feels incapable of inspiring love in her partner and urges him to gain new ‘experiences’.<sup>3</sup> Yet, profound differences between her early twentieth-century work and her short-story collection, published at the end of the first interwar decade, leap to the eye. What points to this argument is the decisive shift in Kazantzaki’s manner and perspective: the short stories are written in a subjective writing style, while hints of empathy for females and a closer look at women’s issues are also evident.<sup>4</sup>

The example of the young protagonists in “Η ξεπάρθηνη” and *Παραστρατημένοι*, where female sexuality, as part and parcel of romantic relationships, comes into focus, are particularly interesting.<sup>5</sup> The centrality of the issue of female sexuality in “Η ξεπάρθηνη” is attested by the title of the story itself, with ‘ξεπάρθηνη’ meaning ‘a young woman that has lost her virginity’.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the protagonist, a sensual

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<sup>1</sup> Kazantzaki 1930: 59.

<sup>2</sup> It was published in *O Noumas* in continuous installments from April 19 to May 10, 1909.

<sup>3</sup> Due to its plot and style (evoking the manner of Gabriele D’ Annunzio) Kazantzaki’s “Ridi, Pagliaccio” is regarded as a representative piece of aestheticism. See Kastrinaki 1997: 426.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 429 and 430.

<sup>5</sup> The issue of sexuality woven into the fabric of the narrative further accounts for the characterisation of *Παραστρατημένοι* as a ‘Bildungsroman’.

<sup>6</sup> The short story was first printed in Geneva under the title “Le livre de mon Pierrot”, and then, when it was about to be published in Greece, Zacharias Papantoniou gave it the bestselling title “Η



young woman, follows her own path in life and proves to be anything but the “ideal spinster”; which would namely involve remaining a virgin her whole life, being confined to the house, and keeping her father company when he gets older.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to her father’s expectations, Katina meets a French man, Michel, with whom she becomes intimate enough to get pregnant. What merits attention here is the fact that Katina decides to give birth to a baby boy out of wedlock and raises her son on her own.<sup>2</sup>

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ξεπάρθηνη”, which was characterised as “bad” (“άστοχος”) and “vulgar” (“ακαλαίσθητος”) in a review by Charis Theodoridis. As Lilika Nakou admitted in an interview given to Natasa Hatzidaki, the female character from the book was based on a real person. Yet she did not want to reveal her identity, because the girl died. See Hatzidaki 1983: 69; Kokkinis 1991: 497; Theodoridis 1935: 2.

<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1937b: 17.

<sup>2</sup> Despite her love for Michel, Katina suggests that he should return to Valence; not only because Michel is afraid of asking her father for her hand in marriage and is leading a dissolute life in Greece, but also, because Katina feels that Michel’s love is somehow gone and is sure her father would oppose her desire to get married because of his stinginess. On the other hand, defying social and gender conventions is not an attitude expected of a young woman born and raised in a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century semiurban area. However, the reaction of Rene in *Η τιμή και το χρήμα* seems realistic, given the frustration she experiences. Particularly, upon realising that Andreas’ love is conditional (he makes high dowry demands to pay off his mortgage; and if his requirement for a large dowry –1000 5-drachma coins– is not satisfied, he intends to abandon his partner), she is determined to go away, work and raise her baby on her own (she is already a factory worker). In this context, it could easily be inferred that women’s emancipation can be achieved through work; and the institution of dowry is condemned on the author’s part (the key leitmotiv of the novella is “Ανάθεμα τα τάλαρα”). All these point to the assumption that in Theotokis’ fiction, socialist principles are interwoven with (social) realism and the depiction of the characters’ psychology. For his part, Kostantinos Hatzopoulos (1868–1920), Theotokis’ like-minded friend, brings aspects of his contemporary reality to the forefront, gives critical representations of provincial life, and illustrates women’s terrible position instead of their rebellion against the existing social (and gender) hierarchies or their emancipation. It is important to note that socialist ideology, together with his interest in the women’s movement, make Hatzopoulos focus on women’s subordination and relate their inferiority either through their social and/or economic status, or the unwritten moral code. For example, the turn of events in his naturalistic novella *Αγάπη στο χωριό* (1910) falls short of readers’ expectations, for this is not, as the title suggests, a love story in a village, but a story about deplorable

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deals, as well as corrupted feelings and ethics, in rural society. As a result, despite the ethnographic background, the elements indicating the author's preoccupation with women's status are scattered across the narrative. Indeed, although Foni, a young, paternal orphan and penniless woman, is still in love with her cousin George with whom she had a secret affair in the past, she is engaged to Fotos. Just because of the double moral standards and his wealth, George on his part can cover his misstep up: he is expected to pay the prospective groom a dowry. And Fotos repeatedly delays the wedding since George does not give him the promised amount of money in advance. Then, in his realistic novel *Ο πύργος του ακροπόταμου* (1915), Hatzopoulos intertwines the economic and social decline of the Kranias family with the tragic fate of the three sisters. From the very beginning of the narrative, the reader realises that the female heroines' pursuit of happiness is tantamount to lover/husband-hunting. The first daughter conducts an affair with a young and moneyed man, but their relationship does not end in marriage, and, as a matter of fact, Froso confines herself to the house. For their part, Mario and Koula will suffer a fate similar to that of their eldest sister since, although they both are caught up in relationships with men, they do not manage to get married at the end. It is, in essence, because of their lack of dowry, as well as their vanity (despite the family's decline), that their hopes for marriage are shattered. On the contrary, their brother becomes an officer and marries to a woman that brings him a dowry, just because he is a man. Let it be pointed out that the motto (a verse from Goethe's drama *Iphigenia in Tauris*) appearing in the original form of the text (*Η Κούλια τ' ακροπόταμου*, 11/1 – 12/4 1909, *Ο Noumas*) may be treated as further proof of the author's social concern, for it points to women's woeful state. The omission of the epigraph from the first publication of the book and the subtitle 'Ethnography' notwithstanding, the social perspective underpinning the novel, the depiction of the sisters' inner world and the author's sympathy towards his heroines cannot be ignored. Finally, in the short story "Αννιώ", the female protagonist feels betrayed: she remained loyal to her partner during his absence (he went abroad to make money), while he himself married a woman from an affluent family and after two years of marriage, he returned the dowry and divorced. As a result, when he comes back after years, Annio does not even accept his generous offers. Taking all these into account, it is tempting to deduce that Hatzopoulos' female protagonists are mainly passive and submissive, with the exception of Annio, who seems to pave the way for Theotokis' heroine in *Η τιμή και το χρήμα*. See Adamos 1985b: 133, 148, 151 and 152; Bebel 1892; Charis 1976: 13 and 16; Charis 1979c: 174; Chourmouziou 1979f; Dallas 1997: 182, 185, 200, 204–205 and 216; Dallas 2001: 21, 23, 33, 35, 49, 72–73, 96–97, 219 and 232; Hatzopoulos 1910; Hatzopoulos 1915; Hatzopoulos 1923; Karantonis 1977c: 84, 85, 90, 91, 94 and 96; Karvelis 1978: 44; Karvelis 1984: 35, 36 and 37; Karvelis 1991: 63–64; Karvelis 1997: 95–96, 101–106 and 119; Karvelis 1998: 122, 125–126, 139, 141–143, 145–146, 148–149, 155–156, 159–161 and 163; Kordatos 1940: 1283–1284; Paganos 1983c: 110 and 112; Paganos 1983e: 183, 189, 190 and 191; Pagkratis 1991: 414, 415, 416 and 419; Sachinis 1991a: 192, 193, 194 and 197; Sachinis 1991e: 179–184; Seferiadou 1982: 211, 357–358 and 395–396; Spatalas 1924: 17, 20 and

It is obvious that this young woman takes a radical view of single motherhood and female sexuality.<sup>1</sup> Feeling that out-of-wedlock birth is preferable to chastity, she is grateful to Michel for making her a mother, even though he was not married to her;<sup>2</sup> and, although she has no regrets about raising an illegitimate child, she lets no one, except her nanny Kontylo and her close friend Tantel, know that she has become a mother.<sup>3</sup> The secrecy surrounding the birth of the child is no doubt the result of the strict social and moral standards by which women's sexual behaviour is still judged at the time the story was written;<sup>4</sup> she thus has good reason to fear that, if the truth comes to light, her father will kill both her and her son and her mother will suffer a massive stroke.<sup>5</sup> In her mind, things would be even worse if she had any siblings, since her sister would also be stigmatised, whereas her brother would side with their father and probably become an accessory to murder, intending to supposedly save the family's honour.<sup>6</sup> Besides, although Katina acknowledges

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31; Stergiopoulos 1986b: 171 and 172; Theotokis 1921: 44, 53, 114 and 119; Thrylos 1963b: 136, 145 and 178; Veloudis 1986: 16–17, 19, 28, 46–48, 56, 58, 60–62, 64–65, 72–73 and 76.

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, these advanced ideas are put forward by a young woman who attended an all-girls school.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1937b: 13.

<sup>3</sup> The nanny views Katina's pregnancy as a trial sent by God and blames Katina's father, for he was not willing to marry off his daughter. See Ibid.: 26.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 15, 24 and 27.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 15–16.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 16. A representative example of the way daughters' sexuality is treated by family can also be found in Nakou's short story "... Και το παιδί είχε ψέμματα". More specifically, Andreas lies to his mother about his sister's romantic encounter, and, as punishment for her 'inappropriate' behaviour, Marika is sent to a monastery. As Deborah Tannen emphasises, the brother is depicted as the "perpetrator of injustice" and society as "responsible for creating and condoning mother's hysterical response". As a result, the daughter is ostracised because of "a thoughtless lie". The fact that no tears spring to her eyes relieves -in terms of responsibility- "the society that persecutes her and the mother who represents that society". See Nakou 1937c: 138–143; Tannen 1983: 29–30.

erotic desire and sexual pleasure are normal for a woman, and Tantel for his part is in love with her, she resists her impulses.<sup>1</sup> Despite her bold approach to female sexuality, Katina, by associating the satisfaction of sexual instincts with true love, comes off as a moral and honest woman.<sup>2</sup>

In *Παραστρατημένοι*, Alexandra Kastri becomes acquainted and falls in love with Kostas Kimonidis, who seems to entertain some corny and oversimplified ideas about women.<sup>3</sup> He is deeply convinced that they lack intellectuality and do nothing but display their fondness for luxuries; he completely agrees with other men that women are only good at performing domestic tasks and giving sexual pleasure.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in his opinion, women are divided into two categories: women-prostitutes who satisfy the sexual desires and primitive instincts, and women-virgins who arouse no sexual desire and can be considered respectable, such as one's own sisters.<sup>5</sup> The gist of this typology is that women are “valued as objects of male desire”.<sup>6</sup>

Alexandra speaks openly about her virginity only after realising that Kostas thinks of her as belonging to the second group, declaring without any hesitation that

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1937b: 32–33 and 91–92.

<sup>2</sup> According to Eleni Lianopoulou, it is the unwritten law (women, compared to men, cannot change sexual partners) that somehow dictates the heroine's attitude. See Lianopoulou 1993: 320.

<sup>3</sup> Nakou 1935: 235–236.

<sup>4</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, Kyrillos –Kostas' friend who, as a former monk, loves and reveres the Virgin Mary– believes that women should be treated with respect. Ibid.: 258–259.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 313. A similar typology existed in Victorian England: “the Victorian male divided ‘women into two classes –those who must be respected, and those who need not be’, and he satisfied ‘his affections through the former and his desires through the latter’”. See Hale 1914: 257–258; Marriner 1974: 128.

<sup>6</sup> Joannou 2019: 208. This perception of the female body appears in *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα* as well, where Kanelos Doanos compares any woman with prostitutes and views women as sex objects. See Petsalis 1939: 39.

she has always regarded her virginity as a “silly detail”, thus bursting Kostas’ bubble who believed that, by contrast to open-minded Western girls, she would protect her virginity as something “sacred”.<sup>1</sup> She also explains that her virginity has to do with the fact that she has never had strong feelings for any man so far, clearly implying that, should she fall in love, this will change.<sup>2</sup>

Believing that her maidenhood is a hindrance to the development of her relationship with Kostas, Alexandra is determined to find a way to get rid of it, and finally chooses the medical way, as she cannot imagine herself having sex with the first man that comes her way.<sup>3</sup> Acting on her beliefs, she gives up her virginity for the sake of the man she loves. Her chosen method (‘hymenotomy’) suggests that,

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1935: 313. It is a cry of gender injustice when Nina (*Γυναίκες*) speaks out against society’s intention to regulate women’s sexuality by making them espouse the belief that their virginity is the most valuable virtue. In comparison to her sisters, Nina, a communist, is the only character that does not relate a love story. The depiction of communist values, as well as the positive hero (Nina serves as an example), point -more or less- to the theory and method known as “socialist realism”. For his part, Aimilios Chourmouziotis mentions that Nina’s speech echoes the diction of the leftist journal *Neoi Protoporoi* (in 1931, Kazantzaki was the editor in chief of *Protoporoi*). Following Chourmouziotis, Angela Kastrinaki notes that the heroine’s and the authors’ views are much the same. See Adamos 1986: 87; Kastrinaki 1997: 435–436; Kazantzaki 1933: 35; Zevgas 1933: 123–124.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1935: 313–314. Likewise, although Anna and Dimitris are apart (*Γυναίκες*), Anna does not regret sacrificing her virginity for the sake of the man she loved. On the contrary, Dimitris, on realising that Anna was a virgin, viewed her decision to sleep with him as a calculated act. See Kazantzaki 1933: 51–52.

<sup>3</sup> Nakou 1935: 315–319 and 328. The case of Mary, the twenty-four-year middle-class daughter of Nakou’s “*Η ιστορία της παρθενίας της δεσποινίδος Τάδε*” is similar. Due to her passionate love for a man, Mary decides to have sex with a doctor to get rid of her virginity and to assure herself that her syphilis is not catching but hereditary. Her decision to have sex prior to her marriage is obviously set against her middle-class family’s morality. What leaps to the eye in this short story is, according to Deborah Tannen, the profound difference between “the romantic visions of sex and the impending reality”. For Petros Spandonidis, “*Η ιστορία της παρθενίας της δεσποινίδος Τάδε*” is “a modernist romantic story”. See Nakou 1937a: 121–125; Spandonidis 1935a: 52; Tannen 1983: 32.

although she is not a virgin anymore, she is still a respectable person.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the reference to this type of surgery may be seen as a radical gesture on the part of the author in an attempt to address a taboo subject pertaining to a woman's desire for control over her own body.

Yet, on realising that Alexandra is no virgin, and against her expectations, Kostas flies into a rage and stops short of beating her up. He finds it hard to believe that Alexandra has had such a procedure and raises serious doubts as to her honesty and virtue;<sup>2</sup> as Alexandra works night shifts, he allows himself to imagine her involved in promiscuous sexual encounters, whereupon he rules out the possibility of marrying her. Comparing his later reaction to Alexandra's loss of virginity with his initial claim that he cannot feel any sexual excitement for her because of her maidenhood, it is clear that Kostas Kimonidis, who pursues an affair with a married woman while criticising Alexandra for wandering off the right path ("παραστρατημένο κορίτσι"), is a narrow-minded hypocrite after all.<sup>3</sup> The story thus brings male hypocrisy and double moral standards to the fore and comments on the established conception of virginity as a prerequisite for marriage.

Two last remarks must be made about Nakou's fiction here. There is a striking similarity between Katina ("Η ξεπάρθενη") and Olga Skina (*Αργώ*), since, like Katina and contrary to social conventions, Theotokas' heroine is determined to give

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<sup>1</sup> The critics unanimously regard Alexandra as a symbol of moral goodness; even when she describes her 'lapse', she preserves her purity. See Karantonis 1936: 84; Moschos 1989: 821; Panagiotopoulos 1980c: 165; Spandonidis 1935b: 464 and 465.

<sup>2</sup> In Deborah Tannen's view, it is Alexandra's "literal interpretation of Kostas' double standard" that "throws into relief the senselessness of his value system". See Tannen 1983: 64.

<sup>3</sup> Nakou 1935: 337.

birth to a baby who is the result of an illicit affair.<sup>1</sup> This comes as no surprise to the reader, since Olga has already been characterised as an “emancipated woman” by the narrator.<sup>2</sup> What accounts for the use of the characterisation is the fact that Theotokas was a feminist and supporter of gender equality. Indeed, in an interview with George Perastikos, Theotokas agrees on full equality between men and women<sup>3</sup> and further views those who think differently on this matter as “amoral and barbarous”.<sup>4</sup> This is reminiscent of Parren’s opinion that “it is possible to tell the level of civilisation a people have reached by the place women have in society”.<sup>5</sup> In other words, “the status of women” may be considered “as a standard of a ‘civilisation’”.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Theotokas was certain that what characterised his era was “the shaping of new feminine types and of a fresh look at love”.<sup>7</sup>

There is also a close relation between Nakou’s fiction and the British interwar middlebrow women’s novel, with the term ‘middlebrow women’s fiction’ suggesting novels placed “between the highbrow (the formal and intellectual challenges of modernism) and the lowbrow (the mass-produced and disposable romances and thrillers), for the most part written by women and aimed at a female [middle-class] readership constituting ‘a cultural framework in which women spoke to women’ about a common ground of home and family”.<sup>8</sup> In particular, similarities can be drawn between the Greek author on the one hand, and Rose Macaulay

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 380.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 84.

<sup>3</sup> Perastikos 1937: 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Parren 1921: 439.

<sup>6</sup> Towns 2009: 681.

<sup>7</sup> Perastikos 1937: 14.

<sup>8</sup> Dyer 1993: 40; Hinds 2009: 294 and 300.

(1881–1958), E. H. Young (1880–1949), and Rosamond Lehmann (1901–1990) on the other, in the sense that the English “feminist or modernist” authors, as Jin Xiaotian suggests, “represent young romantic heroines and reinvent forms of romance to problematise notions of femininity and sexuality, an arena full of ethical collisions”, as can be seen in their works *Dangerous Ages* (1921), *William* (1925), and *The Weather in the Streets* (1936) respectively.<sup>1</sup>

The intertextual relationship between “Η ξεπάρθενη” and *Παραστρατημένοι* on the one hand, and *The Weather in the Streets* on the other, is justified by the fact that these works provide the readers with narratives that touch on taboo subjects, such as pregnancy, giving birth out of wedlock (Nakou), hymenotomy (Nakou), and abortion (Nakou and Lehmann), all indicating trends in women’s increasing struggle for control over their own bodies.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, female sexuality appears subject to the standard conceptions of gender and class. Katina, for instance, a middle-class daughter chooses without hesitation to become a single mother, but she hides her pregnancy and almost keeps her son out of sight. Olivia on her part, involved in an affair with a married man, prefers to terminate her pregnancy, with her “decision of abortion being”, as already noted, “more a result of her threatened middle-class respectability and the impossibility to rear an illegitimate child, than a desire to deny herself motherhood in the first place”.<sup>3</sup> In other words, despite their modernity, both Katina and Olivia are still partly haunted by the fear of being

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<sup>1</sup> Jin 2015: 252, 253 and 254.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 256. Kristin Bluemel stresses that “Lehmann’s American publishers tried” in vain to persuade her to “alter her novel”, and as a result, she could not escape severe criticism for the controversial subjects she touched on. See Bluemel 2009: 120.

<sup>3</sup> Jin 2015: 261.



harshly judged for their life choices and find themselves hampered by traditional views of femininity.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to Angelos Terzakis' *Δεσμώτες* and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, it should be noted in advance that Maria Galani and Sofia Malvi do not share the sensual inclinations of the female heroines examined so far, since they do not seem to arouse sexual desire or to intentionally seek sexual pleasures in any way. However, they deserve attention because they are caught up in relationships with male characters. More particularly, although Maria feels pure love for Alkis Georgiadis, she is not open about her feelings for him; and partly because Alkis leaves home to study abroad, partly because she comes from a family that has lost its financial and social status, Maria agrees on a match.<sup>2</sup> At first, she adopts a rather passive attitude; not only does she accept to meet and to get acquainted with her prospective husband, Stefanos Sarmidis, she also conceals her deep dislike for him in order not to sadden her ill mother.<sup>3</sup> However, after the latter's death, Maria finds the strength to send him away, while her secret romance with Alkis is about to have a happy conclusion.<sup>4</sup> Alkis comes back, proposes to her and they get married, with Maria expecting soon after.<sup>5</sup>

For her part, due to her home confinement, lack of social life, and strict code of conduct, Sofia Malvi is a quiet, reserved young woman. Thus, only after Sofia and Yiannis Maroukis get to know each other better does her attitude towards the man she is fond of change little by little: she seeks Yiannis' company, spends a lot of her

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<sup>1</sup> Jin 2015: 260 and 268.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 148–149 and 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 181.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 86 and 200.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 217, 230 and 253.

time with him, shows tenderness and expresses her thoughts and fears. More surprisingly, she consents to premarital sex, making it clear that, despite their lovemaking, she does not expect anything from him.<sup>1</sup> As she realises that Yiannis feels morally obliged to marry her, Sofia tries to talk him out of asking her father for her hand in marriage because, to her, a proposal born of a sense of duty is more or less humiliating: although marriage is on her mind, her sense of dignity makes her determined to turn down such a proposal.<sup>2</sup>

It should be underlined that these two characters (Maria Galani and Sofia Malvi) are quite similar: their patterns of thought and behaviour are, to a great extent, in keeping with tradition, but at crucial moments they adopt an unexpected -modern for their time, so to speak- attitude.<sup>3</sup> However, it is because of Sofia's premarital sexual experience and her keeping sex apart from marriage (even on the grounds of self-respect) that they differ. Here, it is tempting to examine a slight change in the author's attitude towards female sexuality, since Maria has her first sexual experience after her marriage. This difference in the heroines' sexual behaviour could imply the author acknowledges women's right to satisfy their sexual instincts and could be attributed to the length of time between the publication of *Δεσμώτες* (1932) and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία* (1937).

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 199–201.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 133, 135, 201 and 206–207.

<sup>3</sup> Similarly, although Elenitsa-Pelagia Sklavoyianni prefers home confinement to social life and keeps her petit-bourgeois habits, she resists. Indeed, despite her family's opposition, she flirts with Ioakeim Iordanoglou, the son of her family's competitor, and she wants to marry him. In case her parents do not consent to her marriage, she threatens to confine herself to her bedroom and to marry Ioakeim when she comes of age. Eventually, Elenitsa-Pelagia gets her way and marries him. See Karagatsis 1938: 455–458 and 461.

As already mentioned, in the trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* by Petsalis, the interest lies in the fact that the reader comes across heroines belonging to different generations. In the first book, *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*, the main character seems to vacillate between tradition and modernity in her relationship with the man she likes.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, even though Maria Kouka-Phoka is attracted to Petros Parnis and enjoys his company, she expresses regret for their rendezvous out of concern for her respectability related to her social class. Before her affair with Petros, she could not even imagine engaging in extramarital sex;<sup>2</sup> however, her love for him paves the way for their sexual intimacy.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, at some point it is Maria who seeks the next stage in the relationship: annoyed because, despite their discretion, their social circle, as well as a large part of Athenian society, has become aware of their love affair, she takes the initiative and brings up the possibility of their marriage.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, after a two-year separation, the death of Petros Parnis' mother –who had been opposed to their union– and Maria's pregnancy, they get married and Maria becomes the mother of a son.<sup>5</sup>

One may wonder why, after having lived a quite modern life, Maria chooses to marry and to have a child. The fact that she belongs to the prewar generation, for whom marriage and motherhood were thought of as women's natural vocation, may offer one explanation. However, authorial intent should also be considered here since, as I have argued in my first chapter, it is mainly through marriage and

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1933: 128–129 and 131–133. See also Bitsiani 2014: 85–86

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1933: 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 135 and 185–187.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 149–152. The heroine's compliance with more traditional values and standards is stressed by Tellos Agras. See Agras 1936: 842.

<sup>5</sup> Petsalis 1933: 189.

motherhood that Petsalis exemplifies biological and social decline in his trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*.

A new mode of relationships with the other gender appears in the second novel *Το σταυροδρόμι*, where the heroine's moral code allows courting, discussions with young men, and kisses.<sup>1</sup> In fact, as someone belonging to the first post-war (interwar for the readers) generation, Aspasia Psellou flirts with Alekos, discusses relationship issues with him and openly voices her preference for emotional bonds where her partner would be forthcoming about his feelings for her;<sup>2</sup> and, of course, she allows Alekos to kiss her.<sup>3</sup> This pattern of behaviour is also followed by many young girls of her time, and is viewed as "a sign of the times".<sup>4</sup> The springboard for this change in sexual mores is the radical idea of 'free love' that occurs often in the text and consists of the open acknowledgment of women's natural right to sexual pleasures.<sup>5</sup> Still, once again, the trajectory of this love affair leads to marriage and motherhood, since Aspasia marries Alekos and becomes the mother of two children. Thus, the reader is invited to feel that normalisation of female sexuality proceeds in tandem with the consolidation of the ideals of wifehood and motherhood.<sup>6</sup>

This combination of female sexual liberty and traditional women's roles is further exemplified by the two daughters in *Ο απόγονος*, the third book of the trilogy. Here Sofia Parni, first-born daughter of Eleni. L. Parni and the third cousin

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1934: 90–91.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 82–83.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 83.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 91.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 82, 169–170 and 224.

<sup>6</sup> Maria Parni advises her son Alekos to persuade his wife of the primacy of childbearing in marriage. See Petsalis 1933: 210.

of Petros and Maria Parni (the offspring of the fourth generation of the upper-middle-class Parni family), is depicted as a frivolous young lady in her younger days;<sup>1</sup> later on, she gets married, gives birth to a child and considers having a second.<sup>2</sup> For her part, Vasiliki Parni, Sofia's sister, is of the opinion that women can be modern before marriage but adopt more traditional patterns of behaviour after their marriage.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the fact that girls of her time tend to enjoy their life before getting married is by no means a sign of their being anti-marriage. Vasiliki herself is a modern girl but has no hesitation whatsoever when it comes to getting married.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Aimilia Daphni displays a sensitive approach to issues of gender equality and female sexuality.<sup>5</sup> In her *H ζένη γη*, the narrative revolves around the heroines' relationships with men, focusing mainly on Antonis Zacholis' first-born daughter

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1935: 157.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Similarly, Elissavet, the eldest daughter of the upper-middle-class Damakos family (*H ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*), is a naughty girl. After flirting with handsome boys, she engages in premarital sexual intercourse with her future husband, gets pregnant and becomes a married woman with two children. At the other end of the spectrum, her sister Margarita gets married too, thanks to an aunt who arranges a match. See Petsalis 1937: 84, 91–92, 96–97, 100–101, 106, 117, 135–137 and 166.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1935: 159.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 158.

<sup>5</sup> Kostas Papageorgiou underlines the author's ability to vividly depict her heroines' psychology. What her poems and novels have in common is the melancholy tone in the sense that they give readers an intense feeling of sadness. Under the influence of French symbolists (such as Paul Verlaine and Jules Laforgue) and the Greek poet Kostis Palamas, she published two collections of poems (*Χρυσάνθεμα: Λυρικά ποιήσεις*, 1902; and *Τα χρυσά κόπελλα*, 1923) that are characterised by idealism, spiritualism, mysticism, musicality, and melancholia. On the contrary, despite the haunting melancholy that pervades her fiction, there is an evident realistic tone that sometimes goes so far, it becomes raw naturalism. See Agras 1941a: 692–693; Agras 1942b: 631–632; Kotzioulas 1932: 445; Meraklis 2000: 508; Papageorgiou 1998: 307 and 310; Panagiotopoulos 1957: 1009 and 1010; Tarsouli 1951: 69, 70, 72 and 74.

Despoula, with Alexandra, Despoula's youngest sister, featuring as well. Despoula's situation makes evident the perception of woman as an object of male desire: not only does she become a victim of attempted rape during her childhood, she also suffers another two assaults –one from her fiancé before getting married and the other from her husband's business partner.<sup>1</sup> Even after marriage, she continues to be sexually abused by her husband –a brutal man she loathed but was forced to marry;<sup>2</sup> partly because she had to obey her father, and partly because any objections on her part might further damage her honour, which had already been compromised by a previous affair with Mitsos Stavrianos.<sup>3</sup>

The case of Despoula brings out Aimilia Daphni's rather revolutionary perspective on male sexuality. More particularly, after her marriage Despoula has difficulty getting pregnant;<sup>4</sup> unsurprisingly, she is accused of being sterile before

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<sup>1</sup> Daphni 1937: 26–28, 43, 45–46 and 182. Katina (“Η ξεπάρθηνη”) had a similar experience, since Alekos sexually assaulted her at the age of six or seven. For Deborah Tannen, “all that Katina finds repulsive in men is embodied” in this man. See Nakou 1937b: 60–61; Tannen 1983: 54.

<sup>2</sup> Daphni 1937: 100–101 and 105. Her mood after her ‘first night’ may also be suggestive of the criminal ignorance of anything concerning marital sex life. This lack of knowledge combined with her husband's violent behaviour may account for her physical and psychological state. Ibid.: 101.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 40, 51–52 and 54. It was after the attempted rape that the issue of Despoula's virtue was raised for the first time. A doctor was asked to examine her and to ensure that she was still a virgin. Under this light, her virginity becomes a matter of familial concern, for it is valued as an essential prerequisite for marriage. This concept is supported further by the case of Leipsanevatos' daughter, who had extramarital sexual affairs and underwent hymenoplasty with a view to avoiding the scandal of having been ‘spoiled’ prior to her ‘first night’. To cap all that, Voula Papadeli (*Γιούγκερμαν*) and her beloved George Mazis ran away from Mytilene to cause a scandal and coerce their families into marrying them. After the failed ‘kidnapping’, Thomas Papadelis worries whether his daughter is still ‘untouched’. Such a concern implies strict control over female sexuality on the part of both family and society. Ibid.: 26–28 and 56–57; Avdela et al: 320; Karagatsis 1938: 26 and 37.

<sup>4</sup> Daphni 1937: 135.

sterility is proved to be her husband's problem (though he will not admit it).<sup>1</sup> Despoula is a woman, so she is ipso facto considered suspect of infertility –the underlying assumption being that in no way can a man be infertile.<sup>2</sup> Against the backdrop of such an assumption, Aimilia Daphni seems to step off the beaten track in dealing with the question of married couples' infertility.

For her part, Alexandra struggles for sexual autonomy, and, in this sense, she stands out as her sister's countertype. In fact, her sensual nature becomes apparent by degrees. At first, she hugs and kisses her classmate Gerasimos; then, she enters a sexual relationship with her sister's best-man Alexis; and ends up having sex with her boss, Thomas, and getting pregnant. At this point, Alexandra declares that, on the one hand, she is possessed by her sexual instincts, and, on the other, she is considering terminating her pregnancy.<sup>3</sup> The intended termination most probably implies her determination to be in control of her own body but is also a sign of her awareness that premarital sex –let alone an unwanted out-of-wedlock pregnancy– is viewed by both society and family as a loss of honour.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact,

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<sup>1</sup> Daphni 1937: 151. Likewise, in *Γυναίκες*, becoming pregnant is fraught with difficulty and, once again, it is the woman (Dimitra) that is held responsible for childlessness. See Kazantzaki 1933: 49–50.

<sup>2</sup> Daphni 1937: 163 and 173.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 205 and 206. It is because of this statement and the realisation that she has lost her virtue that she is willing to consider the possibility of becoming a sex worker in Egypt. Ibid.: 207.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 206 and 208. What further points to the perception of women's extramarital sexual activity and pregnancy outside marriage as a terrible calamity and loss of virtue is Despoula's readiness to raise her sister's illegitimate child, thereby protecting her name. This willingness, however, may also be attributed to the fact that Despoula cannot have a baby. Ibid.: 205–208 and 211.

Thodoris, Despoula and Alexandra's brother, will not allow the latter's promiscuity to go unpunished and kills his sister at the moment she gives birth to her child.<sup>1</sup>

However, this is not the only 'crime of honour' in Daphni's novel, as aunt Tasia's lover meets his death at the hands of her brother when the latter discovers that the couple intended to secretly run away and get married.<sup>2</sup> The fact that aunt and niece, despite belonging to different generations, follow unconventional patterns of behaviour and encounter death in the name of honour points to the assumption that normative directives were not to be easily dismissed by men.<sup>3</sup>

Striking similarities between Alexandra and Anastasoula, the heroine in "Ο Γολγοθάς" (*Χαμένα κορμιά*, 1922) by Petros Pikros (1894–1956) can also be observed, insofar as the youngest daughter of the Sarantopoulos family falls short of the ideal woman and mother.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to her elder sister who gets married before becoming intimate with a man and getting pregnant, Anastasoula finds herself expecting because of her extramarital affair with Vangos.<sup>5</sup> It is through her voice

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<sup>1</sup> Daphni 1937: 212 and 214. The first time that her brother beat her was when he found her and Gerasimos in an embrace. Ibid.: 73–76.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 22, 34 and 59.

<sup>3</sup> Kostas Papageorgiou maintains that "the author used the darkest colour to draw her male characters". See Papageorgiou 1998: 307.

<sup>4</sup> *Χαμένα κορμιά*, Petros Pikros' first appearance on the literary scene, together with the short-story collection *Σα θα γίνουμε άνθρωποι* (1924) and the story *Τουμπεκί* (1927) that followed, are regarded as a three-part series. What all these works have in common is that they vacillate between social realism and naturalism; they brim with compassion and understanding towards those who live on the fringes of society; and they betray the author's left-wing views, also evident in his political journalism. Apart from descriptions of life in the underworld, comments on social prejudices can also be found in the trilogy, with the short story "Ο Γολγοθάς" suggesting Pikros' sympathy towards his heroine, a victim of social and sexual stereotypes. See Argyriou 1993: 214–218; Bartzis 2006: 25–34.

<sup>5</sup> Pikros 1922: 119–120, 122 and 126.



that Petros Pikros defends “the right to true love and sexual fulfilment, even outside the limits set by church and state”.<sup>1</sup> This is, in essence, an alternative vision of both society and sexual mores but the agricultural society in which the heroine lives shows respect only for married women and treats both the unmarried woman and her child as social outcasts.<sup>2</sup> Due to such social imperatives, after giving birth, Anastasoula hangs herself to avoid the lifelong stigma, while the new-born is looked upon with disdain. In view of all this, the reader may be excused for believing that if Anastasoula had a brother, she would probably have fallen victim to an honour crime, for, as Kleio Presvelou and Anastasia-Valentini Riga remark, such methods of saving the family’s honour were quite common in Greek agricultural societies prior to 1940.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Allen 2005: 35; Pikros 1922: 126.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 128–129. Rather vivid is the birth scene taking place inside the privy: blood mixes with the excrement. Ibid.: 127.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 122 and 124–125; Presvelou and Riga 2013: 586–587. Konstantinos Katsaras disapproves of such practices. See Katsaras 1935: 64–65. Examples of stained honour are provided in Theotokis’ collection of naturalistic “rustic short stories” (*Κορφιάτικες ιστορίες*, 1935) such as “Υπόληψη” (*O Noumas*, 1905), “Ζωή του χωριού” (*O Noumas*, 1905), “Η παντρεία της Σταλαχτής” (*O Noumas*, 1905), “Οι δύο αγάπες” (*O Noumas*, 1910), and “Αμάρτησε;” (*Ethnikon Imerologion*, 1912), as well as in *H τιμή και το χρήμα*, all inhabited by young unmarried women who live in rural and semiurban areas between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. According to Yiannis Dallas and J. M. Q. Davies, “the Corfiot tales portray the conflict between innate urges and mores of a closed, clannish, fiercely patriarchal society resistant to change, in which the father, the church and public opinion hold sway, [whereas] women have few rights”. For Babis Dermitzakis, “‘honour’ and ‘shame’ has always been a decisive factor in human behaviour among people living around the Mediterranean” with “shame as a feeling and as a form of disapproval by the group remained restricted mainly to sexual behaviour”. If this is the case, a private discussion between a man and a woman can damage the latter’s honour, let alone premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse. See Adamos 1985b: 151; Charis 1976: 14 and 15; Dallas 1997: 200 and 216; Dallas 2001: 21, 23, 95, 96, 219 and 231; Dallas 2005: 229–230, 235, 236 and 241; Davies 2017: xiv and xv; Dermitzakis 1998: 554 and 555; Karantonis 1977c: 91; Karvelis 1978: 43 and 44; Karvelis 1984: 34; Paganos 1983c:

To conclude: in the present section, firstly, I outlined the emergence of sexological discourse in the fin de siècle years and the circumstances under which radical views on sex and women's sexual behaviour or equal rights to sexual life acquired a remarkable resonance from the late 19th century onwards, with a special focus on the Greek case. Secondly, I explored the sexual life and experiences of young heroines (daughters) with a view to shedding light on their beliefs and conceptions, as well as those of the men involved in their sexual life. Authorial perceptions and views regarding sexual matters, as well as broader gender-related issues, were also considered.

What the fictional texts under consideration have in common is the central role in the narrative of their female characters' sensual inclinations; thus, I have sought to find the particular circumstances behind the various instances where female sexuality is in question. In general terms, Gregorios Xenopoulos (*Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου* and *Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*), Petros Pikros ("Ο Γολγοθάς"), and Galateia Kazantzaki ("Αβυσσος" and *Γυναίκες*) present a claim for a different sexual morality and envisage sexual relationships between the two genders, which go beyond traditional beliefs and achieve parity based on sexual freedom and non-suppression of female sexuality.<sup>1</sup> Gregorios Xenopoulos (*Ο κατήφορος*) and Aimilia Daphni (*Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*), in recounting stories where their heroines share striking similarities, endeavour to moralise young girls. Meanwhile, Dionysios Kokkinos (*Η μυστική φωλιά* and *Πιγγος*), Thanasis Petsalis (*Το σταυροδρόμι* as

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111; Paganos 1983e: 187; Pagkratis 1991: 415; Theotokis 1921: 39–43; Theotokis 1935b: 154–157; Theotokis 1935c: 11–51; Theotokis 1935d: 86–98; Theotokis 1935f: 111–131; Theotokis 1935h: 66–85.

<sup>1</sup> This forward thinking accounts for the fact that, despite their missteps, Xenopoulos' heroines (Kora Doxara and Nitsa Gazeli) get married.

well as *Ο απόγονος*), Pavlos Floros (*Άποικοι*), and M. Karagatsis (*Γιούγκερμαν*) intend to depict the sexual mores of their time. Finally, Lilika Nakou (“*Η ξεπάρθενη*” and *Παραστρατημένοι*), Angelos Terzakis (*Δεσμώτες* and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*), George Theotokas (*Αργώ*), Aimilia Daphni (*Το Τάλαντο της Σμαρώς* and *Η ξένη γη*), Thanasis Petsalis (*Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* and “*Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*”), and M. Karagatsis (*Γιούγκερμαν*) present female protagonists who break more or less new ground in their relationships with men.<sup>1</sup>

The key issue in my discussions of female sexuality has been that of the ‘double moral standard’, which in turn is tied up with questions of virginity and womanly virtue. It is because of the importance of such questions that different standards are applied to male and female pre- and extramarital sexual experience in *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*. In *Τλιγγος* and *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*, Kora Frinta on the one hand, and both Eleni Grizoti and her husband, George Perros, on the other, emphasise that women face unpleasant consequences if their behaviour does not meet the required standards. In *Παραστρατημένοι*, Kostas Kimonidis, while himself pursuing an illicit affair with a married woman, on realising that Alexandra is not a virgin, voices doubts about her honesty. The same double standard gives Kiara (*Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*), Nitsa (*Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*), Smaro (*Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*), and Elena (*Μυστική φωληά*) a bad name. By contrast, characters such as Kleantis Zisiadis (*Η τρίμορφη γυναίκα*) and Dimitris Skaligeris (*Τλιγγος*) come across as open-minded and, by acknowledging women’s right to extramarital experience before marriage, allow glimpses into a new perception of female sexuality.

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<sup>1</sup> The heroines’ missteps are attributed, as already mentioned, either to their imperfect edification and misconceptions of feminism (*Ο κατήφορος* and *Η μυστική φωληά*), or to their simple-mindedness (*Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*, *Η μυστική φωληά*, “*Αβυσσος*”, “*Το κρίμα της Φωτεινής*”, and *Γιούγκερμαν*).

Despite the presence of progressive voices, daughters are fully aware that society and family still judge and punish “transgressive women”.<sup>1</sup> Young women in pursuit of sexual pleasures are at risk of conceiving out of wedlock (Anastasoula, “Ο Γολγοθάς”; Elena, *Η μυστική φωληά*; Foteini, “Το κρίμα της Φωτεινής”; Kora, *Τλιγγος*; Katina, “Η ξεπάρθενη”, and Alexandra, *Η ζένη γη*) or to go astray. The consequences vary: they die of mental illness (neuropathy) caused by regrets for their ‘sin’ (Elena, *Η μυστική φωληά*); they contemplate or attempt suicide (Kora, *Τλιγγος*; Kiara, *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*); they kill themselves (Anastasoula, “Ο Γολγοθάς”; Smaro, *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*; Roza, *Ο κατήφορος*; and Popi, “Αβυσσος”) or are killed by male family members (Alexandra, *Η ζένη γη*) –not to mention that in “Ο Γολγοθάς” and “Η ξεπάρθενη”, there is the implication that, had they had a brother, “sinful” females might have found themselves stabbed to death.<sup>2</sup> Such honour-killings confirm that daughters’ virginity and virtue, the prerequisites for marriage, are viewed as matters of familial concern. It goes without saying that the importance attached to purity -in both physical and moral terms- is part and parcel of the various mechanisms through which society and family act as moral guardians and exercise control over female sexuality.

Generally speaking, relationships between male and female characters bring young women on the scene who are quite capable of reconciling modernity with

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<sup>1</sup> Jin 2015: 259.

<sup>2</sup> Here, one should also be reminded of Despoula (*Η ζένη γη*) and Voula Papadeli (*Γιούγκερμαν*), since the daughters’ integrity really concerns their families; of Nina (*Γυναίκες*), who is angry about the fact that female sexuality is oppressed inasmuch as society attaches great significance to their virginity; and of Roza’s brother (*Ο κατήφορος*), who, fearing that his sister might fall in love with his colleague Michael Karaoglou, does not introduce him.

tradition. Such female characters may adopt a quite untraditional *modus operandi* in conducting an affair, while also sticking to traditional values. Thus, after an earlier stage of unfettered behaviour, and sometimes frivolity, they gravitate towards thoughts of marriage (Smaro, *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*) or eventually get married and have children (Maria Kouka-Phoka, *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη*; Aspasia Psellou, *Το σταυροδρόμι*; Sofia and Vasiliki Parni, *Ο απόγονος*; and Elissavet Damakou, *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*). Terzakis' (*Δεσμώτες* and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*) and Karagatsis' (*Γιούγκερμαν*) heroines are particularly interesting as they, at crucial moments in their lives, decide for themselves, thereby taking a step towards modernity; and Nakou's Katina ("Η ξεπάρθηνη"), who, apart from deciding to give birth to a baby conceived during an extramarital affair, also speaks up for women's sexual rights and views sex as a fully acceptable physical pleasure. Anna (*Γυναίκες*) and Alexandra (*Παραστρατημένοι*) provide similar examples: the former does not regret losing her virginity after engaging in sex with the man she loves, and the latter declares that she will not hesitate to become sexually intimate with a man she falls in love with. It is because of such attitudes that, even though wifedom and motherhood were not greatly challenged, interwar fiction, in general, forged a new concept of femininity in the context of emotional and sexual relationships; and this is why Xenopoulos' *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου* and Nakou's "Η ξεπάρθηνη", in particular, suggested a clear-cut break with *Τα βιβλία της αυγής* (*The books of dawn*, 1900–1902), where Parren defended self-determination in sexual matters but not female sexuality.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the issues stressed in Kallirrhoe Parren's fiction, see Psarra 1999a: 465–466.

Another important element is the frequent featuring of hot topics, such as hymenoplasty (*Πλιγγος* and *Η ξένη γη*), and hymenotomy (*Παραστρατημένοι*), which reflect a new desire on the part of women for control over their bodies. Further, considering the timid circumspection which characterised the Greek feminist movement vis-à-vis taboo subjects, such as contraception and birth control, we should acknowledge Kokkinos and Nakou's boldness in the matter. Ambivalent attitudes to abortion make Kora's doctor (*Πλιγγος*) willing to perform hymenoplasty but reluctant to terminate her pregnancy. Daphni's approach to the problem of childlessness is also noteworthy inasmuch as she turns the tables on male beliefs by laying infertility at men's door. Kokkinos and Daphni again broach the issue of daughters' and sons' awareness of sex matters: Kora undertakes her own trip through sexuality, by contrast to her brother whose sex education is the main concern of their aunt (*Πλιγγος*). Knowledgeable about human anatomy and physiology, Smaro feels at ease with sexual matters (*Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*), whereas in her ignorance Despoula, Smaro's countertype, experiences physical and psychological suffering after her 'first night' (*Η ξένη γη*). No doubt, the thematisation of children's sex education in modern Greek fiction of the interwar period must be seen in conjunction with the publication of sex manuals in the 1930s.

Two final remarks must be made regarding the representations of femininity and masculinity in the fictional texts in question. Firstly, the female body is perceived by most typical male characters as an object of sexual desire (Kostas Kimonidis, *Παραστρατημένοι*; Kanelos Doanos, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*; and almost all the male characters, *Η ξένη γη*), a sexist stance stemming from the male conviction that women are by nature passive in sex. Secondly, Daphni's "campaign against sexual

vice and male violence” is instantiated by the case of Thanasis Farantzios (*Η ζένη γη*), who makes his wife Despoula feel physical and emotional pain by abusing her in bed.<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding to my conclusions for the present chapter, I should like to draw attention to Thomas Sitaras’ *Πόθοι και πάθη στην Παλιά Αθήνα, 1834–1938* which is concerned with the relationships between men and women during the period 1834 and 1938. This brings into focus the sex life of men and women in the interwar years. According to his study, “the advertisements for doctors specialising in sexually transmitted diseases, such as syphilis and the clap, and for fifteen brands of condoms, the classifieds where hints about liberated relationships are evident, entertaining spicy stories, and various reports about ‘nests of debauchery’”, all published in newspapers and journals in the interwar period, indicate “a sexually liberated city” and “a sexual revolution”.<sup>2</sup> In the material gathered by Sitaras, it is clear that women’s sexual conduct is affected by new ideas and attitudes which become widespread from the late 19th century onwards.<sup>3</sup> Last but not least, there are noteworthy cases of traditional beliefs co-existing with modernity, as when young women flirt, date, and experience sexual pleasure while sticking to their virginity as a prerequisite for marriage.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Offen 2000: 247.

<sup>2</sup> Sitaras 2011: 295 and 362; Sitaras 2012: 16–17.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 188, 191, 219, 220–226, 230–235, 255–256 and 267–276.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 105–106 and 288; Sitaras 2011: 431.

## Conclusions

The revitalisation of Greek interwar feminism's concern about gender issues directed my attention, in this chapter, to fictional families with a view to exploring the representation of 'gender-space' relationships in interwar fiction. Each of the three sections of the main part scrutinised different aspects of this relationship: domestic and social life, educational profiles and career opportunities, and sexual relationships. The introductory part laid the groundwork for approaching the fictional texts in question not only by shedding light on Greek interwar feminist discourse but also by clarifying the terms 'gender' and 'gender division of labour', which stand at the centre of both my study and feminist thought.

What emerges from these sections is a distinct, new type of woman epitomised by young heroines who, in comparison to their older contemporaries, challenge the traditional standards and dominant conceptions of femininity by various degrees – either by taking their place in the social sphere and leading a free and more exciting life or by entering the larger world of the labour market and destabilising the gendered assignment of the roles of 'breadwinner' and 'homemaker' or by expressing their sexuality and negotiating their relationships with men in unexpected ways.

The argument for noticeable differences between younger and older female characters and for the emergence of a new kind of femininity in Greek interwar fiction is further strengthened by a brief comparison between interwar fiction and the literary production of the late 19th and early 20th century. It is true that, to some extent, gender issues were broached in fiction for the first time before the 1920s and 1930s; but these fictional works mainly described women's unfortunate position in



family and society and portrayed passive and submissive heroines, as is the case in Konstantinos Hatzopoulos' *Αγάπη στο χωριό* and *Ο πύργος του ακροπόταμου*, in Evgenia Zographou's short-story collections, and in Athina Gaïtanou-Gianniou's *Οράματα*, with Parren's *Τα βιβλία της αυγής*, Kostantinos Hatzopoulos' "Αννιώ", and Konstantinos Theotokis' *Η τιμή και το χρήμα* being the exceptions, as they depict female characters who take a step towards self-mastery.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, compared to earlier literary production, the increased number of female protagonists venturing to change aspects of their life, in tandem with the apparent recognition of women's new gender roles on the part of certain characters, confirm the contribution of interwar fiction to the shaping and promotion of new gender identities.

More particularly, the new social life enjoyed by young women included their chosen forms of entertainment, cross-gender gatherings away from their family's view and control, and fashionable appearances modelled on those featuring in films and women's magazines. In other words, being modern meant following a certain way of having fun and adopting new styles (slenderness and fitness included). Free mixing of genders, on the other hand, was an interwar Western-European phenomenon, while fashion became a matter of interest for low-class and working girls as well.<sup>2</sup> Changes on all these fronts spelled a strong reaction against the past.

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<sup>1</sup> At this juncture, one should also be reminded of Alexandros Papadiamantis' *Η φόνισσα*, as well as Andreas Karkavitsas' *Η λυγερή* and *Ο ζητιάνος*, as they reflect on women's fate in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century rural societies.

<sup>2</sup> It should be reiterated here that what opened the door for their entrance into the public sphere was the loosening of social norms and the change in women's status through work in the interwar years. The girls' knowledge of the latest styles and the ability to spend part of their wages to buy the luxuries they liked were viewed as steps towards modernity. Finally, women's dieting and physical exercise were treated as threatening reproductive capacities, and therefore, they were disapproved.

Domestic confinement was rejected, and new styles challenged accepted ways of presenting the female body. The socialisation of young women, despite occasional objections, went down well with families, but objections were raised when women were seen to frequent disreputable venues in the wrong company. Despite the new air of freedom, some young heroines, whether out of necessity or by personal choice, remained confined to the house, which was usually identified with the “mundanity of the daily lot” and housewifery skills.<sup>1</sup> Even so, some of those house-bound female characters seemed to depart from traditional patterns of thought and action, since they took unexpected decisions at crucial turning points of their life.<sup>2</sup>

By comparison to their older contemporaries, the young women who adopted a modern style of life were also better educated. However, they still lagged behind males of comparable status and age. As a rule, in terms of occupation and profession, the latter usually followed in the footsteps of the older male members of the family; whereas women were less privileged in this respect and were only given access to low-skill and worse-paid jobs whenever they decided to work.<sup>3</sup> Despite their lower standing and regardless of the reasons for which they chose to work, women’s entrance to the labour market meant a clean break with the past insofar as working females seemed to call into question the closeted, domesticated and economically dependent type of woman. This picture is further confirmed by the fact that working daughters were contrasted not only with their mothers but also with the figure of ‘woman-doll’ who was identified with a carefree and indolent

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<sup>1</sup> Hinds 2009: 296.

<sup>2</sup> This slight but clear change in the depiction of home-bound young heroines may explain the profile of few mothers as well.

<sup>3</sup> The girls from low-class or downfallen families were, of course, more deprived than both their male and female peers.

style of life. Also, the views voiced by either the working daughters or other characters, are of special interest, with positive attitudes indicating a challenge to traditional gender roles and identities, and the negative ones suggesting a strict adherence to long-established standards. Still, the co-existence of progressive stances and narrow-mindedness indicates a society in transition. It is worth stressing once again that just as the domestic space (family) fosters gender discrimination, unequal treatment, as well as deep-rooted expectations regarding the respective roles of men and women (career – marriage /motherhood), the workplace also proved to be a site rife with discriminatory behaviour against women, which means that both society at large and family were liable to enforce, reproduce, and maintain gender stereotypes.

Lastly, intimations and manifestations of sensuality inform the narrative in the aforementioned novels to a large extent. Under this aspect, the narrative sheds light on such questions as ‘double moral standard’, ‘virginity’ and womanly ‘virtue’; shows family and society’s tendency to control female sexuality, as well as their punitive attitude towards transgressive heroines (suicide attempts, suicides, and honour-killings); allows the reader to become aware of authorial claims for a different kind of sexual morality and for genders’ equal standing in matters of sexuality; compares characters with progressive ideas to those embracing more conservative values; speaks for female sexuality and declares women’s capacity for sexual feelings and pleasures; takes up the issue of genders’ awareness of sex matters; digs into taboo subjects, such as abortion, hymenoplasty, hymenotomy; calls into question preconceived ideas about infertility; denounces male vice and the perception of female body as a mere object of male sexual desire; draws moral

conclusions aimed at young female readers; depicts the sexual mores of the time; and brings on the scene female protagonists who more or less act contrary to standard expectations in their dealings with their partners.

Yet another point to stress is that, despite their modern aspirations and changed perceptions, a number of female characters eventually came to terms with their roles as spouses and mothers. In other words, regardless of whether they had a social life, took up work or freely expressed their sexuality, most of them –with the exception, as already shown, of the most ‘sensual’ ones– like their countertypes, got married and became mothers. However, even though the ideals of domesticity and motherhood, supported by both male and female characters, were not seriously challenged –as the ‘gender division of labour’ was shown to still linger– in some respects, the life of these modern female figures looks substantially different from that of their mothers.

It is, finally, worth stressing that it is not necessarily women (D. Tagkopoulos, G. Xenopoulos, A. Terzakis, D. Kokkinos, Th. Petsalis, and G. Theotokas are an all-male company) nor confirmed feminists (D. Tagkopoulos, A. Terzakis, G. Kazantzaki, and D. Kokkinos can hardly be called that) that deliberate on questions pertaining to gender roles and gender identities in their fiction –questions that gained currency in feminist thought and in sexological discourse from the late 19th century onwards. We might therefore assume that reflection on, and renegotiation of, fixed gender conceptions in literature accounts for the great number of female characters inhabiting narratives in which authors’ progressive ideas are voiced through ‘transgressive’ heroines or through other open-minded characters.

## CHAPTER THREE

### FAMILY AND MARRIAGE: FAMILIAL AND MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS, PARENTAL FIGURES, AND DIVORCE

The present chapter takes the emergence of the concept of ‘companionate marriage’ and the divorce reform outside and within Greece in the interwar period as a starting point to chart the landscape of familial and marital relationships in contemporary Greek fiction of the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, the third decade of the twentieth century was marked by a fundamental cultural shift in “the visions of sexuality, heterosexual relationships, and gender power”, evident in the formation and promotion of a new model of marital relationships known as ‘the ideal of companionate marriage’.<sup>1</sup> To Christina Simmons, it was the postwar climate and the attendant challenges to “cultural norms, including marriage” that facilitated the appearance and prevalence of this new trend, aiming at “preserving marriage by reforming it”.<sup>2</sup> Of course, women’s struggle for and achievement of independence and civic equality also played a major part in the shaping of this new marital model: the changes in women’s lives through their presence in the public sphere and their participation in the labour market somehow encouraged the reform of marriage inasmuch as “women’s growing autonomy” was seen as “a great threat to the ‘stability’ of the nuclear family”.<sup>3</sup>

The term ‘companionate marriage’ was coined, as Christina Simmons mentions, “in 1924 by Dr. Melvin M. Knight to describe legal marriage for companionship

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<sup>1</sup> Celello 2009: 17; Charnock 2017: 364 and 376; Simmons 2009: 105, 124 and 137; Soland 2000: 124.

<sup>2</sup> Simmons 2009: 106.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 105, 132–133 and 136; Beaumont 2007: 471; Celello 2009: 22; Chambers 2001: 63.

without children”, and it was “popularised by Ben Lindsey in 1927”, thereby generating extensive “public discussion”.<sup>1</sup> In a broader sense, compared to “former models of patriarchal marriage”, the term suggested viewing marriage as a partnership, a perception that points to “the transition of marriage and family from patriarchy to modernity”, which, in turn, reflects “the history of industrialization and urbanization”.<sup>2</sup> Companionate marriage meant relying on “emotional and sexual intimacy, sexual pleasure for both partners, emotional expressiveness and tenderness, mutual affection and respect, romantic love and mutual interests, equality and friendship, communication and joint-decision-making, privacy and freedom from parental control”.<sup>3</sup>

Particularly, sex was regarded not only as a means for procreation but also as contributing to “bonding, marital health, marital success, and marital stability (‘the cement, the glue of marriage’)”, and thus special emphasis was placed on sex education (birth control included).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, “romance, complete giving,

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<sup>1</sup> Chambers 2001: 61; Cott: 2016: 56–57; Simmons 2009: 106 and 121.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 106, 122, 124, 130–134 and 136–137; Celello 2009: 17; Charnock 2017: 364; Cott 2016: 50; Dolan 2008: 27; Jin 2015: 256; Offen 2000: 21; Soland 2000: 124 and 127; Wallace 1999: 66.

<sup>3</sup> Avdela et al 2020: 316; Celello 2009: 16 and 17; Chambers 2001: 45, 47 and 61; Charnock 2017: 364, 375 and 376; Cott 2016: 50 and 59; Jin 2015: 256; Offen 2000: 21; Simmons 2009: 105, 106, 108, 122, 124, 126, 127, 130–134 and 136–137; Soland 2000: 124–125 and 127; Wallace 1999: 66; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2011: 301–302. It was because of the “vision of marriage as the union of two individuals bonded through sexual love” that this new arrangement of conjugal relationships “reflected a more individualistic society”. Notwithstanding its redefinition, marriage, in tandem with motherhood and domestic labour, were still women’s ultimate purpose in life and main occupation, since, as Simmons states, the new ideas about marriage were put forward in an era when “pressures and incentives toward motherhood remained powerful”. See Celello 2009: 17; Simmons 2009: 105, 117–118, 123 and 137.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 105, 108, 122, 124, 125, 127 and 134; Celello and Kholoussy 2016: 4; Chambers 2001: 47 and 62; Cott 2016: 59; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2011: 304, 306 and 313.

and communication” were viewed as the solid “foundation for a deep and beautiful shared life”.<sup>1</sup> Central to this ideal companionship was also “the acceptance of divorce as an appropriate option” -“an important safety valve”- in case the marriage broke down beyond repair.<sup>2</sup> These elements of ‘companionate marriage’ has led some historians to view the 1920s as a significant milestone in “the history of the family in general and marriage in particular”, since “the family completed its transition ‘from institution to companionship’” during these years.<sup>3</sup> As expected, the new marital ideal gave rise to heightened marital expectations, implying that failing to realise the new hopes of intimate and egalitarian partnership could make spouses (especially females) primarily bitterly frustrated, and secondarily seek a divorce.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as Deborah Chambers underlines, “the idea of companionate marriages remained a myth perpetuated by the textbook experts of the time”.<sup>5</sup>

In Greece, the ideal of ‘companionate marriage’ was mirrored in feminists’ claims for a marital “union between two dignified, cooperative, and equal individuals”;<sup>6</sup> in the treatment of sexuality in treatises on sex by Nikos Drakoulidis and Anna Katsigra (already discussed in the previous chapter); in Konstantinos Katsaras’ practical guidebook to family, sex, and marriage (partly mentioned in the second chapter); and in numerous texts published in interwar journals and

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<sup>1</sup> Simmons 2009: 134; Soland 2000: 125 and 132–134.

<sup>2</sup> Ceello 2009: 16; Ceello and Kholoussy 2016: 4; Simmons 2009: 122 and 127.

<sup>3</sup> Burgess and Locke: 1953; Ceello 2009: 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ceello and Kholoussy 2016: 5; Simmons 2009: 137; Soland 2000: 127, 132, 134 and 135. To an extent, unfulfilled hopes for companionship in tandem with divorce reforms may explain interwar divorce rates. *Ibid.*: 135.

<sup>5</sup> Chambers 2001: 55.

<sup>6</sup> Allen 2014: 44; Poulos 2014: 138–139; Theodoropoulou 1923: 1.

newspapers. As for the marriage manual,<sup>1</sup> special value is placed on equality; the total commitment of spouses to their duties and close cooperation in the rearing and edification of children, as well as in the demands of everyday life; on emotional and physical intimacy; intellectual contact; affection and faithfulness; privacy and freedom; divorce as a solution to broken marital relationships; on a friendly and pleasant family environment; and the absence of physical abuse.

The new marital model is also evident in a series of articles appearing in the journal *Ethniki Zoi* under the titles “Η ζωή της γυναίκας: Η σύζυγος” (“Woman’s life: The spouse”) and “Η ζωή της γυναίκας: Η Σύζυγος. Φίλη-σύντροφος” (“Woman’s life: The spouse. Friend-Partner”).<sup>2</sup> Once again, the emphasis is on companionate cooperative egalitarian harmonious conjugal relationships; mutual love; friendship between the partners; mutual interests, desires, and life aims; spouses’ complementary characters; the pleasure of being physically close to one another, sharing the good times, and bearing the hard ones together (‘camaraderie’).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the details that follow, see Katsaras 1935: 12–13, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25–26, 28, 30, 35–36, 41, 48 and 52–54. This marital ideal suggests, in its turn, a familial ideal as well. See Allen 2005: 205; Allen 2014: 40.

<sup>2</sup> P. 1921b: 11–12; P. 1921d: 10–12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*; P. 1921b: 11–12. The perception of marriage as partnership appears in an article published in the newspaper “Neoellinika Grammata” under the title “Στήλη των κυριών: Οι καλοί τρόποι στην οικογένεια και στην κοινωνική ζωή. Ο σύζυγος. Η ανατροφή των παιδιών” (“Women’s column. Good manners at home and in society. The husband. Children’s upbringing”). Besides, in a text titled “Διαθήκη Αθηναίου προς το παιδί του” (“An Athenian man’s will”), an Athenian father, perceiving mutual sexual fulfilment as essential to marriage, advises his child on marriage issues. See Marinetta 1935: 6; Sitaras 2012: 48.



Besides the descriptions of marriage as companionship, practical advice on “making a marriage work” also features in the press.<sup>1</sup> What all these pre-emptive recommendations have in common is the conception of “marriage as an institution that couples, and especially wives, needed to work at in order to succeed” (“marriage as work formula”).<sup>2</sup> Under this aspect, women, “the traditional guardians of the home”, were mainly burdened with the laborious tasks of “restoring the joy that characterised the early day of their relationship and marriage”, “making marriage run smoothly”, and creating a happy and pleasant atmosphere in the house.<sup>3</sup> As a result, marital success or failure was attributed to women’s successful or failed efforts respectively. Such a considerable interest in marriage might conceal a desire to have healthier more stable “stronger and more satisfying marital relationships”, as well as an unease over the fact that every marriage could end in divorce given the reform of family law in Greece in 1920 (examined below).<sup>4</sup> No doubt, reinforcing the institution of marriage was intended to encourage the strengthening of family as well, for marriage is the foundation on which family is built.

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<sup>1</sup> Wallace 1999: 66. It should be noted that Anthimos Siskos (Archimandrite) entertained the view that “delivering lectures on marriage issues could protect marriage and decrease divorce rates”. This strategy was developed and followed in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s due to the upward trend of divorces. See Celesso 2009: 10 and 13–43; Siskos 1934: 27.

<sup>2</sup> Celesso 2009: 3, 40 and 43.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 16, 23 and 35; Charnock 2017: 374. Hints of women’s role in making their marriage work appear not only in the articles published in *Ethniki Zoi* between May 1, 1921 and June 15, 1921 but also in Katsaras’ manual. Suggestions also included looking attractive inside the house, taking on the role of the mother and being big-hearted. See Katsaras 1935: 24 and 27; P. 1921a: 9–10; P. 1921b: 12; P. 1921c: 9–10; P. 1921d: 10 and 12.

<sup>4</sup> Celesso 2009: 3 and 16. For example, the increase in the number of divorces in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s drove a diverse group of American experts to undertake the project of “making marriage work”. *Ibid.*: 2–3, 5, 15, 23–24 and 26.

Finally, Thomas Sitaras' books *Η Παλιά Αθήνα ζει, γλεντά, γεύεται 1834–1938*, *Πόθοι και πάθη στην Παλιά Αθήνα 1834–1938*, and *Ξεφυλλίζοντας παλιές εφημερίδες: τα καλύτερα της Παλιάς Αθηνάς* offer a fascinating glimpse at conjugal relationships.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, these collections of a wide array of texts published in journals and newspapers and depicting Athenian life between 1834 and 1938 illustrate the funnier aspects of the interwar marriage. 'Recipes' in the form of 'commandments' ('dos and don'ts') according to which spouses should regulate their conduct ("Ο ... Εικοσάλογος του ιδανικού συζύγου", "Ο Δεκάψαλμος του αφοσιωμένου συζύγου", "Ο Δεκάλογος της Αγάπης", "Με τέτοια συμπεριφορά καλύτερα να μην παντρευτείτε...", "Ο δεκάλογος του καλού συζύγου"),<sup>2</sup> quizzes ("Είσθε τελεία σύζυγος;", "Γνωρίζετε τον εαυτό σας;"),<sup>3</sup> and letters from female readers ("Ποιος είναι τελικά ο ιδανικός σύζυγος;")<sup>4</sup> provided valuable advice for happy and successful marriages and mirror the perception of marriage as companionship.

Consequently, upon the emergence and promotion of the new marital ideal, many countries reformed their legal framework of divorce from the first decades of the twentieth century onwards. For example, "in comparison to other Western countries", as Zara Bersbo, Nathalie Bouteillec, Patrick Festy, Glenn Sandström, and Per Simonsson remark, "divorce law was liberalised early in Scandinavia" against a backdrop of "intense legislative activity".<sup>5</sup> On the whole, Scandinavian

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<sup>1</sup> Sitaras 2011; Sitaras 2012; Sitaras 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 208–209 and 213–214; Sitaras 2011: 338–339 and 412–414; Sitaras 2012: 196–198.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 198–201 and 209–212.

<sup>4</sup> Sitaras 2018: 201–208.

<sup>5</sup> Bouteillec et al: 2011: 191 and 193; Sandström 2011: 296; Simonsson and Sandström 2011: 210, 216 and 225. Norway introduced a "pioneering law" in 1909 allowing "divorce by consent after a

divorce legislation was in keeping with “the process of political democratisation” and “the demands for equal political citizenship” set forth by various groups, such as “liberals, social democrats, and women’s rights activists”.<sup>1</sup> As such, it was regarded as “liberal”, and viewed as “a formal milestone for the emancipation of Nordic married women”.<sup>2</sup> Although the reforms seemed to “promote greater freedom to divorce” on the grounds of “individuality and gender equality”, they were, in fact, “founded on gender difference and complementarity”: “both spouses became responsible for supporting the family” in that they “had to make different contributions of equal value” (paid employment vs. domestic chores and child-rearing).<sup>3</sup> Under this aspect, one is led to assume that Scandinavian legislators, by using “equality as a means to make marriage more attractive to women”, aimed at “preserving the sanctity of marriage, promoting healthy and stable marriages, and maintaining social order”.<sup>4</sup> In other words, “the Scandinavian family laws reflected a bourgeois ideal” consisting in women’s home confinement and their responsibility to take care of the family and the household.<sup>5</sup>

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period of one year’s separation” and “a new law on the Formation and Dissolution of Marriage in 1918”. Sweden on its part passed “the Act on the Celebration and Dissolution of Marriage in 1915” – a progressive law “accepting no-fault divorce as the basic principle for divorce legislation” – followed by “a new Marriage Code in 1920”. And finally, Denmark introduced the law “on the Formation and Dissolution of Marriage in 1922”. See Bouteillec et al: 2011: 193; Sandström 2011: 296 and 297; Simonsson and Sandström 2011: 213 and 216.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.: 211 and 216; Sandström 2011: 296;

<sup>2</sup> Bouteillec et al 2011: 191 and 193.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 191, 193, 194 and 204; Sandström 2011: 296; Simonsson and Sandström 2011: 211 and 216. Although wives were “recognised as providers”, they were still financially dependent upon their husbands. See Bouteillec et al: 2011: 194 and 204.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 191 and 204; Sandström 2011: 296; Simonsson and Sandström 2011: 216.

<sup>5</sup> Bouteillec et al: 2011: 204.

Moving southwest and focusing on interwar Britain, there were two significant junctures for British divorce law, both indicating a “gradual movement towards” gender equality and mirroring “contemporary values and expectations of marriage”.<sup>1</sup> The years after the First World War were marked by attempts to amend the restrictive Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 by removing the double moral standards: “while a wife’s adultery was sufficient cause to end a marriage, a woman could divorce her husband only if his adultery had been compounded by another matrimonial offense, such as cruelty or desertion”.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, “the Matrimonial Causes Act 1923 granted a wife the right to divorce her husband for adultery alone, and it was no longer necessary for a wife to seek a decree of restitution to free herself of her marriage to an adulterous husband”.<sup>3</sup> Yet, despite the fact that the removal of the double-standard perspective went hand in hand with British women’s legal emancipation and suggested “the rejection of the idea that male adultery was acceptable”, “the 1923 act was”, as Ann Holmes emphasises, “conservative in nature and narrow in scope”;<sup>4</sup> not only because “the grounds for divorce were strictly limited”, but also because the idea underpinning the new law was mainly that “male adultery contributed to such social problems as prostitution,

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<sup>1</sup> Charnock 2017: 368; Gibson 1994: 85 and 86.

<sup>2</sup> Charnock 2017: 367–368; Holmes 1995: 601 and 602. What lay behind the legalisation of this double standard was a fear there would be confusion about “the rightful inheritance of property” through the birth of illegitimate children, “a concern for property” –woman’s adultery “decreased the value of her husband’s property interest in her”– “a belief in innate female chastity” and the sinfulness of her adultery (if committed), and “an emphasis on the feminine virtue of self-sacrifice”. See *Ibid.*: 604–608.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 601 and 602; Charnock 2017: 365 and 366; Cretney 2010: 147; Gibson 1994: 85.

<sup>4</sup> Holmes 1995: 601, 602, 603, 616, 619 and 620. To an extent, the rise of radical perceptions of female sexuality also contributed to challenging the double moral standards in the 1857 Act. *Ibid.*: 610.

illegitimacy, and the spread of venereal disease”.<sup>1</sup> It was against the growing concern about the inadequate provisions of the 1923 Act that a campaign aiming at further liberalising the divorce law launched in the 1930s and “culminated in the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1937”, extending the legal grounds for divorce with a view to “including desertion, cruelty, drunkenness, and incurable insanity”.<sup>2</sup> Once again, what lay at the heart of the discussions about divorce reforms was, as Holmes notes, the belief that marriage dissolution was a matter of concern to both individuals and society, and thus its proponents attached special importance to individual happiness, while conservatives voiced fears over social stability.<sup>3</sup>

As for the Greek case, the divorce law 2228/1920 was a crucial turning point in divorce legislation in that it reformed, to some extent, Byzantine-Roman Law – especially Justinian Law no. 117 that had been in force from 542 to 1920– and offered a modern legal framework for divorce.<sup>4</sup> The most significant innovation

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<sup>1</sup> Holmes 1995: 601, 602, 610–613, 619 and 620.

<sup>2</sup> Beaumont 2007: 468 and 469; Cretney 2010: 250 and 263; Wallace 1999: 64. The limited grounds for divorce resulted in an increased number of separated couples and deserted wives, forcing, in turn, the National Council of Women to take the initiative in addressing the divorce issue in 1934 and to ask the government to consider reforms in the existing legislation. Arguably, it was the heated discussion about degeneration from the fin de siècle onwards and the resultant heightened desire for a regenerated healthier and more efficient society that explains “divorce of the insane”. See Beaumont 2007: 468–469; Cretney 2010: 226.

<sup>3</sup> Holmes 1995: 619.

<sup>4</sup> Alexopoulos 1937: 179 and 181–182; Kasimatis 1939: 20 and 23; Siskos 1934: 33. No doubt, there was considerable interest in the reactions to the divorce reform. For example, in his *Κοινωνιολογία περί γάμου και των συναφών* (*Sociology of marriage and related issues*, 1926) Phoivos Pharmas is of the opinion that “the most serious ground for divorce is ‘character incompatibility’ owed to lack of mental connection, as well as to a deep-seated feeling of aversion”; and that “although ‘indissolubility’ of marriage is the ideal commandment from the religious aspect, no religion has the right to prevent the dissolution of bad marriages”. Besides, he believes that “the fear of divorce fortifies marriage, irreversible unhappy marital bonds, in comparison to divorce, are more harmful

introduced by the 1920 Act was Article no. 5 providing that either spouse could petition for divorce on the grounds that “the husband or wife’s fault has caused such a serious marital crisis (‘κλονιστικό γεγονός’) that the continuation of cohabitation has turned out to be intolerable” (‘character incompatibility’).<sup>1</sup> Under this law, some grounds for divorce were absolute (adultery, bigamy, attempt on the other spouse’s life, malicious abandonment for two years, sexual impotence, absence, and leprosy), and others were relative (insanity and ‘character incompatibility’).<sup>2</sup> The grounds for divorce were also divided into fault (adultery, bigamy, attempt on the other spouse’s life, malicious abandonment for two years, and character incompatibility) and no-fault (sexual impotence, absence, leprosy, and insanity).<sup>3</sup>

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both to family and society, and public opinion should approve of the dissolution of bad marriages”. In the same vein, in his treatise *Γένεσις και εξέλιξις του γάμου* (*The birth and the evolution of marriage*, 1937) G. Alexopoulos claims that “failed marriages should not be prolonged”. In his treatise *Ο γάμος και τον διαζύγιον* (*Marriage and divorce*, 1934), Anthimos Siskos states that “increasing divorce rates suggest the loosening of the institution of marriage, divorces lead to marriage dissolution and family breakdown, Article 5 facilitates divorces and marital dissolutions”, and divorce should be granted on the grounds of adultery alone”. Finally, in his *Το διαζύγιον: κατά το εν Ελλάδι ισχύον δίκαιον* (*The divorce in Greek law of the time*, 1938) George Maridakis believes that “divorce neither should be greatly facilitated because an easily accessed divorce may render the marital bond fragile nor should be hindered since such a difficulty in getting a divorce is tantamount to a terrible misfortune”. See Alexopoulos 1937: 183; Maridakis 1938: 6–8; Pharmas 1926: 143–145; Siskos 1934: 27, 36 and 45.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.: 31–32 and 36; Alexopoulos 1937: 181; Angelis and Iliopoulos 1925: 27; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 104; Porphyrogenis 1931: 134; Triantaphyllopoulos 1921: 2.

<sup>2</sup> Angelis and Iliopoulos 1925: 26–27; Maridakis 1921: 11; Maridakis 1938: 31; Stymphaliadis 1925: 46; Stymphaliadis 1937: 81. The term ‘absolute grounds for divorce’ (‘απόλυτοι λόγοι’) suggests that “the judge does nothing but grant a divorce”, whereas ‘relative grounds for divorce’ (‘σχετικοί λόγοι’) means that “the judge is freer to decide whether a divorce is to be granted”. Ibid.; Angelis and Iliopoulos 1925: 26; Maridakis 1921: 11; Maridakis 1938: 31; Stymphaliadis 1925: 46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; Angelis and Iliopoulos 1925: 27; Maridakis 1921: 12; Maridakis 1938: 31; Stymphaliadis 1937: 81. ‘Fault’ (‘υπαίτιοι λόγοι’) and ‘no-fault grounds for divorce’ (‘αναίτιοι λόγοι’) imply that “the spouse is responsible and non-responsible for the marital dissolution”. See Angelis and

Although at first glance the Greek law passed in 1920 (24 June – 2 July) appeared to be progressive in its introduction of the principle of equality between the spouses vis-à-vis the grounds for divorce and in its acceptance of ‘character incompatibility’ as grounds for divorce, it, in fact, treated male and female adultery on unequal terms: “if adultery was committed by the husband because of his wife’s abstinence (although imposed by health issues), the court could dismiss the petition on the grounds of uncontrollable male sexual drives”.<sup>1</sup> Such a provision sparked reactions from the League for Women’s Rights and the National Council of Greek Women, and they both sent a report to the Greek Parliament on May 11, 1920 to voice their objections.<sup>2</sup> It seemed to them that, to an extent, the law was deprived of a moral basis, and spouses’ status had not been equalised: “male adultery was regarded as relative grounds for divorce”, and thus “whether or not adultery rendered cohabitation intolerable was at the judge’s discretion”.<sup>3</sup> Arguably, what lay behind feminist groups’ reactions was a sense of frustration since equality between spouses (the ideal of the “egalitarian two-parent household”) and the advancement of the legal status of the woman-mother and woman-wife in the marriage context

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Iliopoulos 1925: 27; Maridakis 1921: 12; Maridakis 1938: 31; Stymphaliadis 1925: 46; Stymphaliadis 1937: 81.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.; Maridakis 1921: 18–19; Maridakis 1938: 33; Stymphaliadis 1925: 46; Triantaphyllopoulos 1921: 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 136–139.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 136–137. A similar view also appeared in an article published in the journal *Ellinis* (March 1922) under the title “Η θέσις της γυναικός εις το αστικόν δίκαιον” (“Women and civil law”). See Triantaphyllopoulos 1922: 68.

through the reform of Civil and Family Law was at the heart of the feminist struggle.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding its inadequacies, the reformed institutional framework undoubtedly opened up the technical (legal) possibilities for divorce. Thus, I shall now explore the extent to which the legal framework had a bearing on divorce rates in interwar Greece. To this purpose, I present census data and divorce statistics collected from the official site of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). The first table (Table 1.1) indicates the number of married and divorced men on the one hand, and that of married and divorced women on the other, in the years 1861, 1870, 1879, 1907, 1920, and 1928. The second table (Table 1.2) illustrates the number of divorces granted between 1926 and 1937 on the grounds of adultery (by the husband), adultery (by the wife), an attempt on the other spouse's life, malicious abandonment, 'character incompatibility', and other legal reasons. The third table (Table 1.3) shows the number of cases in which men, women, or both spouses were held responsible for the divorce in the same period (1926-1937).

**Table 1.1**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Married men</b>	<b>Married women</b>	<b>Divorced men</b>	<b>Divorced women</b>
1861	184.016 (33,19%)	184.819 (34,91%)	-	-
1870	243.120 (32,54%)	244.250 (34,71%)	-	-
1879	277.758 (32,49%)	276.704 (34,65%)	-	-
1907	451.435 (34,07%)	466.056 (35,66%)	953 (0,07%)	1.182 (0,09%)
1920	856.864 (34,35%)	909.929 (36,09%)	2.668 (0,11%)	3.271 (0,13%)
1928	1.126.018 (36,92%)	1.144.029 (36,92%)	4.735 (0,16%)	6.778 (0,22%)

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<sup>1</sup> Allen 2005: 133 and 205; Avdela and Psarra 1985: 25 and 40; Gruber and Graves 1998: 40; Moschou-Sakorrafou 1990: 142; Offen 2000: 343; Psarra 1992: 73; Samiou 1988: 23 and 26; Samiou 2013: 106.



**Table 1.2**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Adultery (by the husband)</b>	<b>Adultery (by the wife)</b>	<b>Attempt on the other spouse's Life</b>	<b>Malicious abandonment</b>	<b>'Character incompatibility'</b>	<b>Other legal reasons</b>	<b>Total</b>
1926	40	222	24	342	532	63	<b>1.223</b>
1927	28	164	7	309	434	19	<b>961</b>
1928	34	188	4	378	533	10	<b>1.147</b>
1929	57	172	5	357	623	18	<b>1.232</b>
1930	44	181	5	372	589	12	<b>1.203</b>
1931	37	201	9	363	615	14	<b>1.239</b>
1932	30	151	6	344	592	9	<b>1.132</b>
1933	34	161	-	375	603	24	<b>1.197</b>
1934	38	159	3	474	667	22	<b>1.363</b>
1935	26	159	2	405	652	7	<b>1.251</b>
1936	39	174	11	649	744	11	<b>1.628</b>
1937	45	202	2	602	840	11	<b>1.702</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>2.134</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>4.970</b>	<b>7.424</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>15.278</b>

**Table 1.3**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Man's fault</b>	<b>Woman's fault</b>	<b>Both</b>
1926	430	681	112
1927	370	487	104
1928	456	583	108
1929	506	596	130
1930	485	592	126
1931	492	598	149
1932	437	529	166
1933	482	536	179
1934	564	639	160
1935	488	625	138
1936	611	785	232
1937	641	821	240
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.962</b>	<b>7.472</b>	<b>1.844</b>

The above census data indicate that the year 1920 set a trend in divorces in Greece inasmuch as the number of divorced men and women in 1920, compared to that in 1907, doubled.<sup>1</sup> Unsurprisingly, the same goes for the years 1920 and 1928. Here, one only has to consider that the 1920 census was carried out on December

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<sup>1</sup> As for the divorce rates in western countries in the interwar years, they were on an upward trajectory as well, which could be attributed to urbanization and industrialization, “the establishment of a dual-provider family model”, the “decreased legal cultural and economic constraints”, and individuals’ heightened expectations of marriage. For example, in Sweden, as Glenn Sandström and Per Simonsson remark, “the divorce rate nearly quadrupled between 1910 and 1930” in that it “climbed from 1.33 divorces per 1,000 married females in 1920 to 2.74 in 1939” (2381 divorces were granted in 1932). In Britain, according to Ann Allen and Caitriona Beaumont, “divorce rates increased fourfold” because of the 1923 law reform. High rates were also found in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and France. On the other side of the Atlantic, as Kristin Celello underlines, America “had one of the highest divorce rates in the world throughout the period in question: in 1922 the rate of divorce was 6.6 per 1,000 married women [...] between 1921 and 1924 it was 622 percent higher than in the period between 1889 and 1892”. See Allen 2005: 141; Beaumont 2007: 468; Celello 2009: 3, 15, 23, 24 and 28; Cvrcek 2009: 720; Mace 1947: 119; Sandström 2011: 292, 293, 295 and 303; Simonsson and Sandström 2011: 211, 218 and 225; Vikström et al 2011: 112.

19, 1920, and the divorce law had been in force since June/July 1920. The fact that we have no data for the years 1861, 1870, and 1879 points to the assumption that divorce was a rare occurrence in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

The statistics show that 15.278 divorces were granted from 1926 to 1937 –4.563 during the first period (1926–1929) and 10.715 during the second (1930–1937). The most common ground for divorce was ‘character incompatibility’ (7.424 out of 15.278), while an attempt on the other spouse’s life was the least frequent (78 out of 15.278). The increasingly frequent citing of ‘character incompatibility’ as a ground for divorce comes as no surprise, since it seems that spouses chose to free themselves from unhappy marriages on the innovative ground for divorce introduced, as already noted, by the 1920 Act. Many divorces were also granted on the grounds of malicious abandonment (4.970 out of 15.278) and female adultery (2.134 out 15.278). Viewing male adultery as a relative ground for divorce explains the striking difference between male (452) and female (2.134) adultery, which, in turn, accounts for the significant difference in the number of cases in which men (5.962 out of 15.278) and women (7.472 out of 15.278) were held responsible for the divorce. Gender inequality in relation to adultery might also explain, to some extent, the high occurrence of ‘character incompatibility’; fearing that their petition may be rejected, women might have asked for a divorce on the grounds of the innovative Article 5. Last but by no means least, the slight decrease in divorce rates

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<sup>1</sup> 1928: κβ’. The extremely low divorce rate is justified further by the fact that Church did not start keeping records of divorces until the third decade of the twentieth century. See Sitaras 2011: 295; Sitaras 2012: 23.

in 1932 (1.132) and 1933 (1.197) may be associated with the Wall Street Crash of 1929, whose consequences were felt in Greece as well.<sup>1</sup>

Rates of adultery may also be seen in relation to the ideal of ‘companionate marriage’ and the interwar ‘sexual revolution’, both of which suggest an important cultural watershed and a new sexual order in the interwar period. ‘Companionate marriage’, underpinned by the radical perception of women’s right to sexual fulfillment, encouraged (as already stressed) new understandings of spouses’ romantic and sexual relationships, which, in turn, shaped women’s increased expectations within marriage. On the other hand, interwar sexual liberation is justified not only by young women’s sexual conduct (already examined in the previous chapter) but also by the fact that married men and women sought sexual pleasures outside their marriage.

Much as in the case of young females’ romantic and sexual experiences, interesting insights into adulterous spouses’ attitudes are generously offered in studies by Thomas Sitaras. Coming across the gathered material one may feel that infidelity discourse informed interwar journals and newspapers to such an extent that pursuing an illicit affair appears to have been highly common in these years.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the same reason, a similar downward trend appeared in the United States of America in the 1930s. See Celello 2009: 23.

<sup>2</sup> In light of such a wave of sexual promiscuity, the protagonist’s faithfulness is surprising in a story titled “Τοκ τοκ τοκ ... Ποιος είναι; Τα βάζανα!” (“Troubles knock on the door”). Infidelity is also discussed in British women’s magazines of the 1930s (*Woman’s Own*, *Modern Woman*, and *Modern Marriage*). As Hannah Charnock notes, “magazine discourse on infidelity in the 1930s was a product of a unique social context in which the new-found potential for divorce created new possibilities for married couples”. What lay at the heart of these magazines’ rhetoric was a ‘conservative modernism’: these publications “mobilise decidedly modern conceptualisations of marriage” (such as the notion of “enduring strength” of a marital bond that could respond to challenges both within and outside marriage) with the intention of “defending the institution of marriage”. As such, they offered

More pointedly, first-hand accounts, vignettes, and spicy entertaining stories with humorous and declarative titles (“Αχ, αντρούλη μου, κολάστηκα!”, “Μια του κλέφτη, δυο του κλέφτη...”, “Κυρία, ο σύζυγός σας σας απατά!” “Η κουμπάρουλα σου που δεν μπορεί να σου αρνηθεί τίποτα!”, “Το κρεββάτι και τα μάτια σας...”, “Αχ, είστε πολύ τολμηρός! Περάστε!!!”, “Κουμπάρος μου ήταν, κουβεντιάσαμε”) feature married men and women who either succumb to temptation or pursue sexual pleasures and commit adultery.<sup>1</sup> What merits attention here is the fact that most of the unfaithful spouses are women, while in a few cases both husbands and wives cheat on each other.

Increased female adultery, as represented in the press of the time, might be the reason that the guide “Συμπτώματα γυναικείας απιστίας: ένας απαραίτητος οδηγός για κάθε σύγχρονο άνδρα”, first published in the journal *Επιθεώρησις των γυναικών* (*Epitheorisis ton Gynaikon*, 1934) and immediately after in *Μπουκέτο* (*Bouketo*) and included in Sitaras’ collection, is targeted at husbands, and describes the signs of female infidelity.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the funny tales suggesting a trend in adultery, real adultery stories (for instance, a sixty-year-old married man with children injures his lover and commits suicide, or a mother falls in love with her daughter’s fiancé) also appear in newspapers and convey a sense of anxiety about moral panic in the sense of the collapse of familial values and marital instability.<sup>3</sup> It is the post-war spirit

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invaluable advice for women married to unfaithful or philandering men. See Charnock 2017: 363, 367, 369 and 375–376; Sitaras 2011: 300.

<sup>1</sup> Sitaras 2012: 68–70, 92–93, 133–135, 138–140, 156–160, 167–168, 169–170, 175–178, 191–192, 220–226, 239–243, 247 and 358–361; Sitaras 2018: 215–223, 227–233 and 384–388.

<sup>2</sup> Sitaras 2012: 203–206.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 247–249. The increasing divorce rates and the spread of adulterous relationships does not escape Gregorios Xenopoulos’ notice. See Xenopoulos 1932: 516.

(‘μεταπολεμικό πνεύμα’) grounded in new-fangled beliefs about religion, family, and love that is primarily blamed for the familial and marital breakdown.<sup>1</sup>

This fear regarding the breakdown of family and marriage, resulting from the moral, economic, and social upheaval caused by the First World War and suggesting the unstable foundations on which individual’s lives rest, is clearly voiced by Anthimos Siskos (marital and familial stability as contributing to social order).<sup>2</sup> In his opinion, post-war marriage goes through a crisis: on the one hand, sexual instincts are satisfied either within free union or in sinful places;<sup>3</sup> on the other hand, the economic and material considerations as to partner selection let one predict that this marriage will not last.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, marriage is not a moral bond anymore but “a business-like association”.<sup>5</sup>

Moral panic is also mirrored in various newspaper and journal articles. For example, in “Οι πειρασμοί της εποχής: κρίσις ή αρρώστια;” (“Temptations of the time: crisis or illness?”), T.T. speaks out about “a generalised crisis” and deems that “the foundations of society are rotten”.<sup>6</sup> In “Η αναστήλωσις της ευθύνης” (“The restoration of responsibility”), Stavros Kanonidis expresses the view that “the

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<sup>1</sup> Sitaras 2012: 248.

<sup>2</sup> Siskos 1934: 5–6 and 25–26.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 6 and 19–20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 6–7 and 21. In the same vein, Kostantinos Katsaras, although he acknowledges the power of money as a means for facing challenges in everyday life, is against marrying for economic reasons (“marriage as a commerce”), since money does not bring long-term marital happiness. A funny aspect of the fact that love has become “an expert in economics” and marriage is viewed as a for-profit organisation is illustrated in the interwar press as well: “Ζητούνται σύζυγοι”, “Όταν το σεξαπίλ είναι ελαττωματικό...”, “Τα σα εκ των σων σοι προσφέρω κατά πάντα και διά πάντα!...”, and “Ένας καθ’ όλα μουσικός γάμος”. See Katsaras 1935: 31 and 32; Sitaras 2018: 165–167, 181–185, 185–188 and 188–190.

<sup>5</sup> Siskos 1934: 7.

<sup>6</sup> T. 1930: 9.

interwar period is anaemic and transitional”, and “this turmoil may be attributed to the First World War since it upended people’s lives and overturned human values”.<sup>1</sup> In “Στροφή προς τους αιώνιους θεσμούς μας” (“Resorting to our eternal values”), Kleisthenis Philaretos is of the opinion that “the wars have brought about negative effects on the economy, the spirit and morality”.<sup>2</sup> Due to “this spiritual and moral chaos of the time”, he entertains fears for “the overturn of fundamental values, such as the motherland, religion, and the family”.<sup>3</sup> In “Η κρίση” (“The crisis”), Chr. Evelpidis is convinced of “the economic, political and moral crisis as well as of the multi-faceted anarchy” of his era.<sup>4</sup> Finally, in “Η ανάσταση των παλιών ιδανικών στη συνείδηση των νέων ανθρώπων” (“Make young people believe in the lost ideals”), A. Loukidis speaks boldly about “a transitional post-war moral crisis” and expresses “the need to restore moral values” and “re-establishing shattered ideals” (family included).<sup>5</sup>

Considering all the above, in this chapter, I shall focus on fictional works in which family and marriage constitute the backbone of the narrative with a view to examining the fictional representations of familial and marital ties in relation to the Greek interwar historical, cultural, and legal context. More particularly, I will shed light on the ways family and marriage crisis becomes evident and I will explore an escalation between the familial and marital crisis in the fiction of the 1920s and 1930s. Finally, I shall try to answer whether these fictional works, in keeping with

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<sup>1</sup> Kanonidis 1932: 120, 121 and 124.

<sup>2</sup> Philaretos 1932: 225–228.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 225 and 226.

<sup>4</sup> Evelpidis 1933: 103 and 105.

<sup>5</sup> Loukidis 1934: 88.

non-fictional texts of the time, reflect a moral panic about the breakdown of family and marriage.

The main body of the present chapter consists of two sections, namely “Familial relationships and parental figures” and “Marriage and divorce”. The first, as the title attests, explores the bonds between family members, as well as the paternal and maternal figures in the context of the transitional and turbulent nature of the interwar period. The second section examines spousal relationships, as well as the incidence of divorce against the backdrop of the new perceptions of marriage and women’s sexuality within marriage, the sexual liberation of the time in the sense of adultery, and the institutional framework for divorce.

### **3.1 Family**

#### **3.1.1 ‘Family organisation’ and ‘family disorganisation’**

In family law, ‘family’ refers to “the primary group whose members are associated with each other through marriage and kinship”, and as such, “‘family’ evokes ideas about a private sphere separated from the public sphere and the idea of public and private ‘selves’”.<sup>1</sup> Given the ties between family members, ‘family organisation’ is viewed as “a process of interaction beginning before marriage for the husband and wife and with birth for the child, and continuing throughout life, or until the family becomes disintegrated”.<sup>2</sup> The process itself promotes the development of “feelings of oneness, of common aspirations, common wishes, objectives, emotional commitment, and form of caring”.<sup>3</sup> This identification underpins familial

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<sup>1</sup> Chambers 2001: 21; Kasimatis 1939: 1 and 3; Stymphaliadis 1937: 2.

<sup>2</sup> Mowrer 1932: 35 and 36.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 35, 36 and 89; Chambers 2001: 25.



relationships and unites the members of the family with one another.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, ‘family disorganisation’ suggests the “differentiation of attitudes and wishes” resulting in “the breaking-down of attitudes of identification and the building-up of individual responses”.<sup>2</sup> As for “the relationships between parents and children” on the one hand, “and between children themselves” on the other, they are characterised by “an excessive amount of conflict”, and thus ‘family disorganisation’ is regarded “as system dissolution”.<sup>3</sup>

Let it be noted in advance that “family conflict is one of the oldest and most central themes in the Western canon, already” evident in “the stories of the Old Testament and in the tragic drama of Ancient Greece”.<sup>4</sup> Parent-child conflicts may fall into two categories, “the conflict between sexes and between generations”.<sup>5</sup> According to Freud’s psycho-analytic theory, it is because of the son’s and the daughter’s preference for the mother (Oedipus complex) and the father (Electra complex) respectively that the son and the father on the one hand, and the daughter

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<sup>1</sup> Mowrer 1932: 35 and 89. John Scanzoni defines organisation “as system maintenance”. See Scanzoni 1966: 411.

<sup>2</sup> Mowrer 1932: 35, 36 and 89–90.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 174–175; Scanzoni 1966: 411. Embedded within the concept of ‘disorganisation’ lurks the notion of ‘crisis’. Deriving from the Greek word ‘κρίση’ (decision, choice, judgement, or escalation of a problem), the term, as referred both to family and marriage, may denote “a turning point or sudden, decisive or crucial change; or a breaking point or emergency, an unstable period or one of distress and disorder; an emotionally significant event (like an attack of pain) or a radical change of status in a person’s life; a juncture (whose outcome will make an important, decisive difference) or crossroads, or straits (even dire straits); an exigency resulting from some pressure of restrictions or urgency of demand”. See Avădanei 2017: 50.

<sup>4</sup> Collins 2014: 58. As Yi-ling Ru points out, “all kinds of conflicts among family members, including those between fathers and sons, mothers and children, husbands and wives, and between brothers form what might be described as the horizontal structure”. See Ru 1992: 2, 36 and 45.

<sup>5</sup> Mowrer 1932: 207; Tanner 1979: 8.

and the mother on the other, become rivals for the mother's affection and the father's attention.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the conflict between generations manifests through the individual's desire for freedom from parental authority.<sup>2</sup> It is upon this "opposition between successive generations" that "the whole progress of society relies".<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the 'oedipal parental triangles', there are also 'oedipal sibling triangles' exhibiting many similar attributes, "existing parallel to and relatively independent of the 'oedipal parental dramas'", and "developing among siblings and between siblings and parent": siblings compete with each other either for "a parent or for a third sibling's exclusive love and possession", whereas child and parent are rivals for "another sibling's exclusive love".<sup>4</sup> Conflicts between siblings are not only "more common" but also more intense, and thus "more difficult and complex to resolve".<sup>5</sup> It is not an exaggeration to say that jealousy between siblings originating in childhood and stirred up by attitudes of favouritism "leads to an

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<sup>1</sup> Freud 1913: 218, 223–224 and 251; Freud 1959: 55, 57 and 63.

<sup>2</sup> Freud 1950: 74.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Fergus 2009: 71; Fitzpatrick 2009: 452; Sharpe and Rosenblatt 1994: 492, 499 and 520; Stearns 1990: 93. According to Peter N. Stearns, the transition from extended to nuclear families encouraged the increase in sibling rivalry from the late 19th century onwards. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Sharpe and Rosenblatt 1994: 502, 504, 505 and 520. As Sheila Sharpe and Allan Rosenblatt explain, "child's greater degree of dependency on parents for basic care and nurture and the parents' greater degree of authority in comparison with a sibling lend a special significance in child-parent oedipal triangles to the dangers of loss of love or retaliation from the rival parent". Besides, "since siblings are closer in age and often spend far more time with one another than with parents, more intense loving and hating feelings may be generated". Ibid.: 504 and 506; Wellendorf 2014: 6–8.

exceedingly hostile aggressive attitude against brothers (or sisters) which may culminate in actual death-wishes”.<sup>1</sup>

Arguably, ‘family disorganisation’, ‘parent-child conflict’, and ‘sibling rivalry’, in tandem with a ‘debatable performance of motherhood’ and ‘fatherhood’ –both maternal and paternal figures are of paramount importance to children’s development– and ‘broken marital relationships’ –since marriage is the bedrock of family– “evoke notions of family crisis and moral disintegration”.<sup>2</sup> In light of the assumption that “if ‘the nation has invariably been imagined via metaphors of family’, those periods in which familial bonds -marital and generational- seem to be fraying often lead to worries about the stability and future of a nation”, “family sociology is deeply implicated in linking an attributed ‘breakdown’ of the family with a collapse of social cohesion”.<sup>3</sup>

The present section focuses on family and several questions need to be answered.<sup>4</sup> What are the signs of a family in crisis? How are the relationships between parents and children on the one hand, and between siblings themselves on the other depicted? What do negative representations of both motherhood and

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<sup>1</sup> Freud 1913: 213 and 216; Freud 1923: 9.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers 2001: 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 10; Celesello and Kholoussy 2016: 1; Dahlen and Wesseling 2015: 319; Eley and Suny 1996: 26. By the same token, “studying marriage in times of crisis provides an important lens onto the relationship between the institution and the nation” given “the metaphorical links between the marriage and the nation”. See Celesello and Kholoussy 2016: 1.

<sup>4</sup> Here one should be reminded of Polyxeni Bista’s *Γυναικεία προσωπογραφία στο πεζογραφικό έργο του Άγγελου Τερζάκη*, Tzina Politi’s essay “‘Η ανεξακριβωτή σκηνή’ (Σχεδιάσμα για μια ανάγνωση των μυθιστορημάτων του Άγγελου Τερζάκη)”, Diamanti Anagnostopoulou’s *Αναπαραστάσεις του γυναικείου στη λογοτεχνία*, and Mary Mike’s *Δοκιμασίες: όψεις του οικογενειακού πλέγματος στο νεοελληνικό μυθιστόρημα 1922–1974*. See Anagnostopoulou 2010; Bista 1988; Mike 2019; Politi 2001.

fatherhood suggest? If mothers and fathers are physically or emotionally absent and fail in their role obligations, are there any maternal and paternal substitutes, and what are their relationships with the young female and male protagonists? What do the conflicts between children and parents on the one hand, and between siblings themselves on the other, show? Are there any incidents of domestic violence, and how can they be interpreted? And finally, are there any negative judgments about family institution in the fictional texts under consideration?

### 3.1.2 Familial relationships and parental figures

In his short story “Ο νέος Μωυσής” (*Ο νέος Μωυσής κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*, 1923), Dimosthenis Voutyras (1872–1958) portrays family life as fraught with a lack of effective communication, deep love, and warm affection, as well as favouritism, and thus, family, as Vera Vasardani points out, may be viewed “as a metaphor of the cruel and indifferent society”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vasardani 1997: 296; Voutyras 1923: 5–65. The short story was first published in the journal *Μούσα* (*Mousa*) in 1921. In Vasos Varikas’ view, Dimosthenis Voutyras’ fiction “criticises the institutions of the contemporary bourgeois society”. A critical representation of family relationships can also be found in Voutyras’ fiction prior to the 1920s. For example, in his short story “Το ξεχαρβάλωμα” (written in 1917 and included in the collection *Μακρὰ ἀπ’ τον κόσμον κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*, 1921) family, as the title attests, is depicted as a machine that has broken down. For Anastasios Stratigopoulos, the reason for the family disorganisation is “the lack of mutual respect”. Comparing family life in “Το ξεχαρβάλωμα” with that in “Ο νέος Μωυσής”, the deterioration of familial relationships is evident in the latter. See Stratigopoulos 1924: 54; Varikas 1958: 24–25 and 32; Vasardani 1997: 298; Voutyras 1921: 44–74. Generally, Dimosthenis Voutyras presents an interesting case to consider. According to Angelos Terzakis, it is thanks to Voutyras that “the short story moved away from the village to the city”. Apart from the settings (poor neighbourhoods and outer suburbs), the characters (defeated, failed, and social outcasts), as well as the boldly unconventional and thorny topics, that feature in his short stories, it is “the evocation of moods and frames of mind, the elliptical narrative style with an open beginning and end, free association, and random memories” that also point to the ‘early modernism’ of his works. Pantelis Voutouris on his part deems that Voutyras’ narratives are examples of urban ethnography. Regardless of any different

More pointedly, the narrative mainly revolves around the disfavoured and neglected child of the family, whose “sensitiveness and emotional trauma are rooted in his childhood”.<sup>1</sup> Filippas Balatis feels that his family cannot only not empathise with him but also ridicules him, and, because of the continuous and fierce rivalry with them, he is devastated.<sup>2</sup> For example, he gets angry, since he thinks his family regards him as crazy and stupid.<sup>3</sup> Besides, Filippas is certain that he is vilified by his sister so that her friends have a low opinion of him, whereas he has never said terrible things about her.<sup>4</sup> Thus, he prefers to shut himself in his room and remain absorbed in his thoughts.<sup>5</sup>

The feeling of loneliness in tandem with the poor communication with the members of his family –he usually stays quiet and does not get involved in their conversations, and they rarely talk with him– is so intense that the tavern substitutes the house.<sup>6</sup> To put it differently, in this place, Filippas maintains the illusion of “having emotional safety and being a member of a group of people”, and as a result,

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and conflicting opinions, Dimosthenis Voutyras’ influence on his fellow writers, as well as his popularity among readers that may be grounded in his treatment of contemporary social issues, are beyond doubt. See Adamos 1985a: 107–130; Baskozos 1999: 11–28; Charis 1969: 79–106; Hokwerda 2013: 195; Karantonis 1977a: 52–56; Katiforis 1960: *α’-α’*; Sachinis 1978: 16–18; Stratigopoulos 1924; Terzakis 1934b: 1019; Tsokopoulos 1994: 11–50; Varikas 1958: 7–33; Vasardani 1997: 287, 290, 293, 295, 296 and 313; Voutouris 1995: 280–281. On the contrary, in Christos Varlantis’ (1873–1931) –a contemporary of Voutyras– short stories “*Η κασσέλα*” and “*Όλοι νηστικοί και ξύλο*” (*Χαμοζωή*, 1909), both the plotlines (a family conflict over a trivial matter -a chest- and an unpleasant family mealtime) and the manner do not go beyond mere ethnography. See Varlantis 1909a: 4–6; Varlantis 1909b: 16–19.

<sup>1</sup> Vasardani 1997: 296–297.

<sup>2</sup> Voutyras 1923: 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 16–17 and 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 15, 26, 44 and 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 14. The tavern is a common place in Dimosthenis Voutyras’ fiction.

“the feelings of alienation and emptiness are allayed”.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, Filippas and the patrons of the tavern plan to flee to Africa and establish the “Free State” (“Ελεύθερο Κράτος”).<sup>2</sup> This plan validates his loneliness, as well as the lack of maternal love and “the desire to be loved and taken care of by any woman”, in the sense that “every time he thinks that he has found a woman” who seems to have a deep and real love for him, “he is willing to quit his plan”.<sup>3</sup> Besides, given that the Balatis family and society have hardness and apathy in common, the protagonist’s plan could also be interpreted, according to Angela Kastrinaki, “as a vision of a better and a fairer society”.<sup>4</sup> Henri Tonnet on his part claims that “the author in his fictional works speaks out against social injustice”.<sup>5</sup>

To cap all that, what mainly points to the hero’s feeling of unfairness and devastation is the fact that he is, as stated above, the neglected and disfavoured member of the family, whereas Periklis, the son-in-law, is favoured in that everybody cares for him.<sup>6</sup> For instance, when he asks for money, his father-in-law provides him with a considerable amount of money, irrefutable evidence of this preferential treatment.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, Filippas, believing that his father is willing to give money only to his brother-in-law, feels deprived, and the relationship between these two men, Filippas and Periklis, becomes so tense that the former beats the

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<sup>1</sup> Vasardani 1997: 295.

<sup>2</sup> Voutyras 1923: 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 14–16 and 28; Vasardani 1997: 298.

<sup>4</sup> Kastrinaki 1995: 68–69.

<sup>5</sup> Tonnet 1992: 44. For the idea that Voutyras’ fiction concerns itself with social injustice, see also Stratigopoulos 1924: 7.

<sup>6</sup> Voutyras 1923: 14 and 39–42. Psychoanalytic discourse clearly informs the relationship triangle father – son – son-in-law. See Vasardani 1997: 296.

<sup>7</sup> Voutyras 1923: 49.

latter, and the father sends his son away.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the feeling of being treated unfairly is confirmed and heightened.

Taking stock of Angelos Terzakis' fiction, one may feel that the domestic web – that is, plots involving the family– dominate his literary production of the 1930s (*Δεσμώτες*, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*). His fixation with 'family' may be attributed partly to “the serious family crisis of the time, an issue of concern” –as Mario Vitti underlines in “Family and alienation in contemporary Greek fiction” and *Η γενιά του τριάντα: ιδεολογία και μορφή* – “among the novelists of the '30s” in that they “were more or less turning their attention to family histories”;<sup>2</sup> and partly to his view regarding the decay of bourgeois ideals (including family), already discussed in the chapter “Family and bio-medical discourse”: “family turned out to be both a private conspiracy aiming at the protection of social pretexts” and “a finance company”, both suggestive of a hollow moral order.<sup>3</sup> In light of these beliefs, the reader is not surprised when encountering the opinion of Alkis Gardoulis and Marvanis (characters in *Δεσμώτες*): society forces us to have or develop bonds, but we should eventually break these ‘chains’, these ‘ropes’.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Voutyras 1923: 49 and 58–61.

<sup>2</sup> Vitti 1972a: 229; Vitti 2012: 284–285.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1932c: 233. Terzakis' challenge to nationalistic ideals of bourgeoisie is stressed by K. A. Dimadis as well. See Dimadis 2004: 25–26.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 74–75 and 117. For Terzakis, marriage and family were matters of constant concern. Indeed, in his “Μεταφροϊδικά ερωτήματα” (“Post-Freudian questions”, 1969) belonging to the essay collection *Η ανάγκη του στοχασμού* (*The need for reflection*, 1985) Terzakis wonders whether these social institutions should be updated. See Terzakis 1991: 55. What further points to his persistent preoccupation with 'family' is his fictional works *Η στοργή* (1944), *Δίχως Θεό* (1951), and *Η μυστική ζωή* (1957). For Mario Vitti, *Η στοργή* and *Δίχως Θεό* deserve consideration, since “they go beyond the conventional family and attempt experimentation”. More pointedly, in *Η στοργή*, “Terzakis creates an ‘artificial family’”: a man cohabits with a young woman and her daughter with a

A special reference to “Ο ξεχασμένος” (*Ο ξεχασμένος κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*, 1925), however, must be made here, since this short story introduces a series of motifs that recur throughout Terzakis’ fictional works of the ’30s, including broken familial relationships, a stifling family atmosphere, questionable performances of motherhood, and the absence of patriarchal authority (the fathers are excluded from the plot at the outset of the story or do not perform their paternal role effectively) to which a slight opposition is voiced in his “Ελεύθερα ιδανικά”.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, what underlies the narrative in “Ο ξεχασμένος” is the fact that everything Thanasis, Michalena’s first-born son, believes about his family is an illusion. Having served time for a murder conviction, Thanasis returns to his village, and after much hesitation, he decides to get to his childhood home.<sup>2</sup> His widowed mother recognises her forgotten child, whereas his sister Evdoxia and his brother Charalampos hardly remember him.<sup>3</sup> For Thanasis, the house, normally a source of comfort, and his close relatives seem unfamiliar, while he himself also feels strange.<sup>4</sup> Besides, he does not have any love for his mother, whose attentiveness and

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view to taking care of them, since the husband/father is absent. Aiming to explore whether affection is unwavering, “the author subjects his hero to great trials within this domestic web”. Similarly, *Δίχως Θεό* presents an ‘artificial family’: a middle-aged man raises his nephews to be “strong, free people”; but he fails. Finally, *Μυστική ζωή* is about family and marriage crises. See Berlis 2008b: 202; Hatzinis 1945: 537–538; Politi 2001: 63–65, 81–83, 85 and 108–109; Vitti 1972a: 230–231.

<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1925: 11–23; Terzakis 1932c: 233. Considering the short-story collections *Ο ξεχασμένος κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*, as well as *Φθινοπωρινή συμφωνία* (1929), critics agree that Dimosthenis Voutyras on the one hand, and the symbolist movement on the other, had a profound influence on Terzakis’ writing style. Terzakis on his part admits Voutyras’ imprint on his fiction. See Agras 1943: 29; Dimadis 2004: 16; Panagiotopoulos 1980e: 120–121.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1925: 14 and 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 14 and 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 19.



care irritate him;<sup>1</sup> yet he has sympathy for his siblings, who gradually become familiar with him.<sup>2</sup>

The erroneous view he forms of his family results from the false information he has. At first, Thanasis is informed that Evdoxia is an honest girl, and Charalampos is a diligent boy, but he quickly discovers the bitter truth: his sister has a lover and she is pregnant, while both his brother and mother are rustlers.<sup>3</sup> Once the initial

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1925: 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 19 and 21–23. The reader, however, is left with a negative impression as to the mother's profile from the very beginning of the narrative: Michalena is depicted as a malicious, grouchy woman, and rumour has it that it was her unpleasant character that caused her husband's death. At this point it should be pointed out that "the 'bad' or 'unfit' mother", first informing ancient Greek literature (Medea, Agave, Bacchae, and Jocasta), "has been", as Marie Ashe stresses, "a powerful figure in Western literature, identifying the 'bad mother' as the woman whose neglectful, abusive, reckless, or even murderous behaviors threaten or destroy her children". As might be expected, maternal figures of considerable interest are also found in fictional texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Although these mothers may seem 'bad' at first sight, their 'unfitness', compared to that of those featuring in interwar fictional works, carries, as will be shown in the following, different connotations and implications. For example, the short story "Το αμάρτημα της μητρός μου" (first appearing in *Estia* in 1883 and published in 1912) by Georgios Vizyenos (1849–1896) suggests, as Michael Chrysanthopoulos remarks, "a psychological analysis of family ties" that focuses on the relationship between the narrator and his mother on the one hand, and between the mother and both her male and female children on the other. Particularly, the narrative develops around the mother's vain efforts to save her sickly only daughter Annio (for example, she resorts to faith and witchcraft, both giving evidence of her ignorance and belief in superstitions) and her three boys' veiled feeling of neglect (the sister's sickness 'necessitates' the idealisation of familial relations behind which unsatisfied emotional needs lurk); while also shedding light on her fixation with female children (after Annio's death the mother adopts successively two young girls), an attitude that arouses her sons' opposition. Only when she reveals her sin (she unwittingly smothered her first-born baby daughter), can her son Giorgis, as well as the reader, interpret her behaviour: she was trying to atone for the death of her baby girl. Yet, even after her confession to the Patriarch, she is still haunted by guilt and remorse, and thus, she is a tragic heroine (For Kostas Stergiopoulos and Dimitra Anastasiadou, "Το αμάρτημα της μητρός μου" shares marked similarities with ancient Greek tragedy). Let it be pointed out that the story is set in a small Eastern Thracian

shock wears off, Thanasis decides to leave the house and to put on the prison uniform once again.<sup>1</sup> “The only difference between his and his family’s crimes is”, as I. M. Panagiotopoulos remarks, “that he was punished for his offence, whereas theirs remain unpunished”.<sup>2</sup> It seems that even though Thanasis is an ex-prisoner, he is disgusted by his family members’ lack of morality, and thus Stefanos Daphnis assumes that “the light of goodness, of right and wrong, is still shining in the depths of Thanasis’ soul”.<sup>3</sup>

Moving on to *Δεσμώτες*, the first novel of the ’30s, the focus is mainly on the Galanis family falling into disarray partly due to the father’s premature death,

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town, a setting that betrays the author’s familiarity with the literary genre of “Dorfgeschichte” (“stories of village life”) and the growing interest in folklore. Yet, against the ethnographic backdrop, Vizyenos, by drawing on personal and family memories/experiences, depicts original and dramatic situations and emphasises his characters’ motivations and internal thoughts. As such, his short story is regarded as a fine example of psychological fiction. On the other hand, in *Η φόνισσα*, the reader comes across a murderous mother. Drawing parallels between Euripides’ *Medea* and Papadiamantis’ *Fragoyiannou*, Dimitra Anastasiadou concludes that “child murder by mothers is deployed as a means to address political, moral and spiritual issues”. More pointedly, women that deviate from the conventional standards and rebel dominate both the ancient Greek tragedy *Medea* and the early-twentieth-century novel *Η φόνισσα*. It is therefore against this backdrop that this fictional matriarchy and its accompanying protest may be viewed as generating discussions about mothers’/women’s position in the world and presenting a claim for a change in mindsets. See Alexandri 2020: 30 and 52; Anastasiadou 2016a: 77–99; Anastasiadou 2016b: 169–184; Ashe 1992: 1019; Athanasopoulos 1996a: 7, 18, 19 and 22; Athanasopoulos 1996b: 177–179; Barbeito 1995: 299; Charis 1968a: 56 and 57; Chrysanthopoulos 2016: 31–34; Moullas 2016:  $\nu\epsilon'$ – $\nu\zeta'$ ,  $\nu\zeta'$ ,  $\xi\theta'$ ,  $\rho\delta'$  and  $\rho\zeta'$ ; Paganos 1983a: 71, 72, 74 and 75–76; Papaleontiou 1996–1997: 68; Sachinis 1982: 161, 163 and 166–167; Stergiopoulos 1997: 45, 47, 50 and 51; Terzakis 1925: 15; Thrylos 1963a: 14, 17, 38 and 40; Tzoulis 1988: 107–109; Vizyenos 1912.

<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1925: 22–23.

<sup>2</sup> Panagiotopoulos 1980e: 118. “Ο ξεχασμένος” reminds I. M. Panagiotopoulos of Georges Clemenceau’s *Le voile du bonheur* (*The veil of happiness*, 1901): a Chinese mandarin finds out the truth about his family only when his blindness is cured, and thus he wants to go blind again. Ibid.: 119.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1925:  $\theta'$ .

signaling the family's unexpected deprivation of its figurehead, and partly due to their economic and social decline, forcing them to move out of their beloved house.<sup>1</sup> Considering this, the sufferings and the misery of the present, compared to the merry days of the past, become more striking;<sup>2</sup> and an unhappy and heavy atmosphere dominates the house, poisoned further by the fact that they rarely talk with each other and they fail (as it will be shown) to provide each other with moral support.

The “vacuum of patriarchal authority” created after the father's physical absence deserves special attention as it seems to be filled, to some extent, by the daughter of the family, acting as a mother substitute,<sup>3</sup> and looking after both her sick mother and her brother.<sup>4</sup> Fotos typically assumes the role of the family protector, but due to his physical condition and weak character he cannot perform his role effectively –a

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 9, 12, 16 and 18; Terzakis 1932b: 60. The term ‘deprivation’ describes “the removal of something that was previously there”. See Holmes 1993: 38.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 26, 197 and 234.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from the daughter replacing the mother, aunt Calliope, Eleni Galani's sister, serves, to an extent, as a mother substitute as well, thus confirming the mother's inability to fulfil her role properly. Yet the aunt is monstrous, mean, crabbed, and sharp-tongued, and thus serious doubts are raised as to her genuine concern for her niece's future. See Terzakis 1932a: 46, 48 and 91; Terzakis 1932b: 59–60 and 197–198.

<sup>4</sup> Collins 2014: 68; Terzakis 1932a: 13, 145 and 160. The siblings' relationship merits a word or two as well, since there are subtle hints of the sister's incestuous impulse towards her brother, mainly appearing when Maria feels that Fotos is fond of another young woman, Eva Krali. Ibid.: 161–168. For the sister's jealousy, see also Anagnostopoulou 2010: 129. The taboo subject of incest informs Theotokis' “powerful anguished psychological drama of obsessive lust” “Αγάπη παράνομη” (1906), where the father-in-law repeatedly rapes his son's wife, and, as a result, she gets pregnant. It is more likely than not that, incest, as J. M. Q. Davies points out, “may well have been an issue in such remote (rural) communities, as it appears again –in the form of incestuous intimacies between cousins– in *Η ζωή και ο θάνατος του Καραβέλα* (1920)”. See Davies 2017: xvi–xvii; Dermitzakis 1998: 557; Theotokis 1920: 132–133, 145–147 and 148–155; Theotokis 1977.

blow to the norms of masculinity.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, unlike his robust and assertive father, Fotos lacks physical health and moral force, and the constant and direct comparison between him and his father casts doubts on his ability to respond to the responsibilities he has been burdened with.<sup>2</sup> Fotos is finally treated like a child by his mother and his sister, and therefore he becomes more and more idle and feels sorrow and anger towards them because they stifle his initiatives.<sup>3</sup> Only after Mrs Galanis' death does Fotos manage to break free from his mother's control and influence (despite her weak heart and general debility) and to start afresh.<sup>4</sup>

At this point, I should present my assumption about the unexpected parallels between Angelos Terzakis' *Δεσμώτες* and Franz Nabl's *Die Ortliebschen Frauen* (first published in 1917 and then reissued in 1936) as to the father's death "at the outset of the text" and the patriarchal void filled by the family's daughter (compared to Maria's role within the family matrix, Josefine's "tyranny appears grotesque and all the more pathological" in Nabl's text), the mother's illness, and the son's physical weakness, as well as the sister's "latent incestuous desire" for her brother.<sup>5</sup> Under this aspect, both Terzakis' and Nabl's fictional works may be viewed as "major realist explorations of domestic crisis and as meticulous critiques of the

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 173.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 18, 52–54, 56–57, 125–126, 143 and 154; Terzakis 1932b: 58 and 60.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1932a: 144 and 152.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1932b: 232. Apart from Eleni Galani vacillating between good (for example, she worries about her daughter's life in the future) and excessive mothering, another maternal figure is also to be found in the novel. Mrs Krali, with a loose code of ethics and conduct, is not only emotionally indifferent towards her daughters Eva and Annika but also forces them to prostitution to have a comfortable life. This lack of moral doubts and ethical sense can be attributed, to an extent, to the physical absence of the family's male figures, i.e., the husband/father (first imprisoned and then dead), and the son/brother (dead). Ibid.: 46; Terzakis 1932a: 87 and 175.

<sup>5</sup> Collins 2014: 58, 62, 63, 66, 67 and 69.

stifling power structures and emotional dependencies that underlie and sustain bourgeois family life”.<sup>1</sup>

In *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, my attention is drawn to the Lampitis family, living next to the Skliros family,<sup>2</sup> and to Menelaos Skliros’ incomplete family unit.<sup>3</sup> As for the Lampitis, the spouses’ broken relationship has a heavy impact on family life. The father seems to be totally indifferent towards his daughter Elli, since he feels a fierce sexual passion for his daughter’s nanny: throughout the book, there is no

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<sup>1</sup> Collins 2014: 58 and 61–62. In *Δεσμώτες*, another dysfunctional family is that of the Galanides’ neighbours inasmuch as this family unit is a source of violence, verbal abuse, anger, and hate; the ‘pious’ father repeatedly physically abuses his wife, his daughter, and his younger son, whereas the eldest son swears at the father, and they both usually fight with each other. As expected, the repeated incidences of domestic violence have a negative impact on the younger son’s behaviour as he turns out to be nervous and malicious too. As such, Terzakis’ fiction seems to associate “the unhappy family life” with “the adverse effects of patriarchal authority”, a trope, according to Matthew Collins, in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth-century Austrian fiction. Ibid.: 58 and 63; Terzakis 1932a: 237, 239 and 243–244.

<sup>2</sup> I should make it clear that in this subsection I will not be examining the Skliros family, since the quality of their relationships (especially that of siblings) can be explained on the grounds of their degenerate nature, an issue explored thoroughly in the first chapter. Though I may say in brief that their family name ‘Skliros’ (‘Σκληρός’) indicates that they are hard, rigid, and unyielding persons: the Skliri live in the same house, but they have no memories of a merry family life, nor harbour and express any feelings of kindness, affection, and love for one another. The parents’ poor relationship also sets a bad example for their children: since the spouses neither feel any love for each other, nor express any love for their children, Andreas and Stefanos do not feel any love for their parents or each other. See Terzakis 1934a: 14, 96, 108–109, 113, 154, 159, 177, 179–183, 240–241, 253 and 256. For *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, see also Bitsiani: 2014: 67–68 and 154–155. To an extent, the Skliros family reminds Antreas Karantonis and Petros Charis of the families in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880) and in Henrik Ibsen’s *Ghosts* (1881). See Charis 1935a: 52; Karantonis 1935c: 106–108. For any similarities and differences between the Greek and the Russian novel, see also Ziras 1978: 14.

<sup>3</sup> It should be stated in advance that “the problem of the man’s role in the family as father” lurks behind the incomplete family unit, since “his absence delegitimises the family”. In other words, the father is viewed as “the single critical figure” that “legitimises the mother and the child unit as a ‘family’”, i.e., as “the only criterion that validates the family”. See Chambers 2001: 4 and 148.

scene where the father shows love or tenderness for his daughter.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the mother is depicted as a weak and fragile woman: she suffers from a neurological disorder, caused by her poor and strained relationship with her husband.<sup>2</sup> However, she is an affectionate mother: she expresses her love for her daughter, and she is filled with sadness, realising how traumatic the effect of her disharmonious relationship with her husband is on their child (the environment in which Elli grows up is rather unpleasant).<sup>3</sup> Considering her failed marriage's imprint on her soul and mind, as well as the importance of Elli's presence in her life, one may easily explain the mother's devastation at her daughter's death.<sup>4</sup>

For his part, Menelaos Skliros is also the father of a daughter born out of wedlock. Since he did not marry the girl's mother, Laouretta was not given a family name: she only has a first name and gets the nickname 'Πριγκηπέσσα' instead, whereby she is generally known.<sup>5</sup> Much as in the case of his relationship with his sons, there are no signs of his active and direct involvement in his daughter's life. Indeed, after Laouretta's birth, Menelaos abandons his mistress but continues to support her (and her daughter) on a regular basis;<sup>6</sup> still, he has never met his daughter (Laouretta has only ever seen her father from a distance), and therefore he has no paternal feelings.<sup>7</sup> The same goes for Laouretta: taking stock of her biological father's attitude and drawing a comparison between the mother's and the

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 34–35 and 37.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 34 and 38.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 35.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 234.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 120 and 127.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 136 and 137.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 131, 136 and 137.

father's role in a child's life, she attaches considerable significance to the former.<sup>1</sup> It is worth mentioning the fact that after her beloved mother's early death, Laouretta was raised by another woman, who acted as a mother substitute; she was a kind and decent person, and she treated Laouretta nicely.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, in *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, as briefly noted in the first chapter, the Malvides family is divided into two completely different worlds –that of the father and the daughter on the one hand (Meletis and Sofia Malvi), and that of the mother and the son on the other (Olga Velmeri and Orestes Malvis).<sup>3</sup> As a result, the emotional bond between father and daughter is stronger than that between father and son; Meletis, playing, as will be seen, a dual role, that of father and mother, feels that Sofia is closer to him, while Orestes is cold, snobbish, and arrogant.<sup>4</sup> He, however, loves his son and tries in vain to soften his hardness.<sup>5</sup> For her part, Sofia Malvi truly loves and supports her betrayed and resentful father, but fosters hostile feelings towards her mother and her brother.<sup>6</sup> Her feelings are justified on the grounds that Olga Velmeri abandoned them, while her arrogant and callous brother will also leave the family home at the first opportunity.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Orestes harbours negative feelings for his father and sister, since they are, according to his opinion, too plebeian and responsible for his misery, whereas he easily forgives his mother

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 131.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 131 and 135.

<sup>3</sup> For Andreas Karantonis, in *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, the narrative mainly develops around “a silent family tragedy”, and “the scenes depicting the Malvides' unpleasant adventure unfold slowly but steadily”. See Karantonis 1937b: 789 and 790.

<sup>4</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 54–55 and 209–210.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 138.

<sup>6</sup> Terzakis 1937: 135–136.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 135 and 136.

for whom he seems to have an incestuous drive.<sup>1</sup> As for the mother's incestuous desire for her son, it is confirmed when Orestes takes a bath and Olga admires and compliments his body.<sup>2</sup>

Obviously, the maternal figure merits a word or two. Even though her children were at the earliest stage of their life, Olga Velmeri abandoned them without a second thought with a view to enjoying an affluent life at her lover's side.<sup>3</sup> This cold decision and action without hesitation were indicative of both her character and her emotional indifference towards her close family members, her children. Of course, the malicious damage to her personal items following her departure is of great interest: the objects associated with her were destroyed completely with the intention of eliminating any traces left and blotting out the abandoned family members' memories.<sup>4</sup> Her departure was followed by the arrival of a mother substitute as well: the older sister of the deserted husband took on the mother role, since she managed the household and assumed the raising of the children.<sup>5</sup> However, she was not affectionate at all, and proved to be the less than ideal person

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 24, 26, 28, 29 and 138. The elimination of the paternal figure manifested through the rejection of the father-husband on the son's and wife's part is established further, as Tzina Politi notes, through the father's place on the fringes of society, an indication of "the shattered dreams and the desperate attempt to keep up appearances". To cap all that, when Orestes accepts his mother's offer for a fresh start in Cairo, Meletis Malvis concedes that if he loses his children, he will feel utterly bereft, and compares himself with a male reptile killed by the female after reproduction. *Ibid.*: 164 and 173–174; Politi 2001: 85.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1937: 158–159. For the mother's incest desire for the son, see also Anagnostopoulou 2010: 129.

<sup>3</sup> Terzakis 1937: 29 and 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 29 and 30–31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 30–31.



for this role: the aunt regarded her brother as responsible for her spinsterhood.<sup>1</sup> For the same reason, she harboured negative feelings for her sister-in-law and tried frantically to make her nephew and niece feel the same.<sup>2</sup>

Family disorganisation is also portrayed in Gregorios Xenopoulos' novel *Η νόχτα του εκφυλισμού*. Both Phoivos Vramis and Meropi Karamali, the protagonists of the book, have, as already noted in the chapter "Family and bio-medical discourse", the same traumatic experience: their mothers voluntarily left home and abandoned their families some years ago.<sup>3</sup> As expected, their departure disrupts their relationships with their children. Particularly, Phoivos has a poor relationship with his mother; he meets her quite often, but he does not love her as much as he loves his father, whom he adores, since his mother decided to abandon him and enjoy her life. That is why he sides with his father. As for Meropi's relationship with her mother, it is broken after the latter's voluntary departure and remarriage, and her father's decision to prohibit his daughter from being in touch with and meeting her.

These similar cases of family disintegration can be examined in relation to the ideas expressed in Phoivos Vramis' *Νέα Ηθική*. Indeed, in this book, he severely criticises the social institutions, namely religion, family, and marriage. As for family, Phoivos firmly believes that it is mainly characterised by amorality, and he gives a detailed description of family in his time.<sup>4</sup> More particularly, he is of the opinion that family may be regarded as moral only if it is based on mutual love and

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 136.

<sup>3</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 19–20, 36–37, 39 and 65. After Mrs Vrami's departure, aunt Poulcheria, the sister of Phoivos' grandfather, is the only female figure within the house, serving somehow as a mother substitute. For Phoivos, she is, in essence, his grandmother.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 260–261.

respect. On the contrary, if parents do not love their children, and vice versa, and siblings do not love each other, family members feel unhappy and lose their vitality. Given that family in his time is built on shaky foundations indicating the lack of emotional intimacy, he first claims that family poses obstacles to individuals' progress and is therefore an amoral tyranny. He further remarks that the necessary precondition for the moralisation of a family is deep understanding and love among family members. In other words, first and foremost, family members must be friends. Here one has only to remember Xenopoulos' article "Το πιο μεγάλο πρόβλημα. Εξ' αφορμής ενός βιβλίου", where it becomes obvious that Xenopoulos does not advocate the abolition of family and marriage but their reform.<sup>1</sup>

Dysfunctional family relationships rooted, in turn, in problematic spousal bonds seem to be a central focus of Lilika Nakou's fiction (for example, in the short story "Η ξεπάρθηνη", Katina claims honestly that her parents' thorny relationship and the tense family atmosphere poisoned her childhood), thereby questioning the role of the mother and father within the family units featuring in her fictional works.<sup>2</sup> For his part, P. Chalkos, in his review of Nakou's short story collection, maintains that "Η ξεπάρθηνη" is engineered towards depicting "the amorality of the family institution" ("the family as a source of promiscuity").<sup>3</sup> Following P. Chalkos, Aris Diktaios stresses that Nakou's fictional works are designed as narratives that shed

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<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1932: 515.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1937b: 40. Deborah Tannen, Eleni Lianopoulou, and Diamanti Anagnostopoulou more or less broach the presence of maternal and paternal substitutes in Nakou's fiction. See Anagnostopoulou 2010: 219–221 and 225; Lianopoulou 1993: 251–253; Tannen 1983: 52, 53, 54, 55, 60, 62 and 75.

<sup>3</sup> Chalkos 1934: 194.

light on “the decaying of the bourgeois society and on the corrosion of its ‘joints’” (the same is true, in his opinion, of *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* and *Αργώ*).<sup>1</sup>

Turning first my attention to “*Η ξεπάρθηνη*”, the most distinctive trait of the heroine’s mother is her inexpressiveness: although she has a kind heart, she is not extroverted at all due to her upper-class background.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Katina, deprived of maternal love, resorts to her nanny Kontylo, who acts as a mother substitute. In contrast to her mother, the nanny, who also raised Katina’s father and aunts, and is now looking after Katina’s child, is an extrovert.<sup>3</sup> This, according to Katina, is mainly due to the nanny’s plebeian origins as expressiveness is typical of that social group.<sup>4</sup> Katina on her part admits that she loves her nanny more than she loves her mother, since Kontylo epitomises the affectionate mother she never had: not only was she tucking her in, while her mother was enjoying herself, and telling Katina bedtime stories, but she is also ready to sacrifice herself for her.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, when the nanny becomes aware of Katina’s pregnancy, she gives Katina her savings so that she will be able to give birth safely at a clinic and to buy some clothes for her baby, and she stands beside her during the birth.<sup>6</sup> Against this backdrop, the nanny, even though she is not Katina’s biological mother, carries out the maternal duties more effectively. Conclusive proof of the lack of maternal affection from her mother is provided when Katina becomes a mother herself and expresses her love for her child

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<sup>1</sup> Diktaios 1963b: 119.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1937b: 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 24.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 63 and 106–107. The author’s preference for this social class has already been stressed in the previous chapter. See Nakas 1979: 5; Tannen 1983: 17.

<sup>5</sup> Nakou 1937b: 24–25 and 106–107.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 26.

openly.<sup>1</sup> To put it differently, Katina, although she did not receive enough love from her mother, shows her warm feelings for her son and embodies the ideal mother.

What further determines Katina's attitude towards her mother is the latter's weak character, and thus, Katina's feelings fluctuate between love and contempt.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, Katina loves her (for example, she felt compassion for her mother when she fell over and hurt herself once).<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, she scorns her mother for not ending her failed marriage, and she imputes the hostile feelings towards her father to her; her mother never stood up to her husband, and, although unhappy in her marriage, she did not leave from home because of her blind adherence to social conventions.<sup>4</sup> Even when her father chased her mother out of the house, she returned after a few days.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the daughter's disrespect for the mother is incurred by the latter's reluctance to be in control of her life and destiny.<sup>6</sup>

Her father is authoritarian, brutish, and mean both with his money and feelings, and thus nobody can challenge his authority;<sup>7</sup> understandably, his daughter's feelings towards him are ambivalent. At times she loves him and feels pity for him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1937b: 14, 30, 32, 33, 42 and 52.

<sup>2</sup> Let it be mentioned that in "Η ξεπάρθενη", the mother also has two children (Loukia and George) from her previous marriage. The mother's decision to abandon her husband and her children means Loukia cannot pardon her mother, while Katina, upon becoming aware of the existence of her half-siblings at the age of twenty, makes a caustic comment on the hypocrisy of the bourgeois family. Ibid.: 76 and 78.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 75.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 69 and 114. It is the mother's submissiveness that, according to Tannen, legitimises the father's authority. See Tannen 1983: 56.

<sup>5</sup> Nakou 1937b: 70.

<sup>6</sup> One has only to remember here that Katina, as already discussed in the previous chapter, is a heroine striving to be self-sufficient, independent, and master of herself.

<sup>7</sup> Nakou 1937b: 17, 22, 23 and 51.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 20–21, 29, 51 and 52.

However, in fact, she mainly fears and hates him, since his authoritarian attitude has always scared her and ruined her childhood, as well as her mother's life.<sup>1</sup> The trigger that makes Katina give vent to her innermost negative thoughts and feelings is the realisation that her father is the abettor of her son's assassination.<sup>2</sup>

In few words, in *Παραστρατημένοι*, the disorganisation of the Kastris family can be attributed to the marital breakdown because of the mother's extramarital affair and the father's consequent departure; the mother's emotional unavailability because of her fiery passion for her lover; the father's vain attempts to reunite his family after his rival's departure and the former's remarriage; the children's feelings towards their mother, father, and paternal substitute/'stepfather', clearly determined by the impact of the parental figures' life choices on their life; and the mother's death, as well as the son's suicide. It is worth mentioning the symbolic representation of the Kastris family disintegration, depicted through both a physical and an economic catastrophe: Nikos sets their house on fire, while the lover's shady activities –the reason for the 'illegal' partners' quarrels and the strained family atmosphere– lead to confiscation of the family's cherished items (such as the daughter's piano), as well as poverty and misery.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1937b: 112. Apart from Katina's father, Michel (the protagonist's partner and biological father of her son) does not fulfil his paternal role either. At first, he was moved and happy with the birth of the baby, but soon after, he seemed to be indifferent to his child. It is, however, his decision to leave for France that establishes his physical and emotional unavailability. For Tannen, Dr X and Dr Spanidis seem to be "protective" and "good" and serve as paternal substitutes, with the former "taking a paternal interest in Katina and her son (her father does not)" and the latter "playing the role of an idealised father to Petros". Ibid.: 28, 54–56 and 58–59; Tannen 1983: 53 and 54.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1937b: 110 and 112.

<sup>3</sup> Nakou 1935: 64, 90–91, 131, 135–136 and 140–143.

More pointedly, the clearest proof of the mother's emotional absence, resulting from her blind love for her cousin Sotiris Rovias, her absorption in the various problems arising from this relationship, and her long-standing illness (migraines and neuropathy), is the fact that Alexandra resorts to substitutes, as well as her own actions as a mother substitute (already discussed in the previous chapter).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, three women seem to fill, to an extent, the daughter's emotional void. At the beginning of the narrative, the reader is informed that Alexandra lives with her godmother Katerina in a country house in Charváti.<sup>2</sup> Katerina's love for Alexandra is justified on the grounds of their spiritual and emotional bond, as well as her deep desire to adopt her godchild.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding her initial negative disposition towards her godmother, Alexandra eventually comes to love her deeply.<sup>4</sup> Taking stock of the merry days and the unconditional and true 'maternal' love found in her godmother's house, Alexandra admits that she prefers living with her.<sup>5</sup> Thus, she feels unhappy upon unwillingly returning home and being irreversibly deprived of

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1935: 13, 38, 54–55, 58, 91, 136, 167 and 182. Alexandra's love for Violetta, an elder classmate, may also be regarded, according to Eleni Lianopoulou and Diamanti Anagnostopoulou, as an additional indication of the lack of maternal love; Alexandra confesses that the remembrance of Violetta was precious during her lonely childhood. For Fortounio, "the heroine's loneliness described subtly is, as expected, more intense during her childhood". In Deborah Tannen's opinion, "the roots of Nakos's preoccupation with the theme of personal isolation may lie in the fact that she lived her own life very much alone". To an extent, it may be because of her life experience that her "fictional parents are often geographically and always spiritually distant from their children who seek and sometimes find love and (temporary) connection with grandparents, nursemaids, or strangers". *Ibid.*: 47–54; Anagnostopoulou 2010: 219 and 225; Fortounio 1928: 1; Lianopoulou 1993: 253; Tannen 1983: 21 and 22.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1935: 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 3 and 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 4, 6, 11 and 28–30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 34.

her first and ideal mother substitute, who, after trying in vain to meet her again, is embittered and decides to leave for France.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the godmother, Mrs Diboua and Adamian serve as mother substitutes as well. Mrs Diboua (the owner of the guesthouse in Geneva), compared to Mrs Kastri who is in a universe of her own, stands by and takes care of Alexandra as long as the latter is living in her guesthouse.<sup>2</sup> Alexandra, on her part, considering Diboua's attitude towards her, confesses that she feels like a petted dog, wagging its tail and looking at anybody that strokes it with gratitude.<sup>3</sup> Adamian, who used to live in the same guesthouse and is acquainted with Alexandra, worries about the girl's health after her mother's death and her brother's suicide, and thus asks Alexandra to live with her in her apartment.<sup>4</sup>

As for the father, Gregorios Kastris, despite his wish to be emotionally available for both his wife and his children, ends up to be physically absent: it is the presence/absence of his wife's lover from home that in turn determines his absence and presence.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, when Sotiris decides to flee abroad, the father returns with the intention of reuniting his family, and his presence, as expected, arouses feelings of safety in Alexandra and proves beneficial for Nikos as well.<sup>6</sup> Still, the mother is

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<sup>1</sup> For Tannen, Alexandra's "return feels rather like a vicious kidnapping" given the maternal "deprivation that awaits her in the house". See Nakou 1935: 35–38, 43 and 45–46; Tannen 1983: 61.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1935: 180.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 180 and 272.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 298, 300, 386–387, 391 and 419.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 13 and 32. Alexandra's "attachment to Kostas Kimonidis" could be viewed as proof of paternal deprivation. Tannen detects hints of Oedipal complex in the mother-father-daughter triangle, given that the daughter "adores her father, she is jealous of her beautiful mother and behaves toward him as if she could take her mother's place". *Ibid.*: 15, 113 and 265; Nakou n.d.: 283; Tannen 1983: 75.

<sup>6</sup> Nakou 1935: 144–145, 147, 154 and 156.

not willing to either follow him to Alexandria, or allow her children to leave with their father.<sup>1</sup> Once again, the father's departure from home makes the children feel like orphans, a feeling intensified further when he asks for a divorce to remarry, a decision that deeply hurts both Alexandra and Nikos.<sup>2</sup>

It should be emphasised that the son's relationship with the paternal figure is even more complicated, since Nikos suspects that his mother's lover is his biological father.<sup>3</sup> Concealment of the truth and the expression of love on the legal father's part reestablish the paternal figure temporarily;<sup>4</sup> but it will be erased once again, as stated above, by the father's second departure from home and his decision to start a new life. For his part, Sotiris Rovias, the mother's lover, although he could have served as a father substitute or a stepfather, never takes on this role since he leaves Greece and does not stand by the children.<sup>5</sup> It is because of his knotty relationship with Alexandra and Nikos that his profile is mainly depicted from their perspective.<sup>6</sup> Generally, they both dislike him, since he is their mother's centre of attention, and is felt to be responsible for various misfortunes in their life, such as the deterioration of their mother's fragile health (because of his arrest and imprisonment), as well as her death.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1935: 156.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 159 and 264–265; Nakou n.d.: 283–284. Of course, after the mother's death, this feeling reawakens. See Nakou 1935: 280.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 73.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 137–139 and 150–153.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 132.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 38, 73, 111, 114, 134 and 268.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 13, 33, 38, 110, 267, 270, 276 and 279. It is a different case with the stepmother in *H ζένη γη*: although Dimitra (Antonis Zacholis' second wife) is not the biological mother of Despoula, Alexandra, and Thodoris, she, in fact, loves her husband's children, with her genuine affection being attributed to the paternal and maternal deprivation she experienced as a child, and her inability to



Before moving to the next case, I should focus on the son of the family as he appears to be in constant conflict with it.<sup>1</sup> Although Nikos seems unyielding and heartless (he usually treats the members of his family in a bad way, and he does not express his feelings), he is, in fact, affectionate and tender; he loves his sister, and the death of his mother hurts him deeply and makes him regret causing suffering to her.<sup>2</sup> Basically, Nikos hates himself more than everyone, and according to Loula Ieronymidi, “his anger is a defence mechanism”.<sup>3</sup> As a child, he is naughty and disobedient; feeling that he is treated unfairly and acting in character, he does not hesitate to set the family house on fire and run away.<sup>4</sup> This burning desire for destroying everything, leaving abruptly or mistreating his family members is probably the result of strong feelings of loneliness and his physical weakness (atrophied leg), while the contradictory traits of his character may be attributed to his problematic relationship with both the maternal and the paternal figures.<sup>5</sup>

The family’s move to Geneva seems to be a good opportunity to make a new start; but his life will eventually go to waste. In contrast to his sister who is working to earn a living, Nikos resorts to his old and favourite habits: he either lays in bed

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give birth. On her part, although positively disposed towards her stepmother, Despoula feels that, if her mother were alive, her life would be different. Only when Dimitra is about to die does Despoula call her “mother”. Apart from Dimitra, Tasia (Dimitra’s sister) also acts, to an extent, as a mother substitute, with whom Despoula has a good relationship too. See Daphni 1937: 11, 22, 24, 34, 65, 116, 129 and 195.

<sup>1</sup> For Loula Ieronymidi, the Kastrides is “a strange disharmonious family within which each family member has its quirks”. See Ieronymidi 1974: 94.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1935: 7, 39, 40–41, 58, 93, 96, 97, 101, 102, 128, 136, 152, 167, 278 and 280–283.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 211; Ieronymidi 1974: 96.

<sup>4</sup> Nakou 1935: 72–76, 78, 89 and 102.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 7 and 39. Deborah Tannen attributes Nikos’ “crippled leg” to the incest between his mother and uncle. See Tannen 1983: 60.

and dreams of imaginary trips, or he gets lost in the clouds.<sup>1</sup> In an effort to avoid being lost in his dark thoughts, Nikos starts a relationship with Emma, a young girl working at the launderette opposite the guesthouse. Still, this affair marks the beginning of his end. Emma gets pregnant and asks him for money to have an abortion. However, believing that Nikos is a rich Greek landowner and with marriage in mind, she keeps postponing the termination of her pregnancy, while also threatening to report him to the police.<sup>2</sup> In the end, after a public quarrel with her, he jumps off the bridge, falls into the river, and kills himself.<sup>3</sup>

Alexandra, who has always looked upon her brother as a special person and hardly expected that his life would go wasted, is disenchanted;<sup>4</sup> and she feels that his desire to run away from everyone and everything hid his inability to set a goal in his life, as well as his feelings of emptiness caused by such lack of purpose.<sup>5</sup> Nikos' predicament, as will be shown, is representative of similar difficulties experienced by young people in the interwar period. Against this backdrop, Alexandra's thoughts at the end of the novel are of great interest. She decides to take on the responsibility of raising her dead brother's child, a prospect that causes her considerable stress.<sup>6</sup> Basically, she wonders if she can rear the child in such a way that it will be able to rise like a phoenix from the ashes of their generation.<sup>7</sup> In the

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1935: 209, 212 and 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 284 and 286–289.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 278–279.

<sup>4</sup> Nakou n.d.: 279–280.

<sup>5</sup> Nakou 1935: 211. "The lack of particular orientation and of solid basis in the life of the protagonists living between two wars" is also stressed in I. M. Panagiotopoulos' review of the novel. See Panagiotopoulos 1980c: 165.

<sup>6</sup> Nakou 1935: 420–423.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 423.

context of the death of her brother and considering the title of the novel –with ‘*παραστρατημένοι*’ referring to those who have strayed from the right path in general, and those “who have lost their destination in the black labyrinths of the unfair and tough contemporary society” in particular–<sup>1</sup> Alexandra’s deep concerns could be viewed in light of general reflections on the misfortunes of youth (‘*το δράμα της νιότης*’) as represented in the interwar press.

For example, in his article “*Η νέα γενιά αντίκρυ στην παγκόσμια αναπλαστική κίνηση*” (“The young generation before the world reform movement”, 1933), George Karapanos expresses the view that “the young people normally wish the overturn of old beliefs and strive for new horizons, new ideals, and a new start in life” and that “the youth of his time is born in era causing considerable distress and concern”.<sup>2</sup> In his “*Το δράμα της νέας γενιάς*” (“The misfortune of youth”, 1933), Nikos Karavias entertains the opinion that for his own generation, “the greatest suffering was the fact that they were hearing voices of pain and despair at the tender age of their life” and “after the end of the war they were looking at the wreckage left”.<sup>3</sup> Essentially, they experienced the disorder into which post-war Europe was thrown: “they were faced with the shattered moral ideals”, “the anguished pursuit of a new start”, and “the growing anxiety that everything in life was unstable”.<sup>4</sup> Finally, in his “*Το δράμα της νεότητος*” (“The misfortune of youth”, 1938), Yiannis Hatzinis claims that “one aspect of the youth’s misfortune is their longing for and

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<sup>1</sup> Karantonis 1936: 82.

<sup>2</sup> Karapanos 1933: 276.

<sup>3</sup> Karavias 1933: 98 and 99.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 99, 100 and 101.

anguish of taking action within a given society, complicated further by the mood prevailing in the transitional interwar era”.<sup>1</sup>

Thanasis Petsalis’ trilogy *Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές* is particularly interesting as it offers glimpses of pre-war and interwar familial relationships, epitomised by Petros and Maria’s family in *Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη* on the one hand, and Alekos and Aspasia’s family in *Το σταυροδρόμι* and *Ο απόγονος* on the other. In stark contrast to the depiction of a merry family life in the first book of the trilogy, the second and the third part seem to be engineered towards the representation of a steady family breakdown, mainly caused by the wife’s adultery. As a matter of fact, it is tempting to assume that deterioration in familial relationships is to be found in the interwar period.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the mother’s infidelity brings about the father’s forced departure from home and disrupts his relationships with his children: although he meets them, he suppresses his feelings with a view to appearing emotionally unaffected by his love

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<sup>1</sup> Hatzinis 1938b: 1.

<sup>2</sup> What further justifies the assumption that family crisis is a sign of the interwar years is the breakup of George Perros and Eleni Grizoti’s family (they marry in the interwar period) in *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*, partly due to marital discord (as will be shown in the second section), and partly because of the poor relationships between the parents and the child. More particularly, the father either works a lot and makes business trips or enjoys himself and meets his lover. For Eleni Grizoti, at first, becoming a mother is a conscious decision and a strong desire; but after the birth of her son, she prefers having fun to spending time with him. It is, however, the mother’s departure from home and lack of communication with the son that suggest a crucial turning point in the mother-son relationship: the mother does not know what her son looks like (they have not met each other for years) and, at a carnival party, she kisses a young man who is none other than Loris. The incest brings shame on the mother and instils in her the fear of her son’s loathing, and she therefore commits suicide. See Petsalis 1939: 72, 75, 88–89, 93, 103, 104, 106, 144–145, 153–161, 163, 168 and 194.

both for his wife and for them and upholding his decision to get a divorce.<sup>1</sup> However, it is the father's death (Alekos is killed in a military coup) and the mother's remarriage that deal the final blow to this fragile family unit.

As already mentioned in the first chapter, Petros Parnis lives with his grandmother (a mother substitute), meets his mother and sister once every two weeks, and can hardly evoke memories of a common family life.<sup>2</sup> Maria Parni either intentionally or unintentionally makes her grandson feel antipathy for his mother to such an extent that when he visits her and his sister, he wants to leave the house immediately.<sup>3</sup> Even when his disposition changes to some extent, Petros keeps feeling that both his mother and sister are "strangers", and do not really understand him.<sup>4</sup> The strongest, however, indication of the lack of maternal affection during his childhood is his love for and his affair with a mature woman. In this respect, Dori Perraki, whom Petros falls in love and is associated with, may be regarded as another mother substitute. As for his relationship with his stepfather, Petros has met him two or three times, and thus he has the impression that Nikos Lazarou is not a permanent presence in the house, but a visitor.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, his sister, having lived with the stepfather in the same house, has become used to calling him "father", since she was a child.<sup>6</sup>

Scrutinising the second part of Petsalis' two-part series *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* is of paramount importance as well, as it allows insights into the issue of 'the

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1934: 219.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1935: 19, 32, 46 and 48.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 19–20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 45 and 50.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 44.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 142.

misfortune of youth'. Indeed, in *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*, Thalís Megalokardos aspires to write a novel about his own post-war generation and to narrate the story of many young men who have faith in neither traditional values nor their actions.<sup>1</sup> In other words, his *Δίχως χτες, δίχως αύριο* is designed as a book with no central main character, but rather an ensemble, where unsatisfied young men and women's desire to start afresh collides with the prevailing atmosphere of uncertainty, instability, fluidity, and anxiety, all fuelled by the increasing threat of a financial crisis or a world war.<sup>2</sup> The interest, however, lies in the fact that Manolis Nikolaïdis, another hero from Petsalis' *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*, fits the description of Thalís' book characters to such an extent that he could be one of the main protagonists.<sup>3</sup> Manolis, a twenty-four-year-old boy, has a restless mind and he is not satisfied with his life nor with the society in which he lives; he takes a humanistic view and discusses global issues; he reads socialist books; he does not believe in anything; and he wishes for turmoil so that his inner world calms down. It is because of the authorial identity that Thalís Megalokardos and Thanasis Petsalis share that the reader is tempted to assume that the former is the alter ego of the latter – 'Thalís' may derive from the first three (Tha) and the last three (lis) letters of Thanasis Petsalis' first and family name respectively.

Under this aspect, one is further invited to think that conflicts within Mr. Damakos' (*Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*) and Mr. Grizotis' (*Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*) family units, resulting from the young protagonists' choices and downward trajectory, may mirror Petsalis' concern about 'youth's misfortune'. Especially during his stay in

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1939: 22–23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 24–25.

Paris and outside parental control, Angelos Damakos abandons his studies, enjoys himself a lot, becomes a father of an out-of-wedlock girl and at the same time he closely associates with other women too, squanders his father's money, owes his friends substantial debts, and develops bad habits, such as drinking and playing cards.<sup>1</sup> Yet, even after realising his degradation, returning to Greece, and trying to live a quiet life, Angelos steadily falls into his old habit of leading a dissolute life.<sup>2</sup> Eleni Grizoti (as it will be shown in the next section), although married, seeks extramarital flings leading to a deep rift between her and her parents who try in vain to bring her to her senses.

Of course, the dramatic end of Petsalis' characters is of considerable interest. The turning point in Angelos' downward trajectory is his encounter with Eleni Grizoti (she is a pure girl at this time) as he decides not only to reconcile with his father and to break his nasty habits but also to reveal his previous life to his beloved Eleni and to share his life with her.<sup>3</sup> So, at the end of the first part of Petsalis' two-part series *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*, the reader is left with the impression that the protagonist is saved due to the beneficial influence of Eleni's love.<sup>4</sup> However, from the very

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1937: 8, 11–13, 17, 22, 26–27, 39–46 and 49–54. In *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*, quite interesting is the comment that “young people's thirst for amusement in the interwar years took on pathological, neurological dimensions”. According to Apostolos Sachinis, Angelos Damakos' story is plausible: “many young Greek males went astray during their studies abroad”. A similar view can also be found in Kleio Presvelou and Anastasia-Valentini Riga's study. See Petsalis 1939: 80; Presvelou and Riga 2013: 58–59; Sachinis 1992: 36.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1937: 55, 66, 68–69, 109–115, 118, 123, 128, 130–131, 134 and 142–143.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 143–144 and 146–165.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 169–170. For the revitalising power of love, see Dellios 1937: 293; Doxas 1937b: 3; Hatzinis 1937: 187; Karantonis 1937a: 496–497; Panagiotopoulos 1980d: 113–114; Sachinis 1992: 35; Syllas 1937: 14; Tsoufis 1937: 3–4. Kostas Papageorgiou characterises *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* as a social and romance novel. See Papageorgiou 1993: 165.

beginning of the second part, Eleni's departure from Greece (her parents do not want their daughter to marry Angelos) dashes Angelos' dreams.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the reader may assume that, once again, Angelos, having lost any chance to be with Eleni (thanks to whom he changed his way of living) might go astray. Eleni, as already noted, commits incest during her pursuit of sexual pleasures and kills herself.

The reason Petsalis decided to write his two-part series *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* should be discussed here, as well as the change in the author's disposition from optimism to pessimism, and the close relation between the fate of the young male and female protagonist. In *Διαφάνειες. Ο μεσοπόλεμος: ο δεύτερος τόμος της ζωής μου*, it becomes more than obvious that *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* and *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα* emanated from the author's irresistible urge to "express his inner world, i.e., his concerns, his dreams, his sorrow, as well as his joy and his hopes" at a time when the contemporary situation was still fluid.<sup>2</sup> In his autobiography, Petsalis also admits that the bedrock of his life, i.e., "religion, homeland, family, and other values, were shattered", "the daily anxiety about what was to come caused his nerves to be on edge", "gloomy news broke out everyday", and "the threat of a world war was more and more visible in the last years of the interwar period".<sup>3</sup> It is therefore against this backdrop that the hints of optimism in *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια* finally fade in *Ο μάγος*.<sup>4</sup> Last but not least, the author's statement that "*Ο μάγος με τα δώρα* was designed as an answer to *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*" bears powerful

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1939: 55 and 181–182.

<sup>2</sup> Athanopoulos 1990: 108–109; Petsalis-Diomidis 1985: 261–262 and 279.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 245, 277, 288–289, 304–305 and 306–307.

<sup>4</sup> *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα* was written between 1937 and 1938, and published in the journal *Neoellinika Grammata* from January 28 to May 20, 1939. See Dimadis 2004: 204; Kazantzis 1940: 12. For the fluctuation in the author's mood, see also Pikramenou-Varfi 1986: 102–103.



testimony to the assumption that Eleni Grizoti's life choices determine the course of Angelos Damakos' life.<sup>1</sup>

Another interesting case of family disorganisation appears in the novel *Κρίσις...* by Arkadios Lefkos.<sup>2</sup> The book title, conveying the impression of a generalised crisis due to the absence of adjectives, in tandem with the year of publication, betray its topic. Indeed, the narrative unfolds in the midst of the interwar economic and social crisis resulting from the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and responds to these turbulent times by presenting a domestic drama. The disintegration of the family unit is attributed to the adverse contemporary circumstances (the word 'κρίσις' rings throughout the text) in the sense that the father of the family, Stavros, is unable to satisfy his personal needs, as well as those of his wife and child.<sup>3</sup> There comes a

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<sup>1</sup> Kazantzis 1940: 12; Sfyroeras 1938: 12. Here one should be reminded that *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα* suggests a turning point in Petsalis' literary production. The experience of the Second World War and the Occupation made the author turn to the past. In fact, he published a series of historical novels (*Μυθιστόρημα ενός έθνους: Οι Μαυρόλυκοι*, 1947–1948; *Η καμπάνα της Αγιά-Τριάδας*, 1949; *Ελληνικός όρθρος*, 1962; *Δεκατρία χρόνια 1909–1922*, 1964; and *Κατακαημένος τόπος*, 1972) between 1947 and 1972. See Athanasopoulos 1990: 103–104 and 180; Petsalis 1947: 1167; Sachinis 1992: 9–10; Troupaki 1985: 68–69.

<sup>2</sup> Lefkos 1934.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 9–11, 15, 16, 18, 29–35, 45, 46, 95–96, 105–106, 111 and 127–128. Tellos Agras emphasises that “there is no oddity in the recounted events”. Petros Charis stresses the author's skills at describing the hero's hardships and despair. George Dellios on his part entertains the view that *Κρίσις...* appears to be “a confession”, brimming with “bluntness and truthfulness”, and he detects eclectic affinities between Lefkos' novel and Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the underground*, 1864 (this similarity is also stressed by Alexis Ziras). Andreas Karantonis regards the novel as “a historical source” depicting the interwar oppressive atmosphere prevailing during the economic and social crisis, and he stresses “the story's fast-flowing confessional character, its biting satire, and its diction resembling a spoken dialogue” (see also Raftopoulos). To Karantonis' mind, Stavros “views his ‘fall’ as reflecting the society's brutalisation”. M. Raftopoulos compares Lefkos' *Κρίσις...* with Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890). Finally, for Tolis Kazantzis, *Κρίσις...* is “a psychological novel” in that “it depicts the hero's inner world hit by his era's crisis”. In light of all these, it is tempting to assume

time when he is so desperate that he regrets being married and having a child, and describes his marriage and the birth of their child as acts of ‘stupidity’ (‘κουτουράδα’).<sup>1</sup> It is because of his inability to perform his role as a provider that the continuous spousal quarreling further deepens the family disorganisation, which is finalised when the mother-wife decides to take the child with her and leave the house, and the father-husband is determined to sell his properties and leave for anywhere.<sup>2</sup>

Through the Chlomochilis family in *Αποικιοί*, Pavlos Floros sheds light on how domestic violence can be a precursor of family disintegration in that it poisons family intimacy and renders family coexistence disharmonious. Alexandros Chlomochilis, the abrupt, sarcastic, and bossy head of the family, abuses his wife, who, in turn, as a victim of aggressive and violent behaviour, hates him.<sup>3</sup> The strained atmosphere at home and the uneasy relationships between the family members account not only for Dimosthenis’ jealousy of other people’s family happiness but also for his ambivalent feelings about his father’s attitude towards his mother. On the one hand, he feels for her, and his mistreatment of his classmate may

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that Lefkos’ writing style may betray his association with the editorial board of the journal *Μακεδονικές Ημέρες* (*Makedonikes Imeres*) that played a significant role in the introduction and employment of interior monologue as a narrative technique in modern Greek fiction. See Agras 1935: 149; Charis 1935b: 53; Daskalopoulos 1992: 197; Dellios 1934: 229 and 230; Karantonis 1935a: 109, 110, 111 and 112; Kazantzis 1991: 93, 153, 221 and 252; Raftopoulos 1956: 69 and 70; Ziras 1999: 321.

<sup>1</sup> Lefkos 1934: 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 22 and 169–174.

<sup>3</sup> Floros 1934: 72, 76 and 78–79.

be interpreted as a way to avenge his mother's abuse.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, guided by primitive instincts, he somehow approves of his father's abusive behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

To cap all that, an intense rivalry seems to grow between the brothers of the Chlomochilis family. At first, Alexandros Chlomochilis asks Dimosthenis to beat up his timid younger brother, but then, he realises that his second son needs tenderness and positive reinforcement.<sup>3</sup> The change in his father's behaviour makes Dimosthenis jealous of his brother.<sup>4</sup> In other words, he believes that his father loves

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<sup>1</sup> Floros 1934: 76 and 79.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 79. Domestic violence seems to be intrinsic to family life in the short story “Σ' ανήλιαγες γωνιές” (*Κόχυλαρ κι' άλλα διηγήματα*, 1925) by Nikos Saravas as well: the first son is filthy and sexually abuses his sister. The second son is ill and cannot react to this terrible situation: he only dreams of a place where he is healthy, and his family is not tainted by dishonesty and immorality. By the same token, the mother, burdened with difficult life experience, is too weak to react. It is the abused daughter that expresses her indignation and repulsion clearly, but she does not have any active supporters. The cloak of anonymity –none of the protagonists has a name– leads to a generalisation, and as such, the story may be regarded as a common one. Besides, the open ending leaves the reader with the impression that the family's daily drama is repeated. For Petros Charis, the short-story collection *Κόχυλαρ κι' άλλα διηγήματα*, as well as the novels *Το δάσος του θανάτου* (1929) and *Μια πληγή δίχως αίμα* (1930), clearly show Saravas' intention to exceed the limits of ethnography. Physical violence perpetrated on the daughters of the family by the rigid and disciplinarian father, as well as by the brutal son-brother, takes centre stage in *Η ξένη γη*, since Aimilia Daphni intended to campaign, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, against male violence. See Charis 1930: 667; Daphni 1937: 12, 29–30, 38 and 57–58; Saravas 1925a: 45–50.

<sup>3</sup> Floros 1934: 75.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. The archetypal story of sibling rivalry is that of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. The nexus of the tale, the competition between the two brothers, suggests, according to Tavuchis and Goode, that “siblings of the same sex compete for the same ‘goods’, their parents' love, the right to inherit property, the command over any magic on the family line, and so on”. See Tavuchis and Goode 1975: 255. It is a different case with the examples of sibling envy and rivalry in Hatzopoulos' *Ο πύργος του ακροπόταμου*, as well as in Theotokis' “Κάνν” (*Κορφιάτικες ιστορίες*, 1935), first published in *Ο Νουμας* in 1905, and *Η ζωή και ο θάνατος του Καραβέλα*. In Hatzopoulos' novel, Mario and Koula, in an attempt to find a husband, are competing with each other. Yet, in light of the author's sensibility to the women's issue, in no way can this competitiveness be viewed as pointing to family crisis. In fact, sisters' strained relationship points to late nineteenth and early twentieth-

his brother more, and his jealousy turns to hate, when, he feels that, on the grounds of their different personalities, he is criticised for his behaviour by the boarding school's headteacher, whereas his brother is praised for it.<sup>1</sup> This feeling of being treated unfairly points not only to the existence of favoured and unfavoured family members but also to the family's failure to offer equal emotional and moral support to its members.<sup>2</sup>

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century women's predicament and distress, both seen as the direct outcome of their inferior status. In *Κορφιάτικες ιστορίες*, Theotokis, as J. M. Q. Davies mentions, "focuses on the primal passions, lust, rage, jealousy, fear, grief, hatred". For example, in the short story "Κάιν", what follows comes as no surprise to the reader, since the title hints at the 'threatened' personal interest and the attendant moral condemnation: Kostas Lampouras gets furious with his honest brother Nikolas (he refused to steal his boss's flock) and therefore, he kills him. Likewise, in the naturalistic social satire *Η ζωή και ο θάνατος του Καραβέλα* ("a dark tragicomedy"), an inheritance dispute creates a tense atmosphere in Statirides' house –not to mention that generally, there is not a hint of love (maternal, paternal, brotherly, sisterly, and spousal), as well as of human goodness, throughout the narrative. As such, Theotokis' fictional works shed light on greed, moral hypocrisy and squalor that dominate village society, thereby offering critical, non-idyllic, so to speak, representations of rural life. See Dallas 1997: 214–215; Dallas 2001: 21, 93, 194, 197 and 201–203; Davies 2017: xiv and xv; Hatzopoulos 1915: 45, 47–48, 50–51, 70–71, 84–86 and 102–106; Karvelis 1978: 46; Paganos 1983c: 111; Sachinis 1991a: 211–212; Saltapidas 1991: 378–381; Theotokis 1920; Theotokis 1935e: 99–110.

<sup>1</sup> Floros 1934: 75–76.

<sup>2</sup> Family disorganisation also characterises Dimitris Valeris' families (the one he was born into and the one he created as a husband-father). Happiness within the family unit in which Dimitris grew up seems unachievable: Michael Valeris and Polymnia Tsolakoglou always argue, souring the family atmosphere and emotionally hurting their children. It is during these quarrels that Dimitris thinks that he would rather have a mother that his father would not hate; but at the same time, he is haunted by terrible guilt because of these thoughts. Besides, he feels that family happiness depends on uncertain external factors, since, although their mother expresses her love, the father cares more about his fame as a merchant and economic growth. To recover from his childhood trauma, Dimitris starts his own family: he marries Corinna and has two children (Meropi and Dionysis). At first glance, his family and marital life appears stable and harmonious. Yet the father's extramarital affairs, the mother's voluntary departure, the son's unintended incestuous intimacy with his half-sister Erna (Dimitris is the father of a girl born prior to his marriage with Corinna), as well as his death, throw the family into disarray. Floros 1934: 20, 22, 23–24, 27–28, 167, 205, 210, 218–220, 222, 226 and 259–260.

Prior to my exploration of the factors leading to family disintegration in *Αργώ*, I should refer to the author's thoughts about family and to a protagonist's view about high ideals.<sup>1</sup> In his article “Φιλική συζήτηση” (“Friendly conversation”, 1930), Theotokas expresses the idea that “family is a social and legal institution”, and “therefore it should adapt to contemporary circumstances to survive”.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he deems that “within this network of relationships, hypocrisy is a sign of amorality”, and he thus prefers “honest extramarital affairs to families founded on social conventions and personal benefits”.<sup>3</sup> Finally, he firmly believes that “the relationships between the two genders will improve only if family undergoes some changes and gets rid of the aforementioned hypocrisy”.<sup>4</sup> Theophilos Notaras on his part believes in high ideals and maintains that “the nation, religious faith, the glorious ancestors, and family are of great importance, since they all epitomise one of the most important human victories over barbarism and have contributed to the birth of civilisation”.<sup>5</sup> Thus he characterises anyone rejecting these ideals as “deranged, hysterical, epileptic, insane, and uncivilised”.<sup>6</sup> Despite his strong belief in the ideal of family, the course of his own family life proves to be a source of disillusionment.

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<sup>1</sup> The first part of the novel (“Το ξεκίνημα”) was published in 1933. Theotokas intended to write a three-part book, but eventually, *Αργώ* turned out to be a one-volume novel published in 1936. See Theotokas 1936a: 479. For *Αργώ*, see also Bitsiani 2014: 115–116, 117–118, 119–121, 122, 123, 127 and 155–156.

<sup>2</sup> Theotokas 1930c; Theotokas 1934: 61.

<sup>3</sup> Theotokas 1930c.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 18–19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 19.

Focusing more closely on the Notaras family, both the father and mother are responsible for the family misfortune. The former seems emotionally detached not only because of his passionate commitment to his profession (Professor of Roman and Byzantine Law at the University of Athens), his sense of duty, and meticulousness, but also because of his strict moral code.<sup>1</sup> In other words, trying not to violate his code of ethics and conduct, he always hides and masks his feelings. The latter, as it will be shown in the next section, abandons her family in her effort to find true love. After her leaving, aunt Loukia (Theophilos Notaras' unmarried cousin) is willing to assume the rearing of the children and acts as a mother substitute: she really loves her nephews and she is affectionate towards them; however, she neither manages, nor displays a willingness to control them.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the failed relationships between family members, the sons' attitudes and life choices that fall short of their father's expectations further threaten the stability of this family unit.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, the children do not espouse their father's strict and fixed ideals and express their opposition to his traditionalism, and, as a result, the famous academic dynasty comes to an end. The first-born son, Nikiphoros Notaras, although he is the aspiring successor to the academic chair, studies law to satisfy his father and he is not interested in continuing the family dynasty.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, he dreams of being glorified in the literary field.<sup>5</sup> After his graduation, he leaves for Germany with the intention of continuing his studies,

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 17–18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 26.

<sup>3</sup> In his “*Ημερολόγιο της Αργώς*”, Theotokas admits that in *Αργώ* one of the main plots is the father-sons conflict within the Notaras family. See Theotokas 1939: 22.

<sup>4</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 26 and 28.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 27–28.

but very quickly realises how overwhelming his bias for literature is and decides to break the family tradition.<sup>1</sup> For a while, he lives in Paris and lives a carefree life, and, after his return from France, he publishes his tragedy *Κάθαρση* (*Catharsis*), causing quite a stir among the intellectuals.<sup>2</sup> Wanting to escape from his dull routine in Athens, he flees to Paris again, where he indulges in sexual adventures once more and he realizes how chimerical his beliefs were, thereby achieving his serenity.<sup>3</sup> After the death of his father, he liquidates the patrimony and disappears, and rumour has it that he is in South America, where he enjoys a life free from the insatiable desire for immortality and glory.<sup>4</sup>

Alexis Notaras studies law too; since his brother Nikiphoros proved a disappointment for their father, the hopes for the continuity of the academic dynasty rest upon him.<sup>5</sup> A rather sensitive and romantic person with fragile health, Alexis is given to daydreaming and melancholy.<sup>6</sup> The premature and unexpected death of their younger brother Linos further undermines the state of his health.<sup>7</sup> Before he dies, he composes a collection of poems titled *Χαρά Ζωής* (*Joy of Life*), where his love for a woman (Morpho Delatolla) is expressed.<sup>8</sup> Its importance is acknowledged

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 30–33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 33–36.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 377–378, 407–416, 420–421 and 423–428.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 465. The death of the father carries a symbolic meaning: “that kind of father belongs to the past” and, in this respect, his death signals “the end of one era along with its religious faith, social values, and conventional codes of conduct”. See Ru 1992: 68–69.

<sup>5</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 33 and 43–44.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 42–43 and 110.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 236 and 238–239.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 119.

after his death, and Alexis gets the glory and achieves the immortality that his brother Nikiphoros had always desired.<sup>1</sup>

Linus Notaras, the youngest offspring of the Notaras family, is a spirited teenager, oppressed by the heavy and stifling family atmosphere. He can hardly bear the dull and monotonous life of his family home, and resents his brothers for struggling to win glory.<sup>2</sup> Having adopted a different perspective upon life, Linus strongly believes that we should live our life intensely; he prefers a life full of adventures, risks, struggle, and travels.<sup>3</sup> He thus intends to leave for the Indies and steals money, thereby severing all bonds and obligations.<sup>4</sup> Having, however, no experience of the outside world, he falls victim to a criminal gang that rapes him and steals his money, and as a result, his father disinherits him.<sup>5</sup> In an attempt to restore his good name, he is killed by the police during a military coup.<sup>6</sup>

Taking stock of the sons' life stories, one is invited to assume that Theotokas' advocacy of individual freedom lurks behind their reaction to their father's traditionalism.<sup>7</sup> Their attitude may also be explained on the grounds of the author's clear bias for naughty children of his time ("those having visions for the future and undertaking brave initiatives"), which is evident in his essay *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα* and

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 463–464.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 111.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 112, 113 and 120.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 230–235.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 235–240.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 241, 279–280 and 296.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: 331; Paganos 1983b: 209, 210 and 211; For Theotokas' faith in the ideal of 'individualism', see also the chapter "Family and bio-medical discourse".



in his article “Αί ἀνησυχίαι τῆς νέας γενεᾶς”.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, and most importantly, the sons’ opposition may be associated with Theotokas’ faith in young people.<sup>2</sup>

More pointedly, despite the prevailing pessimism in his article “Υπάρχει κάτι σάπιο στην Ελλάδα”, hints of positive outlook can be detected in the last paragraph; Theotokas pins all his hopes on young people and entertains the view that their role will be crucial in Greece’s spiritual regeneration.<sup>3</sup> This faith in youth is voiced once more in his article titled “Νιότη” (“Youth”, 1933): “the youth embody hope”, and thus “the young people should be protected from the decayed past and be confident and independent enough to create something new and strong”.<sup>4</sup> Last but not least, his concern about the contemporary situation in Greece and young people can also be found in the first part (“Ἡμερολόγιο τῆς Ἀργῶς”) of his *Ἡμερολόγιο τῆς “Ἀργῶς” καὶ τοῦ “Δαιμονίου”*, where the author reveals that the two out of three topics of his novel are “Το δράμα τῆς σύγχρονης Ελλάδας” and “Το δράμα τῆς νιότης”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1930a: 23–24; Theotokas 2002: 35.

<sup>2</sup> For Theotokas’ attitude towards youth, see also Karantonis 1990a: 66, 67 and 91.

<sup>3</sup> Theotokas 1933c: 201. Similar views are also evident in the journal “Κάθαρση” published by Nikiphoros Notaras and his fellows. The nation’s spiritual regeneration is, as already shown in the chapter “Family and bio-medical discourse”, a matter of concern to the author. See Theotokas 1936a: 28–29.

<sup>4</sup> Theotokas 1933b: 263–265.

<sup>5</sup> Charis 1934a: 188–189; Theotokas 1939: 20–21. For example, the students belonging to the union “Ἀργῶ” are motivated by an overwhelming desire to break free from the stale past. In addition, Marios Sfakostathis, Theophilos Notaras’ close friend, is certain about the bankruptcy of values and hopes. The chapter “Ἑλληνικὴ ἱστορία” is rather revealing about the contemporary situation in Greece. Lampros Christidis, one of the characters of the book, reflects on the issue of youth as well. In this respect, the Notarades’ reaction is justified. Generally speaking, *Ἀργῶ*, one of the most ambitious projects of the ’30s generation, aspired to be a social, political and historical account of the author’s times; and as such, it aimed to give a panorama of Athenian life in the third decade of the 20th century. Despite any weaknesses –for example, “the social world it depicts is largely confined to the government elite (university, politics, the arts), and Theotokas’ presentation of those worlds is

Considering the above, it is tempting to suppose that, through the sons' challenge to the father's traditional values, Theotokas represents the conflict between generations ('guard of tradition' vs. 'quest for freedom and individuality') behind which lurks the battle between the 'old' ('tradition') and the 'new' ('progression') order.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, *Αργώ* is a family novel insofar as it follows the life of the Notarades family over the course of four generations (Nikiphoros, Alexis, and Linos are the offspring of the last generation), narrates family conflicts (especially those between the father and his sons), and focuses on human relationships.<sup>2</sup> Alexis and Linos' deaths notwithstanding (symbolic end of the old order), it is Nikiphoros'

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far from neutral", *Αργώ* may be numbered among the narratives of Greek modernism. This is hardly surprising, since it was in Theotokas' *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα* (the manifesto of the generation of the 1930s as well as of Greek modernism) that his condemnation of the provincialism of the literature of the previous years, and his call for a break with the past; for a European (Western) orientation; for "an equal partnership and a reciprocal relationship with Europe"; as well as a "new" Greek literature take centre stage in his essay. For this reason, Theotokas emerges as a leading figure of his generation. See Argyriou 1996: 90; Athanasiadis 1992: 146 and 148; Beaton 1999: 142; Chourmouziou 1979b: 71; Karantonis 1990a: 86, 87, 91 and 105; Kokkinaki 1997a: 29 and 30; Margaroni 2003: 163; Paganos 1983b: 202 and 213; Panagiotopoulos 1980a: 88 and 91; Pourgouris 2006: 93; Theotokas 1929; Theotokas 1936a: 40, 49–51, 60–61, 62, 97–98, 102–104, 243–263, 288 and 480; Theotokas 1939: 38; Theotokas and Seferis 1981: 115; Thylyos n.d.: 181; Thylyos 1933: 316; Tziouvas 1997: 25, 26, 36 and 37.

<sup>1</sup> Ru 1992: 63, 81–82, 172 and 187.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 2, 5, 28 and 31. It is also because of "a sense of nation, social concerns, ideological beliefs in reformation, and individuation" that *Αργώ* may be characterised as a family novel. Intrinsic to these father-sons conflicts is the figure of the "authoritative, powerful, and dictatorial" father. As Ru clarifies, "the father is depicted as the centre of the clan", "the father has to be a successful founder of a large and wealthy family with an exalted reputation", "he generates authority, insists on the family's value system, and tries to keep the family in order", and "the father appears so rigid about morality as to become a tyrant who suppresses the desires of other members". On the other hand, the sons are cast as either "the compliant successor" or "the rebellious outcast son". Therefore, antagonism comes to the surface, and, contrary to the father's expectations, the "sons' rebellions shatter the family structure and doom the father's rule to eventual failure". Ibid.: 12, 32–33, 45, 47, 79–80 and 179–180.

“psychological growth” that may “suggest the hope of creating a new and better world”.<sup>1</sup>

To conclude: the fictional works under consideration, drawing on a number of motifs (such as lack of deep love, warm affection, and effective communication, physical and/or emotional absence of parents, presence of substitutes, parents-children conflicts, sibling rivalry, physical and verbal abuse, stifling and tense family atmosphere, incestuous attachments and desires, and marriage crisis), are designed as narratives of family disorganisation with a view to allowing analogies between fictional family lives and the contemporary situation to be drawn (“Σ’ ανήλιαγες γωνιές”, *Δεσμώτες*, *Αποικιοι*, and *Η ξένη γη*); giving critical representations of familial relationships (“Ο νέος Μωυσής”); addressing the need for reforming family institution (*Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*); implying the decay of the bourgeois ideals (“Ο ξεχασμένος”, *Δεσμώτες*, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*); depicting the amorality of family (“Η ξεπάρθηνη” and *Παραστρατημένοι*); presenting the deterioration in the familial relationships in the interwar period (*Γερές κι αδύναμες γενεές*); depicting the family disintegration as the direct outcome of the contemporary economic and social crisis (*Κρίσις...*); suggesting the need for the family to be modernised (*Αργώ*); or mirroring anxieties

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<sup>1</sup> Ru 1992: 126. At this point, I should underline that there are striking similarities between John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte saga* and Roger Martin du Gard’s *Les Thibault* on the one hand, and George Theotokas’ *Αργώ* on the other in the depiction of the paternal figure and the rebellious sons. Much as in the Greek novel, father-sons conflicts in the English and French ones suggest the battle between the old and the new generation, thereby “stressing the irrelevance of the traditional values to the new world”. Ibid.: 7, 18, 29, 31–32, 48–66, 68–69, 89, 114, 129, 154 and 156; Harvey 1996: 130–131; Karantonis 1990a: 100; Michaud 1938: 150; Williams 1958: 330.

about the fortunes of youth (*Παραστρατημένοι, Αργώ, Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια, and Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*).

What mainly characterises the narratives in question is the negative description and the blotting-out of the parental figures because of their physical absence, which is either voluntary (departure from home) or involuntary (death); their emotional detachment or unavailability; their personal characteristics and attitude (excessive authority or weakness); their physical and practical inability to carry out their duties adequately, as well as because of the feelings they arouse in their children. Consequently, both on a practical and symbolic level, families are not only deprived of their figureheads, but also the concept of the mother figure as the epitome of love, affection, and self-sacrifice is overturned.<sup>1</sup>

The strongest proof of maternal deprivation is the appearance of the childless maternal substitutes in the narrative.<sup>2</sup> Generally, the substitutes are close family

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<sup>1</sup> The fathers' physical absence or inability to perform their obligations can be described as "voids of patriarchy". Besides, it is interesting that those female heroines who at first sight may appear as less appropriate are cast in the role of good mothers; for example, Laouretta's mother is a prostitute (*Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*), whereas both Katina ("Η ξεπάρθενη") and Alexandra (*Παραστρατημένοι*) lack first-hand experience of good motherhood, since they both have experienced maternal deprivation. Yet Katina becomes a loving and affectionate single mother, while Alexandra's ('virginal mother'/'maternal virgin') anxiety over her new role (she decides to raise her dead brother's child) is promising about her performance of motherhood. Such a positive depiction on Terzakis' and Nakou's part may be attributed to the former's intention to challenge social prejudices and to the latter's views about motherhood, as well as to their judgemental attitudes towards bourgeois family (the children that are raised by these heroines are born outside marriage). Further, it should be stressed that Martha Lampiti, although a good mother, may seem quite problematic in that she suffers from a neurological disorder. For the terms 'virginal mother' and 'maternal virgin', suggesting "young childless women", who in comparison to bad "biological mothers, provide maternal care", see Lauren 2015: 30.

<sup>2</sup> Paternal substitutes can only be found in "Η ξεπάρθενη" (the positive portrayals of Dr X and Dr Spanidis), *Παραστρατημένοι* (the negative portrayal of Sotiris Rovias who vacillates between being a

members (aunts, godmother, and grandmothers) or people belonging to the protagonists' social circle.<sup>1</sup> Of course, these include stepmothers and stepfathers. The depiction of the maternal substitutes is either positive, since they fill the children's emotional void effectively (the grandmother, *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*; the nanny, “*Η ξεπάρθενη*”; the anonymous woman, *Η παρακαμή των Σκληρών*; the godmother, Mrs Diboua, and Adamian, *Παραστρατημένοι*; and both the stepmother and the aunt, *Η ζένη γη*);<sup>2</sup> or negative because they are mean, insincere, and unable to perform their role adequately, as well as due to their age and their hostile feelings for the absent mother (for example, aunt Calliope, *Δεσμώτες*; the grandmother, *Ο απόγονος*, aunt Loukia, *Αργώ*; and the aunt, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*). However, whether effective or not, the presence of substitutes serves as a reminder of what the protagonists lack.

Since mothers and fathers are the pillars of the family, and parents in these narratives are not the ‘angels’ and ‘bulwarks’ of the family anymore, one may interpret the elimination of the maternal and paternal figures as a threat to the stability of family and a crisis of both motherhood and fatherhood. Regarding the crisis of fatherhood, “it indicates”, as Bernard Muldworf stresses, “the existence of a problem outside the family structure”, and “it is, in fact, a crisis of authority: it is

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paternal substitute and a stepfather), and *Ο απόγονος*, where the portrayal of Nikos Lazarou (stepfather) creates contradictory impressions.

<sup>1</sup> In some cases, daughters serve as mother substitutes, taking care of both their mothers/father and brothers while managing the household (Maria Galani, *Δεσμώτες*; Alexandra Kastri, *Παραστρατημένοι*, and Sofia Malvi, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*). In other cases, heroes' love for a woman suggests maternal deprivation once again (Filippas Balatis, “*Ο νέος Μωυσής* and Petros Parnis, *Ο απόγονος*).

<sup>2</sup> The protagonists' temporary relief and connection with maternal substitutes is usually attributed to the latter's death: the grandmother, *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*; the anonymous woman, *Η παρακαμή των Σκληρών*; Mrs Diboua, *Παραστρατημένοι*, and both the stepmother and the aunt, *Η ζένη γη*.

not a psychological situation but the political manifestation of a deep socio-economic turbulence”.<sup>1</sup> In other words, in his mind, “the crisis of fatherhood is, in fact, the personal experience of a political crisis, acquiring both social and economic dimensions”.<sup>2</sup> If this is the case, one is tempted to associate the crisis of fatherhood in the fictional works in question with the stormy interwar years marked by the sudden and complete collapse of the Great Idea, which brought about a political and ideological crisis; the constant conflicts and polarisation between opposing political parties (the Liberal Party and the People’s Party); the rekindling of the National Schism; political and governmental instability due to successive military coups and elections; social problems (for example, workers’ impoverishment, the decrease in salaries, the rise in the unemployment rate and the sustained strikes); the Great Depression and its economic, social and political impact; and the restoration of monarchy, the abolition of Democracy, and the imposition of a dictatorship.<sup>3</sup>

Siblings competing for their father’s love and approval clearly suggests an inversion of “the ideal of sibling love and protection” in the sense that the father’s open preference for a child makes the ‘disfavoured’ child see the ‘favoured’ one as “the object of envy” (as in the Chlomochilis family, *Άποικοί*).<sup>4</sup> In other words, since normally relationships between siblings “are a kind of ‘ascribed friendship’” inasmuch as siblings “are born into the relationship and they are supposed to remain

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<sup>1</sup> Muldworf 1977: 28 and 74.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 79.

<sup>3</sup> A similar view is also put forward by Tzina Politi. See Politi 2001: 70.

<sup>4</sup> Fergus 2009: 70; Fitzpatrick 2009: 462. Although they are not brothers in blood, rivalry for the father’s favourable treatment characterises the relationship of the son and son-in-law (“Ο νέος Μουσής), with the former’s feelings of neglect, unfairness, devastation, and ostracisation from the house prevailing in the novel.

friends throughout their lifetime”, the reader feels awkward upon reading stories about siblings “betraying one another or becoming steadfast enemies”.<sup>1</sup> Since the “feelings of hatred, envy and jealousy” are experienced by and expressed towards people from the same bloodline, one is invited to see enmity within the domestic space as a fictional representation of the National Schism.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, *Ethnikos Dichasmos*, although an inheritance from the second decade of the 20th century (the debate surrounding Greece’s participation in the First World War and the ensuing constitutional conflict), established national division and retributive justice that marked the interwar years as well.<sup>3</sup> Richard Clogg points out that:

The First World War was to place intolerable strains on the cohesion of Greek society and Greece was to emerge from the war and her subsequent adventure in Asia Minor a country divided against herself. The consequences of this division were to distort the whole course of Greece’s political development during the inter-war period.<sup>4</sup>

As it seems, the National Schism posed major obstacles to [the] shaping of a national spirit and led to the domination of resentment (‘μνησκακία’), indicative of

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<sup>1</sup> Tavuchis and Goode 1975: 253 and 254. As Nicholas Tavuchis and William Goode underline “when such a betrayal occurs, or is believed to have occurred, the enmity that results may be extremely powerful, for it is fed by a set of strong affectional forces”. *Ibid.*: 254.

<sup>2</sup> Despoina Papadimitriou notes that the notion of ‘civil conflict’ first appeared in the first interwar decade, whereas that of ‘civil war’ is widely used in the second. To prove her statement, she cites various passages from newspapers. See Papadimitriou 2012: 88 and 91–92. For the National Schism, also see *ibid.*: 54–56, 65 and 70; Clogg 1986: 105–107 and 110; Mavrogordatos 1983: 25 and 26–28; Mazower 1991: 19–20 and 295; Vournas 1998: 155–196.

<sup>3</sup> Papadimitriou 2012: 56.

<sup>4</sup> Clogg 1986: 105.

hostile feelings and vindictive attitudes.<sup>1</sup> By the same token, these hostile feelings are the reason the fictional family members cannot contribute to the formation and establishment of a family spirit, and thus both the nation and the family are represented as divided.<sup>2</sup>

Presenting physical and verbal violence as being situated within the domestic realm conveys the impression that family can be an awful site of suffering, distress, misery, anger, and hate instead of a warm place of love and affection (the anonymous family, “Σ’ ανήλιαγες γωνιές”; the Galanides’ neighbours, *Δεσμώτες*; the Chlomochilis family, *Αποικοι*, and the Zacholis family, *Η ξένη γη*).<sup>3</sup> Taking stock of the turbulent interwar years, one is tempted to draw a parallel between the violence in the domestic and in the public sphere. Particularly, Despoina Papadimitriou maintains that “Greek interwar political life inherited the physical and verbal violence, the resentment, and the lack of moderation from *Ethnikos Dichasmos*”.<sup>4</sup> The numerous coups and countercoups that took place during the interwar period in tandem with the notion of ‘Counterrevolution’, conveying the feeling of hate and revenge, are rather indicative of the dominance of political

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<sup>1</sup> Demertzis and Lipowatz 2006: 71–128; Papadimitriou 2012: 71.

<sup>2</sup> A passage of Venizelos’ speech delivered in Messologi and published in the newspaper *Ακρόπολις* (*Akropolis*) illustrates the division within families because of individual family members’ opposing political views. See Papadimitriou 2012: 96; Venizelos 1930: 1.

<sup>3</sup> Dever 2006: 112; Vassiliadou 2015: 198. The authors’ desire to present and expose the destructive power of patriarchal authority could lurk behind these depictions of the males’ (fathers and sons) violent behaviours contributing to family disorganisation. Here one should be reminded of Angelos Terzakis’ opposition to patriarchy (“Ελεύθερα ιδανικά”), as well as of Aimilia Daphni’s intention to denounce male violence (already stressed in the previous chapter). See Sanner 2005: 153; Tomić 2009: 253.

<sup>4</sup> Papadimitriou 2012: 57.



violence.<sup>1</sup> Although “the circle of violence seems to close between 1926 and 1930, it reopens after 1930, when the economic, political and social crisis deepens”.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, the conflicts of children either with their whole family (*Παραστρατημένοι*) or with their father (*Αργώ*) also constitute a point of interest, since they shed light on the issue of the ‘misfortune of youth’ (‘το δράμα της νιότης’).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in *Παραστρατημένοι*, Alexandra attributes her brother’s attitude (suicide included) to a lack of purpose in his life. In *Αργώ*, the father-sons conflicts, threatening family stability, take the form of a conflict between generations, since the younger Notarades challenge their father’s traditionalism, and indicate both the expression of the sons’ individuality and the battle between the old and the new order.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the conflicts of Angelos Damakos and Eleni Grizoti with their families, Thalís Megalokardos’ intention to write a novel about his own post-war generation and the depiction of Manolis Nikolaïdis as a restless young man worrying about the contemporary social situation are the means Thanasis Petsalis employs to introduce the issue of ‘youth’s misfortune’ in his two-part series *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*.

Although Nikiphoros Notaras’ “psychological growth” (*Αργώ*) -indicative of Theotokas’ faith in young people- and Alexandra Kastri’s decision to raise her dead brother’s child allow hopes for a new and better world to rise, the dramatic end of

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<sup>1</sup> Papadimitriou 2012: 66–67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 72. Papadimitriou uses the phrase ‘βαιοποίηση της πολιτικής’ to describe the intensification of violence in the 1930s. Ibid.: 13.

<sup>3</sup> As already shown, this matter informs not only fiction but also articles published in those turbulent years.

<sup>4</sup> The sons’ opposition to their father’s traditional ideals also implies the author’s preference for the naughty children.

Petsalis' male (Angelos) and female (Eleni) protagonist suggests otherwise. The author's pessimism in *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα* may be attributed to the fact that the second part of *Η ανθρώπινη περιπέτεια*, as his autobiography shows, was written during a period when anxiety about what was to come was growing and the threat of a second world war was becoming more and more visible.

What further characterises the relationships of family members in the novels in question are the incestuous drives (Maria Galani for her brother Fotos, *Δεσμώτες*; Olga Velmeri for his son Orestes Malvis, and vice versa, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*; and Alexandra Kastri for her father, *Παραστρατημένοι*) and actual incest (Dionysis Valeris and his half-sister Erna, *Αποικιοί*; and Eleni Grizoti and his son Loris, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*). In contrast to “adulterous desires” that “are transmural”, “incest imprisons desire within the domestic space, as if the walls around the home were impenetrable”.<sup>1</sup> In other words, incest, compared to adultery that “allows illicit passage both into and out of the domestic space, [allows illicit passage] between various rooms within that domestic space”.<sup>2</sup> As Nicholas White emphasises, both adultery and incest constitute “radical forms of illicit sexual behaviour” and “threaten the order of the family life: adultery does so by explosion, whereas incest threatens the family unit with implosion”.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, it should not go unnoticed that in many cases it is the marriage crisis or the marital breakdown that contributes to the family crisis and disorganisation (the Vramides and Karamalides, *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*; the Lampitis family, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*; Katina's family, “Η ξεπάρθενη”; Alekos Parnis and Aspasia

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<sup>1</sup> White 1999: 10. Adultery will be examined thoroughly in the next section.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 100.

Psellou's family, *To σταυροδρόμι* and *Ο απόγονος*; Michael Valeris and Polymnia Tsolakoglou's, and Dimitris Valeris and Corinna's family, *Άποικοι*; the Kastris family, *Παραστρατημένοι*, the Malvides, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, and George Perros and Eleni Grizotis' family, *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*). To put it differently, as marriage lays the foundation on which family rests, a marriage crisis is depicted as an aspect of the family crisis.<sup>1</sup> As might be expected, tense and broken spousal relationships poison the family atmosphere and hurt the children's feelings.

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<sup>1</sup> In the following section, I shall attempt to explore marriage crisis.

## 3.2 Marriage

### 3.2.1 ‘Marriage plot’ and ‘adultery plot’

In the theory of narratology, ‘marriage’, as Nicholas White mentions, is viewed as “the pretext or the culmination of family plots” in that “we often find it at the fixed poles of storytelling, at (or towards) the beginning or the end of plots”.<sup>1</sup> The marriage plot itself suggests, according to Mary-Catherine Harrison, “a story of heterosexual love and courtship culminating in marriage” that has dominated Western cultural narratives from the rise of the modern novel onwards to such an extent that it came to “‘naturalise’ a deeply cultural institution and normalise a particular set of heterosexual gender roles”.<sup>2</sup>

Considering that “not all stories of marriage are happy ones”, the adultery plot lurks embedded within the marriage plot, following a “different plot structure: marriage does not conclude the novel; rather, it predates the novel’s chronology or occurs relatively early in the depicted events. In these plots, marriage introduces

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<sup>1</sup> White 2007: 21. According to the legal definition found in Pavlos Stymphaliadis’ *Στοιχεία οικογενειακού δίκαιου* (*Family Law*, 1925 and 1937), marriage is defined as “ένωσις ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς συνάφεια, συγκλήρωσις τοῦ βίου διὰ παντός, θείου τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνου δικαίου κοινωνία” (Modestinus). Essentially, the legal meaning of marriage dictates that “men are prohibited from marrying more than one wife”, “the marital union aims at establishing a legal intimate intellectual and physical bond”, “spouses should stand by each other’s side both on good and bad days”, “the marital bond is indissoluble, and it can break on the grounds of adultery alone”, and a “couple’s life is regulated both by divine (moral and religious principles) and man-made law (legal dictates)”. In Gregorios Kasimatis’ *Εγχειρίδιον οικογενειακού δικαίου* (*Manual on Family Law*, 1939), marriage is described as “the bedrock of family” in that it aims at the establishment and development of the family cell. Such a perception of marriage as a multifaceted ‘compromise’ is put forward in the novel *Το δαιμόνιο*: “marriage is a compromise between nature and society, religion and sexual instinct, male and female life”. See Kasimatis 1939: 25 and 26–27; Siskos 1934: 15–17; Stymphaliadis 1925: 7; Stymphaliadis 1937: 8; Theotokas 1938: 170.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison 2014: 112 and 113.

tension and conflict rather than resolving it; novels track the disintegration of marriage rather than the integration of two individuals”, with the marital breakdown being attributed either to “external (and explosive pressures”) or to “internal (and implosive)” ones.<sup>1</sup>

Although the origins of the adultery novel (“the archetypal literature of illegitimacy”) can be traced back to the “ancient Greek and Roman imagination, i.e., the epics of Homer”, as well as “the literature and legislation promoted by the Roman emperor Augustus”, it was from the second half of the 19th century onwards that the adultery novel achieved considerable resonance and became “culturally significant” as it determined readers’ perception of marriage and divorce.<sup>2</sup>

What merits attention here is the fact that the adultery plot, as Nicholas White points out, “plays through a similar repertoire of binary emotional permutations, but within the ensnaring geometry of the triangle”.<sup>3</sup> Under this aspect, adultery may be viewed as “a parody of the marriage”;<sup>4</sup> “the dark side of the romantic ideal and the inversion of the emblematic value of conjugality”;<sup>5</sup> or as “a paradigmatic moment of

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison 2014: 114; White 2007: 32. As Tony Tanner stresses, “the bourgeois novelist may concentrate on what makes for marriage and leads up to it, or on what threatens marriage and portends its disintegration”. See Tanner 1979: 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 12; Harrison 2014: 114; Schwartz 2016: 2; White 1999: 3; White 2007: 28. In their attempt to answer “why the marriage [and the adultery] plot need never get old”, Adelle Waldman and Nicholas White conclude that its “strength is rooted in the perversity of human nature and the persistent difficulties of social life”. For Tony Tanner, “it is the unstable triangularity of adultery, rather than the static symmetry of marriage, that is the generative form of Western literature as we know it”. See Tanner 1979: 12; Waldman 2013; White 1999: 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 15. In this triangular relationship, it is “the carnal knowledge of sexual pleasure apparently forgotten by the married couple” as well as “the knowledge of the secret fact of their passion” that both the wife and the lover “share”. Ibid.: 16; Schwartz 2016: 1.

<sup>4</sup> White 1999: 15.

<sup>5</sup> Schwartz 2016: 1

crisis”.<sup>1</sup> As for the female adultery story, it came to be interpreted as “a woman’s search for self-fulfilment” because of her decision to abandon her husband and to flee with her lover.<sup>2</sup> Last but not least, while “classic novels ended with either a marriage or a death” and thus “family plots” were “defined by the two key transactional moments in which legal texts (marriage contracts and wills) restructured the economic and affective order of family life, the advent of divorce added another transactional moment to this list and allowed for narrative situations in which widowers and widows were not the only figures who might find life after wedlock”.<sup>3</sup>

In the present section, I turn my attention to marital life and the several questions arising from it. What are the signs of marital crisis? How is adultery interpreted? How do the protagonists view their marriage breakdown, and to what extent does their social background determine their perspective? Given spouses’ newly acquired ability to divorce as a result of the 1920 law reform, is it husbands or wives that file for divorce? Do protagonists marry for love or for money? Are there any negative views about the institution of marriage expressed in the fictional works under consideration? And finally, are there any alternatives to marriage to be found?

### **3.2.2 Marriage and divorce**

Objection to social institutions, such as marriage, manifests through the prominence of ‘free union’ in Dimitris Tagkopoulos’ fiction, which summarises his ideas about marriage.<sup>4</sup> For example, in his novel *Θέμης Βρανάς*, the father states openly that his

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<sup>1</sup> Schwartz 2016: 2.

<sup>2</sup> Kennard 1981: 72; Leonard 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Forster 1927: 128; White 1999: 177–178.

<sup>4</sup> Stavridi-Patrikiou 1997: 433 and 435.

daughter is free to choose her life partner and suggests to her and his prospective son-in-law that they should be equal partners, linked by friendship and companionship, virtues that flourish within a ‘free union’.<sup>1</sup> He also urges them to be honest and big-hearted towards each other, and to feel proud of one another.<sup>2</sup> Astroula on her part (*Δύο αγάπες*) associates with Pavlos Rebos, and after the death of her parents she decides to live with him without getting married.<sup>3</sup> For Astroula, their bond is legal, since they are linked by their love, and she sees Pavlos as her husband.<sup>4</sup>

Such a celebration of ‘free union’ on the part of the protagonists may be seen in relation to the author’s views about marriage. As Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou underlines, Dimitris Tagkopoulos “strongly disapproves of marriage, since to his mind, marriage is the cause for individual alienation, for social disorder caused by imperfect relationships bounded by conventions, and for women’s weakness and subordination”.<sup>5</sup> Taking this into account, “Astroula may be regarded as the most

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<sup>1</sup> Tagkopoulos 1923: 58–59. The free selection of a partner is seen not only as an expression of individuality but also as an appropriate foundation for marriage. An argument for ‘companionate marriage’ appears in *Πιργος*, where Kostas Lerianos views marriage as a cooperative, egalitarian, harmonious, conjugal relationship resting on love. See Kokkinos 1932: 174.

<sup>2</sup> Tagkopoulos 1923: 60–61.

<sup>3</sup> Tagkopoulos 1924: 97 and 102–103.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 103. On the contrary, the inferior status of late nineteenth-century women/wives is to be seen in Karkavitsas’ fiction. For example, in *Η λυγερή* (discussed in detail in the following), the protagonist’s father suggests that his son-in-law ought to beat his wife (the former’s daughter) so that she obeys him; and the mother on her part advises her daughter to adhere to Christian values (patience included), the ‘gospel’, a set of principles, so to speak, of married countrywomen. Besides, in *Ο ζητιάνος*, Magoulas seems to be violent towards his wife Crystallo on several occasions, and men generally tend to love their animals more than their wives. See Karkavitsas 1896: 149–150; Karkavitsas 1925: 104, 117, 133–134 and 176.

<sup>5</sup> Stavridi-Patrikiou 1997: 437. The author’s preoccupation with marriage is also stressed by K. Parorititis. See Parorititis 1930b: 89. As for his dislike for marital bonds, it leaps to the eye in his novel

liberated heroine in Tagkopoulos' fiction: although grown up in a conventional environment, she not only chooses her partner freely but also decides not to marry".<sup>1</sup>

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*Πλάι στην αγάπη* (it was first published in *O Noumas* in 1916, and then, it came out in book form in 1920) as well, irrefutable evidence of the recurring ideas and themes in his works.

<sup>1</sup> Stavridi-Patrikiou 1997: 437 and 438; Tagkopoulos 1924: 90. At the other end of the spectrum, in no way does Anthi Strimmenou, Karkavitsas' heroine in his late nineteenth-century *H λυγερή* (first published in *Estia* in continuous installments between April 8, and August 27, 1890, and printed in 1896), follow a course of action of her own. More pointedly, the young, beautiful, and modest protagonist –these qualities are echoed by the nickname ‘η λυγερή’ used quite often in place of her name– and George Vranas, a young, handsome, and brave man, are in love. Still Mr. Panagiotis Strimmenos intends to marry his daughter to Nikolos Pikopoulos, his middle-aged and ugly partner in the grocery store, as the former admires the latter's commercial acumen. The possibility of eloping, an ultimate solution to the lovers' predicament, is met with Anthi's refusal for fear of causing suffering to her parents, damaging her honour, and blackening the family name. As a result, the couple breaks up and the heroine enters an arranged and loveless marriage, with her misery made complete when her beloved George marries Vasiliki Kainouriou. However, in the last pages of the novella, the reader is informed that her husband's injury, the birth of their child, her sense of duty to run the household and take care of her husband, baby, and ill father, as well as her economic and social status as a cause for pride, make Anthi become more like her spouse (“Η αφομοίωσις επήλθε πλήρης”). It seems that Karkavitsas deploys the love story between Anthi and George (a reflection, to an extent, of a traumatic incident that the author experienced in his life) with a view to shedding light on women's degraded position in male-dominated village society and commenting upon their irresolution and timidity. Essentially, Karkavitsas uses the fate of *H Λυγερή* as symbolic of the fate of young countrywomen of his time: living in a sexist and misogynist rural society, the female protagonist has no choice other than to obey her parents, especially her father, and to hold back her opposition to the match arranged for her (by the same token, Anthi's mother, although she prefers George to Nikolos, does not voice any objection to her husband's plans). At the same time, Anthi seriously considers the local laws and customs and worries about the social control mainly exerted by her older contemporaries who represent the most conservative part of village society and the strictest upholders of morality. As a matter of fact, she does not act of her own accord, nor does she express her genuine desires and feelings, and therefore, she turns into a different person at the end of the story. The process of reconsideration and assimilation mentioned above is depicted as inevitable, ‘deterministic’, so to speak, in the sense that being a countrywoman in the late nineteenth century, she could not have done otherwise than she in fact did. In this respect, the novella bears powerful testimony to the author's concern about contemporary social issues, while also “breathing a new



It should be emphasised that ‘free union’, suggesting an alternative relationship to conventional marriage, is discussed in the interwar period. For example, in his *Κοινωνιολογία περί γάμου και των συναφών*, Phoivos Pharmas draws a distinction between marriage and free union: the former is “a social bond pointing to the consent of the married (consent is typical of any contract) and the acknowledgment on society’s part of the union’s validity and the children’s legitimacy”;<sup>1</sup> whereas the latter “is based more or less on sexual instincts, and it aims mainly at sexual pleasure and secondarily at mutual assistance”.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding his clear preference for marriage, he does not hesitate to maintain that sometimes free unions are more stable than marriages, a view indicating his approval for the dissolution of failed and unhappy marriages.<sup>3</sup> In *Ο γάμος και το διαζύγιον*, Anthimos Siskos entertains the view that, to an extent, “free union as well as sinful places undermine

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spirit into literature”. In fact, the turn of events within the text –neither Anthi and George run away (rural idyll), nor do they overcome any obstacles to their union and get married (romantic comedy), nor does Anthi die (romantic tragedy)– suggests the heroine’s coming down to earth, which, in turn, attests to Karkavitsas’ transition from idyllic ethnography to realism. On the other hand, Anthis and Nikolos’ union could also be viewed as proof of the dawn of a society dominated by economic motivations. Against this backdrop, it should be stressed once again that Karkavitsas, by intertwining ethnographic, psychographic, and sociological elements with realism, depicts rural society without embellishments and idealisations. See Adamos 1985c: 37 and 67–68; Baloumis 1984: 172; Baloumis 1993: 52; Baloumis 1999: 109, 110, 128, 130, 131, 152–153, 154–155, 160–164, 185–189 and 195; Basinou 1997: 411; Baskozos 1993: 57; Giannopoulou 2017: 24, 25, 26, 39, 57, 61, 72–76 and 100; Grecynca 1943: 23, 25–26, 27–28 and 36; Karkavitsas 1896: 8–12, 23, 32–39, 49–50, 70, 77, 85–87, 91, 97–105, 148–149, 151–155, 157–158, 167, 172–179 and 183–184; Mastrodimitris 1982: 158; Mastrodimitris 1994: 13–14, 16–19, 22–24, 26–28 and 34–35; Megas 1975: 124; Politi 1996b: 63–64, 75–76, 78, 181, 100, 102, 105, 113, 115, 121, 122, 123, 126 and 127; Sachinis 1991b: 155–156; Sideridou 1990: 1221 and 1222 Stavropoulou 1997: 191 and 195–197; Stergiopoulos 1986a: 125 and 127–128; Varika 2011: 160–161; Vitti 1999: 89–90.

<sup>1</sup> Pharmas 1926: 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 13–14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 145.

marriage, since people can satisfy their sexual needs within such relationships and places”, and thus he asks for the legal prohibition of free unions.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in his *Εγχειρίδιον οικογενειακού δικαίου*, Gregorios Kasimatis states that “the law aims at ‘weeding out’ free union, viewed as threatening the stability of the family cell, so much important for the social life”.<sup>2</sup> To his mind, “‘free union’ (or concubinage), i.e., the long-term union between a man and woman who do not get married but want to live together, appears as a disrespect and a threat to marriage institution, since the law cannot regulate the man and woman’s cohabitation”.<sup>3</sup>

In *Η νύχτα του εκφρολισμού*, the root cause of the breakup of the family unit is, as already seen in the previous section, the dissolution of the marriage.<sup>4</sup> Kostas Vramis’ wife appreciates, admires, and respects her husband, but she has never fallen in love with him. Feeling miserable and trapped in an unhappy marriage, she cannot tolerate her husband anymore and declares that from now on they will not be sexual partners (as Phoivos underlines, ‘character incompatibility’ describes his parents’ relationship).<sup>5</sup> What further reinforces her decision to abandon her husband

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<sup>1</sup> Siskos 1934: 6, 19–20 and 45.

<sup>2</sup> Kasimatis 1939: 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 151–152.

<sup>4</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 19, 36–37, 47 and 65.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 47 and 168. ‘Character incompatibility’ seems to be the reason for the breakdown of Filippos Germalis and his wife marriage (they did not marry for love) in *Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*, and it is because of their upper social background that they do not go on with the legal dissolution of their union. Their hesitation may also be explained on the grounds that the reformed divorce law was passed in 1920, i.e., just three years before the novel’s publication. It is a different case with Aimi (intellectual, 38 years old) in *Γυναίκες*: although she married for love, she decides to end her marriage, since she feels that the enthusiasm and passion linking her with her husband once has faded. Thus, she views divorce as the only way not to hate each other. On the contrary, Dimitra (middlebrow, 35 years old) becomes upset at hearing her sister’s decision and she believes that Aimi will lose her social position and status through her divorce. She further thinks about the social

and to start enjoying her life is their continuous disagreements. Despite the end of their cohabitation, they do not get a divorce immediately. Still, after the abandonment, Kostas Vramis and his son move into a new house, because the previous one, in the abandoned spouse's view, seems too big and evokes negative feelings. As for the Karamalides, they get a divorce, and the wife remarries.

Much as in the case of family disorganisation, marital breakdown may be viewed in light of the ideas expressed in Phoivos Vramis' *Νέα Ηθική*, where Phoivos aims to give a convincing explanation for marriage crisis in his time and to suggest means for the moralisation of marriage.<sup>1</sup> Phoivos strongly believes that apart from family, marriage is amoral too in the sense that, firstly, 90% of couples enter into a marriage of convenience and the partners are not suitable; and secondly, these couples consist of two individuals who are not linked by any strong bond, namely love, affection, friendship, and sexual desirability. Thus, he deems that this amoral cohabitation should cease to exist and be replaced by a moral one. This outcome will be achieved only if marriages are based on love, and only if they are dissolved due to lack of affection and sexual attraction.<sup>2</sup> As a result, moral marriage together with moral family will contribute to children's happiness.

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criticism and fears that her sister's divorce may have an impact on her esteem as well. See Daphni 1923: 149–150; Kazantzaki 1933: 7–8, 16 and 17.

<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1994: 261.

<sup>2</sup> It is against this backdrop that Meropi's intention to marry for love sounds quite promising. Phoivos' views may be regarded as reminiscent of Engels' ideas about the moral and amoral nature of marriage developed in his book "The origin of the family, private property and the state", first published in 1884 and then translated into English in 1902. The German philosopher states that "if marriage founded on love is alone moral, then it follows that marriage is moral only as long as love lasts". An example of amoral marriage that should be dissolved can be found in *Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*, where the husband (Aris Makezinis) not only pursues illicit affairs but also mistreats his wife (Kiara Doxara). After her initial hesitation (she is afraid of society's contempt), she gets a divorce

These views agree with the ideas voiced in “Το πιο μεγάλο πρόβλημα. Εξ’ αφορμής ενός βιβλίου”, where Xenopoulos underscores the increase in divorces and adulterous relationships, and speaks out against marriages of convenience inasmuch so the economic criteria for partner selection do not lay a strong and moral foundation for marriage.<sup>1</sup>

The interest in the short story “Ο γάμος της Αργυρούλας” (*11 π.μ.–1 μ.μ. κι’ άλλα διηγήματα*) lies in the fact that, in the context of the heroine’s arranged marriage, Galateia Kazantzaki takes the opportunity to comment upon self-determination.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Argyroula is forced by her father to marry an older but affluent man because of their economic hardships.<sup>3</sup> Although she compromises on her marriage, at some point feeling upset with her husband who treats her as a childbearing machine, she declares that, from now on, she will act of her own accord.<sup>4</sup> Especially when her husband announces that they will return to his homeland after his retirement, Argyroula, having lived a miserable marital life and

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and remarries. Finally, a perception of marriage as an amoral union appears in *Γυναίκες*, which can be attributed, to an extent, to Galateia Kazantzaki’s left-wing ideology and to her more or less progressive ideas about the relationship(s) between the two genders. Kastrinaki stresses the centrality of the lack of communication, estrangement, and divorce in Kazantzaki’s fiction. See Engels 1902: 99; Kastrinaki 1997: 424 and 429; Kazantzaki 1933: 32–33; Xenopoulos 1984a: 357–361, 371–372 and 427; Xenopoulos 1994: 48.

<sup>1</sup> Xenopoulos 1932: 516.

<sup>2</sup> Kazantzaki 1929c: 136–157. For T. Adamos, Galateia Kazantzaki “decries inhumanity and immoral ‘deals’”. K. Porphyris maintains that the author depicts women’s repression by family. See Adamos 1986: 92; Porphyris 1962: 761.

<sup>3</sup> Kazantzaki 1929c: 137–143 and 145.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 149–150 and 152–156. Here a feminist outcry against the humiliating -for women- ‘exchange’ within marriage leaps to the eye: “in return for a husband’s maintenance, a wife made herself available for sexual intercourse and childbearing”. This objection might also encompass “a demand for recognition” of individuality, “a protest against the idea that women’s bodies existed to service men”, and an aspiration for reform in marital relationships. See Lake 1999: 118 and 121.

feeling deceived (her husband refuses to support her family), terminates her pregnancy and kills herself to take vengeance on him.<sup>1</sup>

By transferring trade practices of the public sphere to the domestic space in *Η πιάτσα*, Nikos Katiforis places marriage within an economic framework and imagines interpersonal relationships as being determined by personal interest with a view to providing a thorough critique of the immorality of bourgeois marriage, as well as of the ‘business-like’ contractual approach to marriage.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, ‘πιάτσα’,

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<sup>1</sup> Kazantzaki 1929c: 146–152 and 155–157. By the same token, in *Γιούγκερμαν*, Voula Papadeli is betrothed to George Mazis, and, for her family, her marriage to him is viewed as a means for overcoming their economic difficulties. It is when her fiancé returns (he was living and studying abroad for a couple of years) that Voula rebels; she states openly that she has regretted her careless youthful behaviour (at the age of fifteen, she and George secretly leave from Mytilene to coerce their families into marrying them), and now being more mature, she has the right to choose her husband freely. But she cannot convince her family. At the end, Voula does not marry George who is looking forward to her final decision, nor her beloved Vasias who asks her father for her hand in marriage, since she dies from tuberculosis. On the other hand, the Sklavoyiannis family’s attempts to marry either Ellen or Ntina to Yugerman, a powerful man, allow M. Karagatsis to comment on upper-middle-class moral standards. In this context, it is worth noting that apart from sexual drives (already examined in the previous chapter), what further features prominently in Karagatsis’ fiction is his critical look at bourgeois mores. It is because of his realistic (and sometimes rough) representations that M. Karagatsis is regarded as a social, sarcastic and moralist writer, whose works suggest a clear breakaway from ethnography. For Dimosthenis Kourtovik, Karagatsis is “the most representative urban-fiction author of the generation of the ’30s”. See Athanasiadis 1981: 24; Berlis 2008a: 272, 273, 287, 294 and 295; Karantonis 1990b: 147 and 151; Kourtovik 2010: 335; Negreponis 1981: 84; Panagiotopoulos 1980b: 179; Paschalis 1985: 405; Savvidis 1981: 143–144. For the Sklavoyiannis family’s attitude and Karagatsis’ critical perspective, see also Bitsiani 2014: 146–147, 150 and 156–157.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Trade-deal’ marriages also appear in *Μυστική φωληρά*, *Αποικιοί*, and *Η ζένη γη*. Liza Fronti (*Μυστική φωληρά*) is in a relationship with Mr. Christostefanou (bank manager) prior to her marriage to Themis Frontis, who marries Liza with a view to promoting his personal interests. Under the terms of the ‘deal’, Liza remains Mr. Christostefanou’s mistress, who in turn will help Mr. Frontis advance his career. Such a depiction of marriage may be viewed as indicative of the activities of the bourgeoisie, mainly featuring in Kokkinos’ fiction. Polly Babi (*Αποικιοί*) treats marriage as a business venture; she considers marrying a wealthy man, although older than her, with a view to gaining her

suggesting the marketplace where various types of transaction are carried out, is personified and depicted as a callous flinty goddess, governing the protagonists' life and interpersonal relationships.<sup>1</sup> Against this backdrop, the moral message underpinning the novel is, according to Petros Spandonidis, that "happiness is a matter of compromise to such an extent that the personal standards fall short of morality".<sup>2</sup> As will be seen, although at first Leonidas and Lela are described as a man who adheres to principles and an honest woman, it finally appears to the reader that they both lack morality.<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that Leonidas and Lela's marriage constitutes a clear case of a 'marriage contract' and a 'trade deal'. Leonidas marries Lela on the condition that he is making a deal with a trader (Mr. Zervos is a shoemaker, and thus Leonidas believes that he is trustworthy) on the one hand, and, as the groom, he gets the

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independence and inheriting his fortune. In the same novel, Menis Thodoras' statement that he married his wife for love is 'open' to doubt, since, after the marriage, his father-in-law gave him 100.000 GBP. Taking stock of the protagonists' treatment of marriage, Takis Papatsonis and Apostolos Sachinis stress the author's intention to touch upon moral issues. Antonis Zacholis (*Η ζένη*) 'barter away' his daughter; Despoula, although in love with her father's apprentice Mitsos Stavrianos, is coerced into marrying Thanasis Farantzios who sells stuff in the marketplace ('παζαριώτης'). For Kostis Papageorgiou, "the thoughts, actions, and aims of people around Despoula are immoral". Let it be mentioned that, in *Οι σκλάβοι στα δεσμά τους* (1922) by Konstantinos Theotokis, the marriage of Evlalia and Aristeidis could be treated as an example of a 'trade-deal' marriage. However, this novel, in comparison with the rest of fictional works, is set in a different context; the deal is arranged between the fallen aristocracy (Ofiomachos) and the newly enriched bourgeoisie (Steriotis). See Hatzivasiliou 1998: 379 and 382; Papageorgiou 1998: 305; Papatsonis 1935: 121; Sachinis 1978: 125.

<sup>1</sup> Katiforis 1930: 171.

<sup>2</sup> Spandonidis 1934: 7.

<sup>3</sup> Katiforis 1930: 24 and 25.

money and possession of the house on the other.<sup>1</sup> Yet, shortly after their marriage, his trust in his father-in-law's honesty is abused: Leonidas gets the money, but not the house, since it is mortgaged, and Mr. Zervos cannot pay off the mortgage.<sup>2</sup>

Besides, what contributes further to the characterisation of Leonidas and Lela's marital bond as a business-like association is the father's and the groom's occupation, which places them within the realm of trade; the former is a shoemaker, whereas the latter is a leather trader.<sup>3</sup> On these grounds, Aristeidis Loukoules, a wealthy American, deduces that Mr. Zervos demonstrated considerable commercial acumen, and his daughter's marriage is nothing else but a 'trade deal';<sup>4</sup> the father is the seller, the groom is the buyer, and the daughter-bride is 'a good for sale'. Basically, through this marriage, the father (shoemaker) does not have to pay for raw materials (i.e., leather) to make shoes, whereas the son-in-law (leather trader), thinking that his father-in-law is acquainted with other shoemakers needing leather too, seizes the chance to expand his customer base.<sup>5</sup>

Such a view about marriage is eloquently depicted in the description of the nuptial contract as being signed on Lela's body, thereby conveying a materialistic

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<sup>1</sup> Katiforis 1930: 36, 99 and 179–180. Lela has first-hand experience of the 'purchase-sale procedure' while working as a cashier at a store. Ibid.: 39–42.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 36 and 179–180.

<sup>3</sup> The description of marriage as a 'business association' ('φάμπρικα') can also be found in *Κρίσις...*. To Stavros' mind, if one faces financial hardship in contemporary society, the only way to overcome these difficulties is a purchase-sale agreement. In other words, both the husband (the seller) and the wife (the 'good for sale') are amenable to arranging a 'trade deal' with another man (the purchaser) to cope with their financial problems. Therefore, the wife becomes the other's man *dame de compagnie*; and if the husband is good-looking too, he may also 'barter' himself. Despite his poverty and misery, Stavros does not adopt this solution; yet his impression is that in his time the purchase-sale agreement is the rule. See Lefkos 1934: 60–63.

<sup>4</sup> Katiforis 1930: 12.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 11 and 12.

approach to human relationships and a perception of the female body as ‘a commodity’.<sup>1</sup> Taking stock of the conditions under which Leonidas and Lela married and seeing economic motivations in this marital ‘alliance’, Mr. Loukoules also raises serious doubts as to the spouses’ pure and true love, clearly implying that the father coerced his daughter to marry the leather trader, an opinion held by Lela as well.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, she believes that their marital union lacks emotional intimacy; although she tried hard to love her husband, she finally realised she cannot feel any love for him, and he himself is a stranger to her, since the only link between them is her husband’s financial needs and her father’s business plans.<sup>3</sup>

The law of the marketplace guides the decisions and the actions of the main protagonists once again when fear for an economic catastrophe and auction arises. Due to these adverse circumstances, both the father and the husband, also considering Aristeidis Loukoules’ fondness for Lela, put forward a strategic plan to exploit him, thereby corrupting marriage; Mr. Zervos and Leonidas (the sellers) suggest to Lela (the ‘good for sale’) that she should become Aristeidis Loukoules’ *dame de compagnie*, assuming that, if Lela accepts to keep him company, he will side with them because of his loneliness.<sup>4</sup> In this way, not only will they overcome their financial difficulties and become wealthy, but also the house will not go under

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<sup>1</sup> Katiforis 1930: 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 25–26 and 197–198. Lack of love and the monotonous spousal life make Lela pursue illicit affairs. At some point, she does not hesitate to reveal her real feelings for her husband and to admit her premarital relationships, as well as her adultery with several men. Ibid.: 25–26, 99, 112–113, 139, 157 and 198–201.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 82, 86, 119 and 130–131.



the hammer.<sup>1</sup> This is undoubtedly a new ‘trade deal’, equating the aforementioned plan with prostitution.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, Lela becomes Loukoules’ *dame de compagnie*, and his considerable sympathy for her brings Lela power; she can either save her father and her husband from the economic disaster or destroy them completely.<sup>3</sup> Lela is finally determined not to act in their best interest; deeply conscious that both her father and her husband view her as ‘a commodity’, she decides to assume the role of the seller and to sell her body without any intermediary, as well as to abandon her father and her husband, get a divorce, and leave with Aristeidis Loukoules for America.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the story, a general truth is confirmed:<sup>5</sup> the marketplace is unpredictable and capricious, and both victimisers and victims, whose role is interchangeable, are faced with the consequences of their choices; Loukoules dies, and none of the protagonists achieves what she/he has dreamed of.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Katiforis 1930: 82.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that a comparison is drawn between Lela and a prostitute, Carolina, is quite indicative of this assumption. Lela on her part characterises herself as a harlot. This equation is also to be found in Melis Nikolaïdis’ novella. Christina Ntounia points out that “female prostitution –a metaphor for the decay of the bourgeois society– was commonplace in fiction of the 1920s”, and “the view commonly held among leftist intellectuals was that literature should contribute to the ‘fraying’ of bourgeois values”. In other words, the ‘commercialisation’ of the female body was engineered towards showing the moral decline of the bourgeoisie. For the issue of female prostitution in fiction of the 1920s, see Despoina Bischinioti’s *Σεξουαλικότητα, σχέσεις εξουσίας και σωματικές εν-γραφές σε πεζά λογοτεχνικά κείμενα της δεκαετίας του 1920*. See Bischinioti 2015; Katiforis 1930: 90–91 and 98; Nikolaïdis n.d.: 66 and 74; Ntounia 1999: 45; Papaïoannou 1986: ια’.

<sup>3</sup> Katiforis 1930: 80–82, 99–100, 183 and 204.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 102, 134, 187 and 205.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 129, 206 and 217.

<sup>6</sup> Apart from *H πιάτσα*, his collections of short stories *Όσο κρατάει το σκοτάδι* (1929) and *Ο άρχοντας κι άλλα διηγήματα* (1945), his novels *Η διχτατορία του Σατανά* (1935) and *Ο καρχαρίας και τα εννέα κύματα* (1965), as well as his play *Οι λύκοι και τα πρόβατα* (1931), belong to the left-wing literary

Before moving to Melis Nikolaïdis' (1892/1893–1979) *Ο άνθρωπος που επούλησε τη γυναίκα του*, which shows marked similarities with *Η πιάτσα*, some brief remarks must be made. The family's economic hardships depicted in *Η πιάτσα* are, according to Epaminondas Baloumis, “indicative of the decline of traditional artisanship because of industrial development”, and, within this context, the author, an advocate of socialism, decided to depict familial and spousal relationships as a ‘trade deal’.<sup>1</sup> Essentially, Nikos Katiforis intended to show that the bourgeoisie, which is about to collapse, devises various means to survive.<sup>2</sup> And it is because of the authorial intention that “the economic analysis prevails in the text”.<sup>3</sup>

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tradition; and as such, they point to the author's social concerns and ideological beliefs. It is important to note here that Dimosthenis Voutyras, Kostantinos Hatzopoulos, Konstantinos Theotokis, Kostas Paroritis, as well as Russian and Scandinavian authors, had a profound influence on Katiforis, who interweaves reality and symbolism in his works with a view to representing his ideas. See Argyriou 1992: 11, 14 and 18.

<sup>1</sup> Baloumis 1996: 291; Nikolaïdis 1967: 539. This view of the bourgeoisie's fall and the fondness for socialism are expressed by Petros, one of the male characters in the book. See Katiforis 1930: 28.

<sup>2</sup> Argyriou 1992: 14–15. Petros Spandonidis views Katiforis' fictional characters as “‘humanised arguments’ (‘ανθρωποποιημένα επιχειρήματα’) showing that the bourgeois regime is a regime of purchase-sale” (i.e., “money corrupts”), whereas Napoleon Lapathiotis entertains the view that “the author depicts social misery and injustice”. Katiforis' view on this social class could also explain the unhappy and failed marriage of Lela's parents. The wife (Angeliki) attributes her unhappiness to selecting the wrong partner. Considering the economic difficulties the family is faced with, she believes that, if she had married the doctor who had asked her father for her hand in marriage, her life would have been better. The primary reason for the marriage suffering strain is the wife's refusal to give her consent for selling the house she inherited from her father. There comes a time when the wife admits that she has never loved her husband and has cheated on him, and she also assents to mortgage the house on the condition that her lover can visit her. The husband, as expected, feels humiliated, and describes her as a nasty woman. As a matter of fact, even when his wife is about to die, he does not show her any mercy, and he is glad to hear that his wife's lover killed himself. See Katiforis 1930: 48–50, 59–60, 64–70, 74–77, 106, 118 and 138; Lapathiotis 1930: 79; Spandonidis 1934: 7 and 8.

<sup>3</sup> Baloumis 1996: 292; Sachinis 1978: 36. Hints of an economic perspective on legal unions and illicit affairs are also evident in *Ο άνθρωπος που έχασε τον εαυτό του*, where the bourgeois

Much as in the case of *Η πιάσσα*, in Nikolaïdis' novella *Ο άνθρωπος που επούλησε τη γυναίκα του*, the narrative, as the title suggests, develops around an unprecedented negotiation, allowing insights into the interplay between 'commerce' and domestic relationships; the husband concedes his wife to a wealthy man who in return supports him financially.<sup>1</sup> In the book's prologue, the author discloses that, although the story contains both real and made-up facts, the turn of events in real life finally justified the power of imagination.<sup>2</sup> To put it differently, the story may

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protagonist views marriage as a 'general partnership' and extramarital intercourse as 'spousal smuggling', governed by laws of economics as well. Generally, in his novel, Petros Pikros provides a critique of the bourgeois society with a view to shedding light on its moral decay and selfish tactics. It is tempting to note that this book continues the story of the German silent science fiction film *Frau im Mond* (*Woman in the Moon*) that was directed by the German bourgeois director Fritz Lang and premiered on October 15, 1929. After watching the movie ("UFA Palace", Syntagma Square), Petros Pikros writes a novel that denounces bourgeois ideology and art. For Anastasios-Milanos Stratigopoulos, *Ο άνθρωπος που έχασε τον εαυτό του*, compared to the trilogy *Χαμένα κορμιά*, *Σα θα γίνουμε άνθρωποι*, and *Τουμπεκί*, goes one step further: the main protagonists belong to the bourgeoisie, and, as a result, the author's leftist ideology becomes even more apparent. See Baloumis 1996: 283; Bartzis 2006: 122–123; Charis 1968b: 172; Lumen 1930: 2; Pikros n.d.: 37–39; Sachinis 1978: 45. For *Ο άνθρωπος που έχασε τον εαυτό του*, see also Bitsiani 2014: 22–42 and 153–154.

<sup>1</sup> Nikolaïdis n.d. For Antis Pernaris, "upon being confronted with difficulties, the hero does not remain calm: first, he loses his self-confidence, then his faith in society, and finally his faith in his wife". The way humans cover their basic needs is "the primary meaning of civilisation". See Pernaris 1980: 111 and 112.

<sup>2</sup> Nikolaïdis n.d.: 4 and 5. According to Yiannis Hatzinis, Nikolaïdis has the tendency to describe "critical psychological moments", a pattern George Perastikos and Charis Petros comment on as well. For Kypros Chrysanthis, the novella is concerned with the "inner moral suffering, with the dramatic factor evident in the oddities around which the narrative develops". Antis Pernaris on his part claims that "the mocking irony, although prevalent throughout the narrative, does not hold up the domestic drama to ridicule". See Charis 1981b: 79; Chrysanthis 1986: 14; Hatzinis 1970: 338; Perastikos 1939: 14; Pernaris 1980: 111.

seem unbelievable yet it is real, thereby reinforcing the plausibility of the narrated events.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas marries Mary, a good, adorable, and loyal wife, and they live a merry life until they are confronted with serious financial pressures, caused by unforeseen financial circumstances. More specifically, the lack of demand and the drop in the price of Thomas' stored merchandise clearly points to the Stock Market Crash, whose signs and consequences became apparent in Greece as well, and to the crisis of capitalism in the sense that "the international capitalism collapsed", as Mark Mazower notes, "most emphatically in 1931".<sup>2</sup>

On behalf of Mr. Wilson, a wealthy English landowner and notorious womaniser, Sofia (the rich man's housekeeper) suggests to Mary that she should leave her husband and live with Mr. Wilson.<sup>3</sup> For his part, Mr. Wilson prefers a consensual agreement to marriage.<sup>4</sup> Particularly, he seems willing to dower her and give expensive and generous gifts to her parents.<sup>5</sup> Of course, after this generous provision, the woman will move into his villa, become the housewife, and will lead a comfortable life next to him.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the titles of his fictional works, it could be inferred that the literary output of the Cypriot writer, editor and publisher who lived in Greece is divided into two periods: the works that came out between 1928 and the Second World War are representative examples of social-psychological fiction; whereas those published from the Occupation by Axis forces onwards betray the author's turn to Christianity. Despite any differences, his literary production as a whole is marked by a spirit of compassion and humanism. See Chrysanthis 1986: 13–15; Chrysanthis 1991; Pernaris 1980: 109–110 and 112.

<sup>2</sup> Mazower 1991: 294–295; Nikolaïdis n.d.: 4, 18 and 19–21; Papadimitriou 2012: 9–10.

<sup>3</sup> Nikolaïdis n.d.: 10, 13 and 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

At first, Thomas is furious with Mr. Wilson's proposal and he wonders how the man dared to put forward such an outrageous suggestion, concluding that it may be because of his wife's behaviour that the wealthy Englishman had the audacity to make such a proposal.<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite initial indignation, their son's illness and their inability to pay for the treatment lead Mary and Thomas to welcome the proposal.<sup>2</sup> In a short time, Thomas is haunted by the decision to accept the offer, he is filled with disgust for his wife, and he asks her to leave the Englishman's house.<sup>3</sup> Still, Mary does not comply, and it seems that both Mr. Wilson and she harbour positive feelings for each other.<sup>4</sup> At the end, they all seem contented with the new 'status quo' and live a merry 'family' life: Thomas and Mr. Wilson become business partners and friends, while Mr. Wilson exclusively takes care of Nikos and invites Thomas to live with them.<sup>5</sup> Thomas on his part gives his blessing and urges Wilson and Mary to express their fondness openly.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, one is tempted to assume that once again, the bourgeoisie sacrifices morality to survive.

The conventionality of marital relationships holds centre stage in Kosmas Politis' (1888–1974) *Λεμονοδάσος* (1930), with the narrative focusing on the love story of the main protagonists, Pavlos Apostolou and Virgo Drosinou.<sup>7</sup> What seems to act as

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<sup>1</sup> Nikolaïdis n.d.: 17, 21 and 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 32–34 and 38–41.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 48–50 and 74–75.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 76–80.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 99, 101–103 and 107.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 108.

<sup>7</sup> Politis 1930. While *Λεμονοδάσος* may appear to be an old-fashioned love story at first sight, it unfolds in a modern setting. Particularly, the novel depicts the carefree life of the upper middle class of the author's time, while also discussing ontological issues. Apart from the evident themes of nature, youth, and love, it is the deployment of different styles and writing techniques, clear proof of Kosmas Politis' cosmopolitanism, that also leaps to the eye. For Maria Kakavoulia, "*Λεμονοδάσος*

a deterrent to their marriage is Pavlos' strong desire to protect their ideal love from daily routine, as well as his clear aversion to marriage, viewed as a conventional relationship.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to his beloved Virgo who feels committed to the conventions of her social class –she prefers, as Antonis Dekavalles underlines, the kind of love acknowledged by the Church– Pavlos expresses his concerns and thoughts.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, he firmly believes that, if they get married, their marriage will kill their love because the drab monotony of everyday life will make them unhappy and they will hardly remember the intense feelings they once experienced. On these grounds, although they get engaged, Pavlos finally abandons Virgo and leaves far away. One day he is informed about the marriage of Virginia

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can be associated with modernist practices of writing. Yet, it cannot be classified as an interior-monologue text because it is still presented as written memoir or as written autobiography". On the contrary, "despite its explicit self-presentation as written memoir and/or final presence of a fictional editor", Mario Vitti regards *Λεμονοδάσος* as an interior-monologue piece of writing. Much as in the case of *Λεμονοδάσος*, in *Εκάπη*, the author's intention is, according to George Kallinis, to undermine the conventions of realist fiction. In light of the above, the first books of one of the most important writers of the generation of the '30s not only suggested a breakaway from the deep pessimism that marked the first interwar decade but also contributed to the renewal of modern Greek fiction. See Anagnostaki 1993: 261 and 262; Baloumis 1996: 394; Kakavoulia 1997: 138 and 139; Kallinis 2001: 264–299; Theotokas 2002: 54; Vitti 2012: 303, 325, 327 and 332; Vitti 2016: 408–409. For *Λεμονοδάσος*, see also Bitsiani 2014: 55–57, 58 and 154.

<sup>1</sup> A predilection for 'free union' might lurk behind this dislike for marital bonds. Angela Kastrinaki on her part holds that, in *Λεμονοδάσος*, the author puts forward two suggestions, inconsistent with each other: "the moralisation of love (love has degraded into carnal desire)" and "the rejection of conventionality". It is against this backdrop that Pavlos at some point "dreams of a love outside the law". This preference for "an absolute unconventional exclusive sexual life unbounded by any social obligations and restrictions" is also stressed by Andreas Karantonis and Antonis Dekavalles. Panagiotis Moullas emphasises the author's perception of 'romance' ('έρωτας') as tantamount to love ('αγάπη'). See Dekavalles 1974: 179; Karantonis 1990c: 167; Kastrinaki 2010: 390–391; Moullas 1989: 22–23.

<sup>2</sup> Dekavalles 1974: 179; Politis 1930: 214–217.

Drosinou with the well-known merchant Andreas Kotsonitis. Considering the heroine's partner selection, Angela Kastrinaki comments upon Virgo's decision:

after the end of the love story, Virgo makes the most conventional choice: she marries a rich but a bit tame bourgeois, and, as a result, she loses the reader's respect: the young maiden desired nothing else but the conventional marriage, and since her first partner selection was wrong, any affluent man is regarded as an eligible groom.<sup>1</sup>

In “*Η ξεπάρθενη*”, the reasons for the ill-fated marriage, as well as the wife's reaction to the marital misfortune, are of considerable interest.<sup>2</sup> The marriage of Katina's parents is neither happy nor successful, causing the misery of the once adorable and kind-hearted wife: the husband always reviles and humiliates her, and therefore, her life has become a torture.<sup>3</sup> Besides, not only does the husband frequent prostitutes and sexually abuse a domestic servant, but his mistress also moves into their house.<sup>4</sup> Even though she feels offended, the wife on her part neither

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<sup>1</sup> Kastrinaki 2010: 223. According to Angela Kastrinaki, the author's view about conventional spousal relationships is fully developed in his next novel *Εκάτη* (1933), where “the opening scene illustrates the marital life of Pavlos Kalanis and Anna: the former is a prominent astrophysicist, absorbed in his readings, whereas the latter is committed to her household tasks”. This scene could be regarded as not only typical of their twelve-year connubial life, but also holding no promise of any change in the future. Considering the nature of Pavlos and Anna's marriage, one is led to assume that “Pavlos Apostolou and Virgo Drosinou's ideal love would follow the same path towards conventionality, if they decided to get married”. Under this aspect, “*Εκάτη* may be regarded as a sequel to *Λεμονοδάσος*”. Ibid.: 351–352.

<sup>2</sup> Let it be noted that Lilika Nakou had a traumatic first-hand experience of unhappy and dissolved marriage, since her parents got a divorce on the grounds of ‘character incompatibility’ and ‘infidelity’ on the husband's part. See Ieronymidi 1974: 93; Nakas 1979: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Nakou 1937b: 16, 23 and 38.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 17, 39 and 69.

abandons him nor asks for a divorce, since she wants to avoid social criticism.<sup>1</sup> So, although they do not tolerate each other (in fact, they hate each other), they stay in a failed marriage.<sup>2</sup> The reader is invited to assume that, apart from her weakness and the fear for society's contempt, the fact that her first marriage also ended in divorce –the reasons for this marital failure are not stated– might play a role in her decision not to sue for a divorce once again.<sup>3</sup>

In *Παραστρατημένοι*, Lilika Nakou's judgemental view of marriage is confirmed through Kostas Kimonidis' partner selection.<sup>4</sup> Kostas is a Greek journalist who consents to an arranged marriage with Betty, a girl coming from an affluent family. As expected, this marriage of convenience will contribute to his upward socio-economic mobility, since Betty's uncle is the owner of "Κήρυξ" ("Herald"), a Greek newspaper, and he wants Kostas to be the newspaper's director. To cap all that, the

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<sup>1</sup> Nakou 1937b: 69 and 70. As expected, nanny Kontylo views divorce as a sin, let alone getting a divorce while having children. Contrary to what Katina's mother believes, Sotiris Rovias (*Παραστρατημένοι*) expresses the opinion that Athenian society is tolerant to divorces, giving the impression that divorces are common in Athens in the interwar years. In the same vein, Flora Athanasopoulou (*Τλιγγος*), trapped in an unsatisfactory marriage and conducting an extramarital affair (with a married man), does not seem to have second thoughts about divorcing her husband. *Ibid.*: 38; Kokkinos 1932: 316 and 318; Nakou 1935: 66.

<sup>2</sup> Nakou 1937b: 29, 40 and 51.

<sup>3</sup> Another failed marriage can also be found in *Παραστρατημένοι* where the lack of mutual love and infidelity seem to contribute to the marital breakdown, evident from the very beginning of the narrative. The strongest proof of the wife's unfaithfulness is the fact that her son is the fruit of her illicit affair. The betrayed husband, although aware of his wife's passion, is reluctant to end their unhappy marriage, since he loves his wife dearly; and it is because Sotiris moves into their house that Gregorios decides to leave, as he cannot bear to live under the same roof with his wife's lover. Nitsa and Gregorios' marital bond is finally legally dissolved only when the latter asks for a divorce so he can remarry. See Nakou 1935: 13, 14, 32, 65, 137–139, 148 and 264–265.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 412 and 414.



bride brings a large dowry, and the uncle intends to give millions of drachmas to his niece's husband.<sup>1</sup>

As briefly noted in the previous section, marriage crisis is central to the plot of *Το σταυροδρόμι*: Alekos and Aspasia marry for love, but their marital bond fails.<sup>2</sup> More particularly, despite his warm feelings and sexual possessiveness, Alekos' passionate interest in politics becomes obsessive and as he allows himself to be completely absorbed in his duties, Aspasia has an extramarital affair with Nikos Lazarou, her husband's cousin and best friend.<sup>3</sup> The tragic irony lies in the fact that Alekos who is a strong proponent of monogamy and deeply respects both his wife and the bond linking them, is cheated on.<sup>4</sup>

Focusing on Alekos Parnis' public and private life, Konstantinos A. Dimadis deduces that, in Thanasis Petsalis' fiction, "a bourgeois may be regarded as successful or failed with respect to specific social criteria, namely education, career/social recognition, and marriage".<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Alekos, whose tripod of life is his wife, his children, and his career, succeeds in his public life and fails in his personal

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<sup>1</sup> For Nikolaos Kalamaris, "Kostas Kimonidis is a man cherishing his ambitions". Following N. Kalamaris, Loula Ieronymidi states that "Kostas Kimonidis is hard-headed, and he has never fallen in love with Alexandra" with whom he was associated prior to his marriage. See Ieronymidi 1974: 114; Kalamaris 1935: 6.

<sup>2</sup> For *Το σταυροδρόμι*, see also Bitsiani 2014: 90–93, 94 and 155.

<sup>3</sup> Petsalis 1934: 112, 117, 121, 137, 145, 172, 184, 194–196 and 198.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 109. One has only to remember here Aimilios Chourmouzos' view (briefly mentioned in the chapter "Family and bio-medical discourse") that Alekos Parnis' marital misfortune is attributed to his effort to combine two incompatible philosophies, namely materialism and idealism. On his part, Tellos Agras points out that "Aspasia's adultery is the most real incident in Alekos' life". Finally, Petros Charis stresses the centrality of Alekos' failed marriage in Petsalis' narrative. See Agras 1936: 845; Charis 1934b: 763–764; Chourmouzos 1979e: 142–143.

<sup>5</sup> Dimadis 2004: 251.

relationships.<sup>1</sup> To put it differently, he is a successful politician but a cheated and unfortunate spouse, and thus, he may be regarded as an example of a failed bourgeois. The concurrence of his appointment to the Ministry of Transport and his wife's adultery cannot be treated as pure coincidence in that his political success makes his personal misfortune seem more striking.<sup>2</sup> Although both private and public success are the prerequisites for a successful life, it seems that a merry marital life, compared to great successes in politics, is more important to Alekos, since for him the main source of happiness in life is his wife; whereas his successful political career is of secondary significance.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, the dissolution of their spousal bond comes as a shock.

His initial thoughts about his wife's infidelity are indicative of the moral code associated with his social class. Alekos feels embarrassed and is afraid that Athenian society might learn about his "marital misfortune, a quite common story with very common consequences".<sup>4</sup> Indeed, despite the repeated attempts of both his mother and his mother-in-law to sway him by asking him to forgive Aspasia and save their marriage, Alekos cannot overlook his wife's infidelity;<sup>5</sup> thus, he stands firm in his decision to dissolve their marriage and devotes himself to his political ambitions. It seems that his wife's illicit affair disappoints Alekos who was sure

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1933: 227.

<sup>2</sup> Petsalis 1934: 149 and 173–174. Apostolos Sachinis claims that "the depiction of Alekos' marital failure is more vivid than his successful career in politics". See Sachinis 1992: 27–28.

<sup>3</sup> For Julien D. Payen, "satisfaction on the job" and "satisfaction in the marital or familial environment are two criteria of self-fulfillment", with the latter being viewed as more significant in that marital breakdown heightens "a sense of loss and isolation, if not desolation". See Payne 1989: 110.

<sup>4</sup> Petsalis 1934: 197 and 198.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 188–191, 198–199, 212, 215–218, 224–225, 232 and 239.

about their mutual spousal fidelity and devotion which was based on love for their children.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, adultery, compared to the happy moments of the past, brings him deep sorrow and weighs more heavily on his mind.<sup>2</sup> Although Alekos and Aspasia live separately (Alekos departs from the house and rents a room, while Aspasia and Nikos keep meeting each other in secret), they do not get a divorce, and society seems to have implicitly accepted their unconventional way of living.<sup>3</sup> Only after Alekos' death is their marriage dissolved, and Aspasia marries Nikos.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, it should be emphasised that this marital failure becomes even more apparent when compared to the happy marriage of Alekos' parents. Indeed, Maria and Petros have managed to overcome any threats to their marital felicity, and, though they have been married for many years, their love is absolute and lasting.<sup>5</sup> Here one is tempted to suppose that, since Petros and Maria's successful marriage is pre-war, whereas Alekos and Aspasia's is interwar, marriage crisis is a sign of the interwar period.<sup>6</sup> At this point, Maria's view that "every time humanity is faced with

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<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1934: 173.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 173–174 and 239.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 217, 219 and 220.

<sup>4</sup> Petsalis 1935: 32 and 45.

<sup>5</sup> Petsalis 1933: 196 and 197.

<sup>6</sup> This impression is further strengthened upon coming across George Perros and Eleni Grizoti's interwar marriage (*Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*). Although they marry for love, their marriage fails. Eleni, on becoming acquainted with her husband's friends and joining their social circle within which cheating is quite a common occurrence, pursues casual intimacies. Besides, marital failure is justified on the grounds that both George and Eleni have not tried enough to make their marriage work. Finally, George not only works hard and makes frequent business trips but also seems coldly indifferent to his wife and flirts with other women. What clearly suggests the breach of relations between husband and wife is the vain attempt by their parents to persuade them to save their marriage for the sake of their son (they ignore the root cause of the marital breakdown and believe that marital discord is owed to 'character incompatibility', and the uncovering of Eleni's 'secret life'). Eleni assumes full responsibility for their failed marriage, intends to apply for a divorce and departs from the house.

a crisis (“κατάπτωση”), marriage institution loosens, and societies are filled with the fear of disorganisation” is also of great significance.<sup>1</sup> If this is the case, marriage crises and panic about social disorder are to be expected in the transitional interwar period.

Much as in the case of family disorganisation, the marriage dissolution in *Κρίσις...* could be attributed to the crisis of the era; the wife complains constantly about their appalling living conditions, and she becomes increasingly indifferent to her husband.<sup>2</sup> Stavros on his part, to an extent, justifies his wife’s grumbling and negative attitude towards him.<sup>3</sup> However, once, he beats her up due to the continuous sexual abstinence.<sup>4</sup> Feeling his wife is on the verge of leaving from the house, Stavros admits that he will not be shocked if she finally decides to abandon him, given their misery, quarrels, and broken relationship.<sup>5</sup> The interest lies in the fact that, in his opinion, the abandonment on his wife’s part may be treated as a common phenomenon of the time, since many spouses, even though they have children, abandon their homes.<sup>6</sup> At first, Stavros seems to be against the idea of divorce, because they have a child, and he believes that he must stand by his wife and daughter.<sup>7</sup> However, he steadily views his wife as a burden and he tries to find a

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This admission of guilt is repeated once more at the end of the novel, where Eleni voices the opinion that both she and George are responsible for the marriage dissolution, but mainly she herself is burdened with this responsibility. See Petsalis 1939: 55, 73, 75–78, 80, 84–86, 88, 90–103 and 164–165.

<sup>1</sup> Petsalis 1933: 211.

<sup>2</sup> Lefkos 1934: 11 and 37–41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 27–28.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 96, 113, 135–137 and 167–169.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 96.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 45.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 113.

way to get rid of her;<sup>1</sup> he eventually abandons any plans. At the end, his feeling is confirmed: his wife and daughter leave the house and abandon him, and, even though they do not apply for a divorce because of lack of money, their marriage is practically dissolved.<sup>2</sup>

What merits a mention here is the fact that marriages fraught with a lack of effective communication and understanding hold centre stage in Lefkos' fiction, and married public servants –Lefkos himself was a civil servant as well– are cast as the leading male characters in his novella *Σε πόλεμο με τον εαυτό μου* (1932) as well as in his novel *Συλλογή από μαχαίρια* (1970).<sup>3</sup> Yet, no doubt, it is the novel *Κρίσις...* that bears the stamp of its era. This assumption is further justified on the grounds that although the length of time between the publication of *Σε πόλεμο με τον εαυτό μου* and *Κρίσις...* is insignificant, the latter is designed and viewed as an extreme version of the former.<sup>4</sup>

Examples of failed marriages are also provided in Terzakis' *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών* and *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*. In the first novel, what clearly suggests the failure of Martha and Petros Lampitis' marriage is the lack of love and tenderness between them; once they loved each other very much, but now it is obvious that, though they are parents to a little girl, their bond has been destroyed (as already

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<sup>1</sup> Lefkos 1934: 146–152.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 148. Let it be stressed that Eirini and Stavros married for reasons other than love. Stavros believes that there was a deceit in his wife's thoughts, intentions, and actions: although he had no considerable wealth nor any qualifications and certificates, his spouse flung herself at him and sought to marry him. To his mind, her miserable life at her aunt and three cousins' home (she was an orphan) and the change in her behaviour after their marriage (she was kind and affectionate at first) are incontestable evidence of her deception. Stavros on his part married his wife to meet his sexual needs. Ibid.: 11–13, 36–37 and 45.

<sup>3</sup> Daskalopoulos 1992: 201 and 206.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 196 and 202.

mentioned, Petros conducts an affair with his daughter's nanny).<sup>1</sup> Martha, although offended, tries to appear indifferent to her husband's adultery and does not react at all.<sup>2</sup> However, this indifference, in her view, is more painful.<sup>3</sup> The fragility of their marriage is confirmed when the nanny runs away with Stefanos Skliros with whom she is also involved.<sup>4</sup> Their departure prompts Petros' blind passion for the young nanny to manifest; not only does he feel madly jealous, but he also avenges the couple by revealing their hiding place to the lawyer of Foteini Sklirou.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the spousal relationship is deteriorating, and both Martha and Petros become estranged once and for all.

Before proceeding with the next novel, I should briefly comment on the betrayed wife's reaction to her husband's infidelity. It is not pure coincidence that Martha decides to talk with Foteini Sklirou about her spouse's extramarital affair and asks for her psychological support and advice; Foteini Sklirou was repeatedly cheated on by her husband as well.<sup>6</sup> In Mrs Sklirou's mind, Martha should behave in accordance with her upper-class background and with a view to preserving her dignity.<sup>7</sup> In other words, although Martha suffers and feels insulted by her husband's behaviour, she should handle his adultery with patience, calmness, and rationality.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 35 and 37. For *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, see also Bitsiani 2014: 67.

<sup>2</sup> Terzakis 1934a: 37.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 149.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 163–165.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 36.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 36 and 37. Similarly, the husband's adultery destroys the marital bond in *Αποικιοί*. Dimitris, attributing his restlessness to his traumatic childhood, admits that the stability and the harmony of his

In *H Μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, the spouses' different personalities and contrasting views on life partly account for the failure of Meletis Malvis and Olga Velmeri's marriage. On the one hand, Meletis is overemotional and he naively thinks that his love and kindness will soften his wife's cold heart.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Olga is not only unsentimental and coldly indifferent to her husband but also persists in keeping him at a distance.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, she hurts him deeply, and, though they live together, Meletis feels that there is an unbridgeable gap between them.<sup>3</sup> What further threatens their fragile bond is the arrival of a 'cousin' from Egypt with whom Olga, feeling miserable in her family and marital life, has a pleasurable time.<sup>4</sup> Being a woman who loves money, travelling, and glory, she decides without hesitation to flee and follow her 'cousin' Hatzinaoum.<sup>5</sup> Her decision to walk out on her marriage and abandon both her husband and children clearly suggests her lack

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familial and marital life make him feel so melancholic that he wants to seek out adventures, and he grows weary of being virtuous and perfect. For these reasons, although his wife is the paragon of wifedom and motherhood, Dimitris pursues illicit affairs. His intimacy with Myrto is the most serious and passionate. Corrina becomes aware of her husband's affair with Myrto and gets jealous, while Dimitris grabs at the opportunity to express openly his feelings and thoughts: he loves his wife like a mother or sister, and he wants to break free from her in order not to hate her. After this revelation, Corrina, from an upper-class background, and wanting to preserve her dignity, leaves and asks her husband not to reveal the real reason for the dissolution of their marriage. For Takis Papatsonis, Floros "paints a portrait of a society deprived of moral grounds to such an extent that it fails to respect the institution of family, the basis on which society is founded". The fact that Floros stresses moral issues in his novel is also mentioned by Apostolos Sachinis. See Floros 1934: 9–10, 28–30, 41, 43, 48, 52, 118–119, 127, 146, 163 and 167; Papatsonis 1935: 121; Sachinis 1978: 125.

<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 47.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 47 and 48.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 48.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 51 and 52.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 42 and 53.

of a decent family education.<sup>1</sup> Let it be stressed that, aside from the wife's leaving, the couple's divorce legally confirms the marriage dissolution.<sup>2</sup>

Marital relationships in George Theotokas' *Αργώ* deserve special mention since they take centre stage in the narrative.<sup>3</sup> In light of the fact that 'fidelity' is one of the cornerstones of marriage, Theophilos Notaras' view on spousal loyalty is of considerable importance. Once, he happens to visit a famous prostitute.<sup>4</sup> Upon realising that Gabriella was wearing a wedding ring –her husband had abandoned her, and thus, she was forced to work as a prostitute– Theophilos is stunned and does not sleep with her. By refusing sexual intimacy with a married woman, Theophilos, who has been lecturing at the university about the legal obligation to mutual fidelity, shows that he was acting upon his teachings and beliefs.<sup>5</sup> Although he holds fidelity in high regard, Theophilos fails in his marital life.

Arguably, the marriage of Theophilos Notaras and Sofia Lampropoulou is doomed to failure, since the latter enters the marriage for reasons other than love; Sofia comes from a poor low-status family, whereas Theophilos has an upper-middle-class background, considerable wealth, and a great reputation.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Sofia's

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<sup>1</sup> Terzakis 1937: 50.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 29 and 54.

<sup>3</sup> For Yi-ling Ru, "conflicts between husbands and wives constitute another central aspect of the family novel". See Ru 1992: 87. For *Αργώ*, see also Bitsiani 2014: 119–120, 121–122, 127, 128 and 156.

<sup>4</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 186–187. Getting a divorce is, according to Gabriella, "affluent people's privilege". Ibid.: 186.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 188.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.: 20–21. Another example of a marriage of convenience in *Αργώ* is that of Pavlos Skinas (a social climber and opportunist politician) and Olga, who have –according to Theotokas– a central place in the narrative (For Nikos Makris, "opportunism and love are key features of Theotokas' fiction"). Striving to break into the upper class and dominate the political scene, Pavlos marries Olga;



parents, relatives, and friends, who believe that her marriage with Theophilos Notaras is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, coerce her into marrying him.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the economic consideration on Sofia's part, Theophilos' attitude also plays a significant role in marital failure. Although Theophilos loves his wife, he dedicates himself to his professional tasks and teaching duties to such an extent that he sacrifices his marital happiness.<sup>2</sup> Sofia, for whom not even motherhood (she is the mother of three boys) is an adequate source of comfort, withers in the stuffy and heavy atmosphere of the house.<sup>3</sup> As a result, after ten years of marriage, Sofia, ignoring her social position and her husband's family name and social status, leaves her family and runs off with Girolamo Senigaglia, an Italian opportunist.<sup>4</sup> Her decision to put an end to her misery and start afresh is further confirmed by the legal dissolution of the marriage.

One is invited to remember here Alekos Parnis. Much as in the case of Petsalis' protagonist, Theophilos Notaras is a failed bourgeois too in terms of success and

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her social and economic status, as well as her beauty, will contribute to his social standing and prestige. The strongest indication of his cynicism is the fact that, even when his wife, feeling disappointed and driven by her need to love and to be loved, pursues illicit affairs, and they both live apart for a while, he is not willing to get a divorce, thereby sacrificing the social and economic benefits that stem from his marriage. Thus, they do not reveal the real reason for their separation, and rumour has it that they separate on the grounds of 'character incompatibility'. The quality of the spousal relationship is established at the end of the novel: Pavlos and Olga finally reconcile with each other, and the former legally recognises the child born out of the latter's illicit affair with Nikiphoros Notaras. Society, however, is aware that Pavlos' son is, in fact, the last offspring of the Notaras family. See Makris 1986: 118–123; Theotokas 1936a: 68–80, 106, 179, 182, 189–193, 380, 463 and 465; Theotokas 1939: 22. For Pavlos Skinas and his marriage to Olga, see also Bitsiani 2014: 124, 125, 129 and 156.

<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 21–23 and 126–127.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 23–24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: 24–25.

failure in the public and private sphere respectively;<sup>1</sup> although he is a successful Professor of Law, thanks to whom the Notarades' dynasty reaches the peak of its glory, he is a failed husband: he cannot make his wife happy, and she abandons him.

It should be noted that their unsuccessful marriage has a profound impact on their first-born son Nikiphoros Notaras in that it causes him a deep sorrow and is the root cause of his disbelief in love, the relationships between the two genders, and marriage.<sup>2</sup> Not only does he keep the women he loves at a distance, but he is also unwilling to live a life based on love. Besides, he is under the impression that there is something morbid in the relationship between the genders, which can diminish his vitality, break his heart, and poison his whole life. His attitude towards marriage is so negative that he cannot even imagine himself ever getting married. Clearly, these views are reminiscent of Theotokas' thoughts about hypocrisy in the relationships between the two genders expressed in his article “Φιλική συζήτηση”, where he also stresses the need for their improvement.<sup>3</sup>

Theotokas' talk of honesty in and reform of mixed-gender relationships is also echoed by the unsuccessful and unhappy marriage of Morpho Delatolla and Manolis Skyrianos. Morpho constitutes the “bone of contention” between two friends, Alexis Notaras and Manolis Skyrianos. Due to her ambivalent feelings for Alexis in the sense that she is both attracted and repulsed by him, she decides to marry to Manolis in the end.<sup>4</sup> Yet her feelings for Alexis still seem to be strong, and, as a result, she cannot express her love and tenderness for her husband and come closer to him; thus

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<sup>1</sup> Dimadis 2004: 251.

<sup>2</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 89–90.

<sup>3</sup> Theotokas 1930c.

<sup>4</sup> Morpho's ambivalence features prominently in *Αργώ*. See Theotokas 1939: 22.

their relationship is based on silent compromises on a mutual basis.<sup>1</sup> However, divorce is regarded undesirable by both, as Morpho has some affection for her husband and is afraid of being alone, while Manolis loves his wife, tries to satisfy her desires, and he would also be devastated in the event of their separation.<sup>2</sup>

The final blow to their fragile relationship is dealt by Alexis Notaras' manuscripts describing his love for a woman who is no other than Morpho –it was Loukia Notara, Alexis' aunt, that gave Manolis her nephew's manuscripts and asked him to publish them.<sup>3</sup> On this revelation of the truth, Morpho decides to cancel her trip with her husband to Olympia, to abandon him and to leave for Geneva. Her letter is quite revealing of her thoughts and feelings.<sup>4</sup> Morpho acknowledges that her husband tried hard to make her happy, while on her part, she strove unsuccessfully to love him. For all their common efforts, they were neither happy nor likely to achieve happiness in future. Therefore, she decides not to return; she makes it clear that she does not intend to love another man or remarry, and somehow admits her love for Alexis.

Before moving to the concluding remarks of the present subsection, I wish to draw attention to the representation of female adultery in *Κορφιάτικες ιστορίες*, where Theotokis, by making honour, shame, and revenge an important part of his tales, explores, as J. M. Q. Davies notes, “their complex controlling influence on marital relationships”.<sup>5</sup> Particularly, the short story “Πίστομα” (first published in *I Techni* in 1899) “shows the implacable workings of the honour code and the

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<sup>1</sup> Theotokas 1936a: 436–437 and 447.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: 447.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 449–451.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 447, 452 and 470–474.

<sup>5</sup> Davies 2017: xv; Dermitzakis 1998: 555.

powerlessness of women”:<sup>1</sup> believing that her husband died, the wife pursues an illicit affair with a fellow villager and gives birth to a child. When Antonis Koukouliotis returns to his village, he first kills the lover; then, he takes his wife and the child to their fields, he digs a hole, and he forces her to bury the child face down.<sup>2</sup> As for the tale “Ακόμα;” (first appeared in *O Noumas* in 1904), it “provides a fuller social context, revealing the influence of the extended family when honour is at stake”:<sup>3</sup> the deceived husband is coerced by his cousin to kill his wife, since she disgraced the family (she engaged in extramarital sexual intercourse and got pregnant). As such, *Κορφιάτικες ιστορίες* suggest, according to Babis Dermitzakis, “a bitter attack against an anachronistic and exaggerated conception about morality, responsible for numerous atrocities committed at the time”: women’s improper sexual behaviour, compared to that of men, is unforgivable.<sup>4</sup> What justifies this

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<sup>1</sup> Davies 2017: xv; Theotokis 1935g: 158–160. As Yiannis Dallas notes, “Πίστομα” originates from oral tradition. See Dallas 2001: 80.

<sup>2</sup> Likewise, being a woman in Papadiamantis’ early twentieth-century Skiathos is not an easy task. Marousa, although married, conducts an extramarital affair and falls pregnant, and, as a matter of fact, she is judged for her infidelity. Yet, none of the women reveal her adultery and out-of-wedlock pregnancy to the men. As Nina Anna Trzaska remarks, they jump on her for being unfaithful, while also “helping her with the abortion. Part of it belongs to the unwritten law of ‘female society’ which seems to head in the direction of the welfare of an individual woman. The ‘female law’ protects her, since it perceives abortion as ‘the lesser evil’ in a world where women are supposed to obey and serve men, where they are deprived of political rights, where they are not supposed to have a libido, where the recognition of rape within marriage is non-existent”. See Papadiamantis 1912: 59–62; Trzaska 2021: 296–297.

<sup>3</sup> Davies 2017: xvi; Theotokis 1935a: 62–65.

<sup>4</sup> Dermitzakis 1998: 555 and 557. See also Dallas 2005: 236 and 241; Karvelis 1984: 34; Pagkratis 1991: 415.

assumption is the fact that “the word ‘cucklold’ in Greek is masculine; there is no feminine equivalent”.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up: in the fictional works under consideration, the marriage plot, “prolonging the narrative beyond the wedding ceremony and putting an end to the common happy ending ‘They lived happily ever after’”,<sup>2</sup> is engineered towards tracking marital breakdown rather than the unity of one soul in two bodies. The disintegration of the marriage is attributed to both internal (lack of emotional and sexual intimacy, of love and affection, of effective communication and mutual respect, constant conflicts and tension, and mistreatment) and external (financial

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<sup>1</sup> Dermitzakis 1998: 557. Even when he presents the reader with examples of married women, Hatzopoulos’ focus is not on the institution of marriage itself but on women’s awful fate. In the short story “Τάσω” (1916), disappointment –her lover broke up with her to marry a woman from an affluent family– drives Taso to admit that her children are the fruit of her illicit affair, to abandon her husband, and to become involved with two men. Such a reaction on the heroine’s part raises doubts about her moral decency; but, in fact, it may be read as a sort of self-punishment or protest either against her husband who could not make her love him; or against her ex-partner who betrayed her; or against social prejudices (society is tolerant of men’s missteps). In the short story “Στο σκοτάδι” (1916), although Stelia marries for love, her marriage ends up unhappy: her husband develops bad habits, such as drinking and beating her up. Her running away from her alcoholic and apathetic spouse, as well as from the latter’s friend who is sexually attracted to her and wants to sleep with her, is doomed to fail: being bold and in control of their own destiny is not an attitude expected of women in late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In contrast to Hatzopoulos’ critical ethnography, George Athanas’ (= Georgios Athanasiadis-Novas, 1893–1897) “Το πράσινο καπέλλο” (1918) is an ethnographic novella: an old-fashioned green hat is successively put on by Pavlis’ wives: Vgenoula (she died in childbirth), Angela (she run off with another man), Konstanto (she died from a disease), and Kanellia –not to mention Maroula with whom he lives for a while. As Anthis Vergis notes, this simple story reminds us of the way of living in the Greek provinces during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Yet, it seems that the author does not take a critical look at the institution of marriage, a fact which one may wish to relate to the prevalence of folkloric elements in his novella. See Athanas 1918; Hatzopoulos 1916a; Hatzopoulos 1916b; Karvelis 1997: 106; Karvelis 1998: 142 and 174; Moschos: 1987: 1196; Papathanasopoulos 1999: 62, 63 and 65; Seferiadou 1982: 335, 357–358 and 366; Vergis 1995: 171 and 174.

<sup>2</sup> Saleh 2015: 52.

crisis) factors, with a view to depicting marriage “as a sinkhole of grubby materialism”, transaction, immorality, and hypocrisy (*Μυστική φωλιά*, “Ο γάμος της Αργυρούλας”, *Η πιάτσα*, *Ο άνθρωπος που επούλησε τη γυναίκα του*, *Ο άνθρωπος που έχασε τον εαυτό του*, “Η ξεπάρθενη”, *Γυναίκες*, *Κρίσις...*, *Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*, *Αποικιοί*, *Παραστρατημένοι*, *Αργώ*, *Η ξένη γη*, *Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*, and *Γιούγκερμαν*);<sup>1</sup> suggesting the need for marriage’s moralisation (*Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου* and *Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*);<sup>2</sup> putting forth a claim for women’s self-determination (*Θέμης Βρανάς*, *Δύο αγάπες*, “Ο γάμος της Αργυρούλας”, and *Γιούγκερμαν*); raising objections to conventional marriage and suggesting alternative emotional and sexual arrangements between the two genders (*Θέμης Βρανάς*, *Δύο αγάπες*, and *Λεμονοδάσος*);<sup>3</sup> shedding light on perceptions of marriage

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<sup>1</sup> Dever 2006: 114. It is because of their left-wing ideology that in Kazantzaki, Katiforis, and Nikolaïdis’ fictional works, women’s objectification (women as a mere thing, as a good for sale) within marriage is used as “a metaphor for the decay of the bourgeois society” (leftist ideology underpins more or less Pikros’ and Nakou’s texts as well). Kokkinos depicts the activities of the bourgeoisie, mainly featuring in his fiction; Lefkos appears to illustrate contemporary mores; Terzakis presents the decay of the bourgeois ideals; Floros, Daphni, and Theotokas touch upon moral issues; and Karagatsis seems to offer a critique of bourgeoisie. See Ntounia 1999: 45.

<sup>2</sup> Whether they marry for love or money, their marriages end up unhappy and failed: Kora Doxara-Aris Makezinis (*Ο γιος μου κι η κόρη μου*), Germalides (*Το τάλαντο της Σμαρώς*), Vramides and Karamalides (*Η νύχτα του εκφυλισμού*), Argyroula-Areopagite (“Ο γάμος της Αργυρούλας”), Leonidas-Lela and Lela’s parents (*Η πιάτσα*), Thomas-Mary (*Ο άνθρωπος που επούλησε τη γυναίκα του*), Flora Athanasopoulou-Yiannousis (*Τλιγγος*), Katina’s parents (“Η ξεπάρθενη”), Aimi-Andreas (*Γυναίκες*), Stavros-Eirini (*Κρίσις...*), Alekos Parnis-Aspasia Psellou (*Το σταυροδρόμι*), Dimitris-Corinna (*Αποικιοί*), Manolis-Foteini Sklirou and Petros-Martha Lampiti (*Η παρακμή των Σκληρών*), Kastrides (*Παραστρατημένοι*), Theophilos Notaras-Sofia Lampropoulou, Pavlos-Olga Skina, and Manolis Skyrianos-Morpho Delatolla (*Αργώ*); Meletis Malvis-Olga Velmeri (*Η μενεξεδένια πολιτεία*), and George Perros-Eleni Grizoti (*Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*).

<sup>3</sup> The treatises of the time (*Κοινωνιολογία περί γάμου και των συναφών*, *Ο γάμος και το διαζύγιον*, and *Εγχειρίδιον οικογενειακού δικαίου*) show “an intolerance for relationships that did not fit the heterosexual and monogamous model” –viewed both as disrespectful and threatening to the

as a companionship (*Ιλιγγος*); reflecting upon mixed-gender relationships (“Ο γάμος της Αργυρούλας” and *Γυναίκες*); or showing a deterioration in marital relationships in the interwar period (*Ο προορισμός της Μαρίας Πάρνη – Το σταυροδρόμι*, and *Ο μάγος με τα δώρα*); or stressing the need for marriage’s update (*Αργώ*).

As already discussed, the adultery plot lurks within the marriage plot to such an extent that the study of marriage becomes a study of infidelity.<sup>1</sup> The relative frequency of female adultery in the fictional texts in question indicates “not just an affective void in” the heroines’ lives, “but also what might be termed a pleasure deficit”.<sup>2</sup> This high occurrence of female infidelity in fiction from the 1920s and 1930s is in keeping not only with the prevalence of female adultery in the interwar press but also with the divorce statistics: 2.134 out of 15.278 divorces were granted

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institution of marriage– and suggest that, at the time, ‘free union’ was not considered a valid partnership option. Pharnas, however, stresses the stability of ‘free unions’ in comparison to the misery of failed marriages, a view indicating an approval for marriage dissolution. See Celesello and Kholoussy 2016: 4.

<sup>1</sup> Here one should be reminded that infidelity discourse is also evident in interwar journals and newspapers, where various texts featuring married men and women pursuing sexual relationships outside marriage and committing adultery abound. Apart from funny tales conveying the impression of a trend in adultery in the interwar period, real adultery stories also appeared in newspapers and allowed anxiety about moral panic in the sense of collapse of familial values and of marital instability to arise.

<sup>2</sup> White 1999: 188. It could also be interpreted as a subtle reminder of husbands’ obligation “to attend to the” emotional and “sexual needs of” their wives. As already shown, the innovative arrangement of marital relationships (‘companionate marriage’) was reflected in feminists’ claims, and was discussed in treatises on sex (N. Drakoulidis and A. Katsigra); in practical guidebooks on family, sex, and marriage (K. Katsaras); in practical advice featuring in interwar journals and newspapers; in pre-emptive recommendations for happy and successful marriages to be found in a body of ‘funny texts’; and in female readers’ letters published in the interwar press once again. Instances of male adultery include Aris Makezimis, Katina’s father, Flora’s lover, Manolis Skliros, Petros Lampitis, Dimitris Valeris, and George Perros. Examples of female infidelity include Lela and Lela’s mother, Flora Athanasopoulou, Mrs Kastri, Aspasia, Olga Skina, Olga Velmeri (implied), and Eleni Grizoti. Ibid.: 189.

on the grounds of female adultery from 1926 to 1937 in Greece.<sup>1</sup> Much as in the case of premarital sex (examined in the previous chapter), males' and females' increasing sexual activity (both outside marriage and within 'free unions') was suggestive of a sexual liberation and allowed unease about marital stability to rise, with the marital breakdown being attributed to the post-war relaxation.<sup>2</sup> Of course, women's sexual promiscuity might seem more teasing, since they were regarded as "the traditional upholders of family values".<sup>3</sup>

When the marital bond is broken, abandonment, separation, and divorce swiftly follow. Abandonment seems to result from "marital ennui", feelings of suffocation, frustration over failed relationships, "extra marital seduction", pursuit of excitement and self-fulfillment, and tensions caused by a gruelling daily routine (Mrs Vrami, Mrs Karamali, Eirini, Sofia Lampropoulou, Olga Skina, Morpho Delatolla, and Olga Velmeri).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, separation appears to be chosen as a solution to an unhappy marriage (Germalides and Vramides) or an unfaithful marital

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<sup>1</sup> As already pointed out, the guide "Συμπτώματα γυναικείας απιστίας: ένας απαραίτητος οδηγός για κάθε σύγχρονο άνδρα", enlightening husbands about the signs of female infidelity, may also be treated as proof of married women's sexual promiscuity.

<sup>2</sup> Siskos 1934: 5–6, 19–20 and 25–26; Sitaras 2012: 247–249.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers 2001: 130.

<sup>4</sup> White 1999: 1. The high frequency of abandonment in fictional texts could also be seen in relation to the divorce statistics: 4.970 out of 15.278 divorces were granted on the grounds of malicious abandonment between 1926 and 1937 (the great incidence of abandonment in the interwar years is also stressed by Stavros in *Κρίσις...*). The heroines' (Eirini excluded) decision to abandon their husbands, to run away with or to be associated with a lover, and remarry (Mrs Karamali) may indicate, more or less, women's increasing expectations for emotional and sexual intimacy within marriage. In other words, their choice points to their unwillingness to continue in unsatisfying and loveless relationships (Let it be mentioned once again that Olga Velmeri flees both to seek sexual pleasures and to have a more affluent life).



relationship (Alekos-Aspasia, Dimitris-Corinna, and George-Eleni).<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the significance of both abandonment and separation as indicators for marital disintegration, it is divorce that clearly signals the end of marriage.

Studying divorce in the fiction of the 1920s and 1930s is of great importance since the divorce law 2228 passed in June 24/July 2, 1920 suggested a crucial turning point in that it offered a modern legal framework for divorce, with ‘character incompatibility’ being its greatest innovation. Whether the fictional couples apply for a divorce or not, ‘character incompatibility’ is quite often the root cause of marital failure (Germalides and Vramides) or covers other reasons for marital breakdown, mainly adultery (Pavlos-Olga and George-Eleni).<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, following whether husbands or wives initiate the divorce is quite interesting, since it brings to the forefront the fact that women mainly deploy the newfound ability to divorce (Kiara Doxara, Flora Athanasopoulou, Aimi, Alekos Parnis, Gregorios Kastris, and Eleni Grizoti).<sup>3</sup>

What merits attention here is the heroes’ and heroines’ reactions both to marital misfortune and to the possibility of getting a divorce. Generally speaking, it is because of their upper-middle-class background that being cheated on by their

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<sup>1</sup> In *Αργώ* Pavlos and Olga live separately for a while, and they do not get a divorce.

<sup>2</sup> One has only to remember that from 1926 to 1937 ‘character incompatibility’ was a common reason for divorce, with 7.424 out of 15.278 divorces being granted on the grounds of the innovative Article 5.

<sup>3</sup> Only five (Kiara Doxara-Aris Makezinis, Karamalides, Flora Athanasopoulou-Yiannousis, Theophilos Notaras-Sofia Lampropoulou, and Meletis Malvis-Olga Velmeri) out of all the fictional failed marriages end in divorce. This may partly be due to the protagonists’ conservative attitudes towards divorce; and may partly reflect the reality that not all unsuccessful marriages were legally dissolved. Besides, not surprisingly, divorce seems to be, more or less, a privilege of the more affluent social classes, whereas for the lower classes, divorce is not such an easy option (Stavros-Eirini, *Κρίσις...* and the harlot, *Αργώ*).

partners – causing the protagonists’ embarrassment (Alekos) and the feeling of offence (Foteini and Martha)– makes them react with dignity and rationality (Foteini and Martha). By the same token, divorce is mainly regarded as threatening their status,<sup>1</sup> and thus the spouses -with the exception of Aimi, Flora, Gregorios, and Eleni- do not proceed with the legal dissolution of their marriage, and try to deal with their marital misfortune with pride (Germalides and Katina’s mother) or do not reveal the real reason for their marital breakdown (Corinna).<sup>2</sup> Contrary to this considerable reluctance, Sotiris Rovias’ (*Παραστρατημένοι*) description of Athenian society as tolerant to divorces is more in line with the census data, which shows that an upward trend in divorces was set from 1920 onwards in Greece.<sup>3</sup> Finally, in the novels, divorce not only puts an end to unsuccessful marital bonds but also opens up opportunities for entering a new more satisfying marriage (Kiara, Mrs Karamalis, Mr. Kastris, and Aspasia).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Views of divorce as a stigma (Dimitra, *Γυναίκες*) or a sin (nanny Kontylo, “Η ξεπάρθενη”) are usually held by middlebrow and uneducated women.

<sup>2</sup> At first, Kiara Doxara vacillates between remaining in a failed marriage and filing for a divorce, but eventually chooses the latter.

<sup>3</sup> The forward-thinking attitude of the upper middle class about divorce is also stressed in a study by Kleio Presvelou and Anastasia-Valentini Riga. One is led to assume that fiction, to an extent, may offer a more conservative picture. Of course, this does not suggest that fiction utterly condemns divorce. See Presvelou and Valentini 2013: 159.

<sup>4</sup> Alekos and Aspasia’s marriage is dissolved through the former’s death.

## Conclusions

Considering the emergence of the new marital ideal of ‘companionate marriage’ - both outside and inside Greece- on the one hand, and the reforms in the legal framework of divorce in many Western countries (Greece included) on the other, in the present chapter, I focused on fictional families with a view to exploring the representations of familial and marital relationships in the fiction of the 1920s and 1930s. Therefore, the introduction laid the groundwork for examining the fictional texts in question not only by explaining the new marital concept and providing useful demographic and statistical data but also by exploring and discussing relevant issues addressed in newspapers, journals, and treatises of the time.

Arguably, familial and marital relationships appear to a lesser degree in the fiction of the late 19th and the first two decades of the 20th century, such as Alexandros Papadiamantis’ *Η φόνισσα*, George Vizyenos’ “Το αμάρτημα της μητρός μου”, Andreas Karkavitsas’ *Η Λυγερή* and *Ο ζητιάνος*, Kostantinos Hatzopoulos’ *Ο πύργος του ακροπόταμου* and *Τάσω, Στο σκοτάδι κι άλλα διηγήματα* (“Τάσω” and “Στο σκοτάδι”), Konstantinos Theotokis’ *Κορφιάτικες ιστορίες* (“Πίστομα”, “Ακόμα”, and “Κάιν”), and *Η ζωή κι ο θάνατος του Καραβέλα*, Christos Varlentis’ *Χαμοζωή* (“Η κασσέλα” and “Όλοι νηστικοί και ξύλο”), and George Athanas’ *Το πράσινο καπέλο*. However, these narratives mainly unfold within an ethnographic framework, and thus, compared to stories from the 1920s and 1930s, they are suggestive of a different ‘ethos’. This different approach of fiction prior to 1920 on the one hand, and from 1920 onwards on the other, is emphasised by Mario Vitti:

although the family as an area of sociological investigation naturally was not discovered by the generation of the Thirties, yet a concern felt by previous generations was brought to maturity by these writers, who enriched it with daring psychological probings and a wealth of themes.<sup>1</sup>

For my part, I should also stress the difference in the “tales of wifely transgression” in fiction of the late 19th and early 20th century (“Πίστομα” and “Ακόμα”) and in fiction of the 1920s and (mainly) 1930s.<sup>2</sup> In the first case, women’s extramarital affairs are presented as an action that blackens men’s honour and thus it should be punished by death. On the contrary, in the second case, women’s pursuit of sexual pleasure outside marriage can be seen in relation to the post-war challenge to cultural norms resulting in a fundamental cultural shift in the perceptions of female sexuality and heterosexual relationships mirrored in the ideal of companionate marriage. Under this aspect, female adultery may be associated with women’s increasing expectations for emotional and sexual intimacy within marriage; thus, the depiction of female adultery in fiction and the press of the time on the one hand, and the rates of divorces granted on the grounds of female adultery on the other, are indicative of a significant cultural watershed and sexual liberation.

Focusing more closely on the exploration of the representation of family and marriage in fiction of the 1920s and 1930s, it sheds light on the “cracks and fissures” in the familial and marital relationships.<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, the

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<sup>1</sup> Vitti 1972a: 231. Vitti was also talking about a serious family crisis in the ’30s, turning out to be an issue of concern to the novelists of the time. See Vitti 2012: 284–285.

<sup>2</sup> White 2007: 21.

<sup>3</sup> Collins 2014: 73.

narratives are mainly about dysfunctional families, erased paternal and maternal figures, and failed marriages, and therefore one feels that both family and marriage, with the latter being the building block of the former, are in a state of instability. Since the writers were creating during an era of transition and turbulence, “where a host of issues and confrontations played out”, by taking into account the metaphorical link connecting marriage/family on the one hand, and nation/society on the other, one gets the impression that ‘bad families’, as well as ‘bad marriages’ featuring in the fiction of the time, may “constitute a crucial platform on which to stage a moral panic” about familial/marital values and instability.<sup>1</sup>

This moral panic is also reflected in several articles appearing in interwar journals and newspapers. As already shown, these texts talk about a generalised (economic, political, and moral) crisis, the anaemic, transitional, and turbulent nature of the interwar period, the spiritual and moral chaos, the rotten foundations of society, the overturn of fundamental human values, such as the motherland, religion, and family, and the need to restore moral values and re-establish the shattered ideals (family included).

Finally, taking stock of the examples of dysfunctional families and failed marriages in fiction of the 1920s and 1930s, one is invited to assume that both the family and marriage crisis becomes more intense in the second interwar decade. What justifies this view is the assumption about the common fortunes of family and

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<sup>1</sup> Chambers 2001: 8; Ferrall and McNeill 2018: 1–2 and 3; Presvelou and Riga 2013: 29. By the same token, Charles Ferrall and Dougal McNeill emphasise that it is “the strains of national break-up, class dissension, and political instability provoking a new literary order” that “suggest a different way of reading British literature in transition (1920–1940)”. Kristin Celello and Hanan Kholoussy on their part point out the benefits that stem from “studying marriage in times of crisis”. See Celello and Kholoussy 2016: 1; Ferrall and McNeill 2018: 4–5.

marriage; as already shown, in many cases, marital crisis (more evident in the fiction of the 1930s) was the root cause of family crisis, and the rates of divorces, as the statistics illustrate, were relatively high from 1930 to 1937. Besides, this escalation in the depiction of family and marriage crisis can also be seen in relation to, as already stressed, the intensification of economic, social, and political crisis in those years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the interwar context, see the Introduction.

## CONCLUSION

Pursuing an exploration that was as comparative and comprehensive as possible of bio-medical, gender and familial/marital matters in Greek family narratives that appeared between 1920 and 1939 was intrinsic to my approach to the authors and their works. As such, this treatise provides insights into the various ways in which the authors (male or female, confirmed or unconfirmed feminist, bourgeois, or socialist) touched upon the aforementioned topics in their texts. More pointedly, by broaching bio-medical, gender and family/marriage issues, the family plots explored in my thesis appear to be platforms on which the authors stage an ‘ailing’ society or a society in crisis. Such plots emphasise the need for biological regeneration (which in turn will lead to moral and social regeneration as well); express thoughts and concerns about a particular social class (the bourgeoisie); and appeal for moral and spiritual regeneration. Further, they shape a new kind of femininity and promote new gender identities, such as younger women’s free and more exciting social life, fashionable appearance, educational profile and entrance into the labour market, the free expression of their sexuality and renegotiation of their relationship with men; and finally, they subtly voice moral panic through representation of dysfunctional families, marriages, and parental figures.

Motifs and themes, such as family, marriage, sex, and body are present throughout the three chapters but are discussed in different contexts. For example, family can be the cell within which the birth of healthy children contributes to the welfare of the community (society, nation, race/‘phyli’) (Chapter One); a site of gender discrimination, unequal treatment (regardless of individuals’ capabilities and desires) and deep-seated expectations vis-à-vis men and women’s roles (career –

marriage/motherhood) (Chapter Two); or a place of physical and mental suffering instead of love and affection (Chapter Three).

Against the backdrop of ‘population policies’, marriage is presented as the union of physically and mentally fit parents that aims at the birth of ‘worthy’ children (Chapter One). The question of marriage is also tied up with a new type of woman and generates discussions about how progressive young women challenge, or should challenge, traditional ideals of wifehood and motherhood (Chapter Two); or it mirrors married women’s heightened expectations for emotional and sexual intimacy within a marital context, the divorce law reform, and moral issues (Chapter Three).

Sex is described as ‘selective mating’ which indicates the desire to guide and control human reproduction with a view to improving society and humanity (Chapter One); alternatively, it is viewed in relation to the different standards applied to the sexual experiences of young men and women before their marriage and the latter’s desire to express their sexuality and pursue sexual pleasures (Chapter Two). Sex is also discussed in light of new perceptions of female sexuality and heterosexual relationships within marriage (‘companionate marriage’), both associated with increasing rates of female adultery (Chapter Three).

Last but by no means least, considering the fears about degeneration and the mounting concern for efficiency (i.e., good physical and mental condition), the body is seen in terms of health/sickness, vigour/weakness, and fitness/unfitness (Chapter One). Fashionable styles and slimness, exclusively related to the female body, became part and parcel of young women’s modernity, with a fashionable appearance suggesting a challenge to the conventional ways of presenting the



female body, while excessive slimming was perceived as a threat to women's reproductive capacities (Chapter Two). Finally, unmarried and married women's sexual desires allow the association of the female body with interwar sexual liberation (Chapter Two and Three).

As such, the family narratives examined allow the assumption that they are in keeping with bio-medical and feminist discourse, as well as the cultural and legal shifts of the time, reflecting, by various degrees, the transitional and turbulent nature of the interwar years. To put it differently, interwar fiction mirrors, to a considerable extent, the bio-medical, feminist, cultural, legal, and historical backdrop of the interwar years. Of course, focusing my research interest on texts where family is the narrative structure was of paramount importance, since family, as already stressed, is society in miniature, and as a matter of fact, family narratives are the most appropriate vehicle for gaining an understanding of a society.

Besides, the study of family (and marriage) in times of crisis has much to say about society as a whole. To my mind, the interwar ideological, political, economic, and social crisis could be compared (in terms of complexity and intensity) to the Greek debt crisis (known as The Crisis) that started in 2009 and brought about large-scale political, social, and moral upheaval. Although 89 years separate the interwar and the twenty-first-century crisis, I feel that a comparison between the 1920-1930s family narratives and those authored from 2009 onwards could yield highly interesting results with regard to the ways in which writers represent family and marriage. In other words, I believe that this offers possibilities to explore the means deployed to depict familial/marital relationships and crises, as well as

individual family members' adventures, with a view to finding the similarities and differences between interwar and early twenty-first-century representations.

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