



METADATA

Title: Greek Literature in the 1940s

Other Titles: -

Language: Greek

ISBN: 978-960-603-023-9

Subject: HUMANITIES AND ARTS

Keywords: Civil War / Occupation / World War II / Travel / Lyrical Prose

Bibliographic Reference: Kastρινaki, A. (2015). Greek Literature in the 1940s [Undergraduate textbook]. Kallipos, Open Academic Editions. <http://dx.doi.org/10.57713/kallipos-877>

Abstract

This book examines literature and, more broadly, culture in Greece during the Second World War, the Occupation, the Resistance, and the Civil War. Literature during this period of extremes is closely connected with history, politics, society, and to understand it, we must attempt to reconstruct a comprehensive framework, from the material conditions of life to the psychology of people. The main outcome of the study, regarding the period of the Occupation, relates to its two distinct phases. In the first phase, until the end of 1942, there is a significant flourishing of book production, a euphoria among writers for the new readers, and simultaneously a tendency to distance themselves from current events, a turn towards the "eternal" and towards an art independent of conditions, sometimes bordering on estheticism. Writers compensate for the gloomy reality with various "escapes": towards childhood, for example, or towards warm sunny islands. The symbol of the island is very characteristic of this first phase of the Occupation, while the dominant narrative genre is the "lyrical prose," a symbolic and introspective art. These phenomena have little to do with censorship, which did exist but was rather lax. Behaviors can be

explained by defeatism, withdrawal into the inner world, the desire for solitude, something often observed after defeats. For this reason, as soon as it became apparent that victory was turning towards the Allies, in early 1943, these phenomena change. Patriotism is revived, the themes change, and poets turn from the "islands" of voluntary isolation to the "city". Nevertheless, the shift is not absolute: many writers continue until the end of the Occupation to produce introspective lyricism. There are also "dual behaviors": militancy in some areas of life and a "carefree" attitude in art, indicating that literature during this period is primarily called upon to play a role of calmness and consolation. At the end of the Occupation, there emerges a demand for an entirely different art, one that would abandon individual problems and give attention to the totality, in an epic manner. This demand is universal, spanning across the entire political spectrum. Characteristically, however, the Left, being predominant at the time, is much less insistent in its demands, accepting all artistic currents and tendencies. In the days leading up to the Liberation, the expectation for a total change of the world is particularly strong