longs to the West-European Literary tradition and probably has as a model the *Contrasto*, the humanist comedy and Leonardo Giustinian's *Canzonette* (first half of the 15th century). Researching the philological tradition of the *Ιστορία καὶ Ονείρο*, Dr. van Gemert gives us precious informations about the three manuscripts of the text making, also, a stemma which forms the basis of the critical edition. The language, the grammar and the syntax of both texts, present some difficulties, but the editor with the use of the sources and with his knowledge of the period resolves those difficulties giving the correct interpretations. For these reasons the edition will contribute to cover, in the future, the lack of a medieval Greek grammar and syntax. The *versus politicus* used by Falieros being a correct form of this kind of rhyme, was previously used by Stephanos Sachlikis (1330-1391).

These two points, the use of the rhyme of Sachlikis and of Falieros, prove that in the Cretan literature the rhyme has been introduced much earlier. The edition is concluded by an apparatus criticus of the two texts, by extensive commentaries and a vocabulary.

Dr. Van Gemert work is an important contribution in understanding the early Cretan literature. His introduction enriched by archival researchs and his conclusions drawn from his knowledge of European literature concerning the influence upon Greek literature, make van Gemert's book extremely useful.

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The eighth volume in the Nostos Books series on modern Greek writers and thinkers, edited by historian Theofanis Stavrou, appeared one year before the celebration of the centenary of Nikos Kazantzakis's birth (1883-1957) - the famous Cretan writer and thinker who composed at least eighteen dramas in metrical or free verse, and in prose, while he was writing several major novels and his colossal epic of modern man, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* (1938; English translation by Kimon Friar, 1958).

*Sodom and Gomorrah* and *Comedy: A Tragedy in One Act* were expertly translated by Kimon Friar who also wrote the scholarly introduction to the first play. Professor Karl Kerényi did the introduction to the one-act play, and Professor Peter Bien turned it into eloquent English. All translations were first published in 1975 and 1976 issues of *The Literary Review*; and the longer play, under the title *Burn Me to Ashes*, had its world première some twenty years ago in the Jan Hus Playhouse in New York.

Since Kazantzakis is not well-known as a dramatist to the anglophone public, the reader will be pleasantly surprised by the similarity or analogy in themes, motifs, and atmosphere between the early play, *Comedy* - which was first published in Heraklion, Crete, and in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1909 - and Sartre's *No Exit* (1944) as well as Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952). It is not an exaggeration to
claim that, as an avant-garde drama about man's existential anguish vis-à-vis the mystery of death, Comedy antedates the two francophone plays by thirty-five and forty-three years respectively.

Utilizing a rather large cast of twelve (First Old Man, Second Old Man, Young Girl, Young Woman, Young Man, Mother, Old Woman, Ascetic, Worker, Proud Youth, Nun, and Fool), Kazantzakis in his expressionistic Comedy presents what «happens inside man's mind at the moment of his death when the soul rises to the summation and supreme summit of life» (p. 99). That moment freezes in time, as it were, not unlike a comparable phenomenon in the last rhapsody of The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel describing Odysseus's death.

Although Sartre in No Exit similarly freezes in time the moment right after the deaths of his three anti-heroes (Garcin, Inez, and Estelle), the Greek play is dominated by the same oppressive atmosphere of 'no way out' which characterizes the French drama, as its representative cast from all ages, sexes, occupations, and contrasted attitudes toward life, agonize at the expectation of some arbiter who will judge their behavior and actions offering metaphysical salvation to the deserving. As it happens in Beckett's Waiting for Godot, neither a master figure (God?), nor anyone else appears to put an end to their agony of waiting, despite the mental torment and physical suffering of both innocent and sinner—in the traditional sense of the words—and despite the initial expressions of faith and hope by Ascetic and Nun. As should be expected of Kazantzakis, it is the despaired Nun who utters the final and definitive, «He will not come», and the end, as the suddenly enlightened and formerly frustrated Ascetic says with a dying voice, «Who did you think would come, dear sister?» and laughs as the curtain falls (p. 120).

Comedy is simpler, shorter, and more traditional than either French drama in terms of theatrical technique and metaphysical speculation, as it makes it crystal clear that a judgement of the kind dogmatically promised by Christian orthodoxy is a hoax. Kazantzakis's dramatization, however, of man's agony at the expectation of a «happenings», plus his fear and frustration at its non realization, mark the beginning of modern European literature of existential orientations. Beckett, of course, intensified and proliferated the thematic implications of Waiting for Godot, since he never revealed who and what Godot was (how could he?), or why his absurd and clownish cast were waiting for him, thus maintaining both secular as well as theological tensions in a drama where animate and inanimate in character and setting remain enigmatic and meaningless throughout.

On the contrary, Kazantzakis's representative «types» and their inevitable «flatness» limited the thematic scope of his play, despite its boldness in 1909—a boldness which undoubtedly echoed Nietzsche's 1872 cry, «God is dead!» Notice also the oxymoron in the compound title, Comedy: A Tragedy in One Act, that is, the tragedy of waiting for the great Nothing which turns into a comedy at the end, and Beckett's farcical and outlandish manner of exploring a similar absurdity, waiting for the Non-Comer, with the additional difference that his cast do not even know why, whereas the Greek's know who and why should come. The overall absurdist preoccupations of the Irishman dictated, as it were, an analogous adjustment of vehicle and technique.

Bolder in its rejection of religious metaphysics, dynamic, and forceful is Kazantzakis's later play, Sodom and Gomorrah (1948), which was written during the last phase of his creative career, after the celebrated novel Zorba the Greek
(completed in 1946), and before Freedom or Death (1950), The Last Temptation of Christ (1951), Saint Francis (1953), The Fratricides (1954), and the first Greek edition of Christ Recrucified (1954) — in America known as The Greek Passion.

Baroque in all its stage aspects, rhetorical and «loud» in its speeches, Sodom and Gomorrah, despite its length (over 80 pages), features fewer characters than Comedy. The author radically alters the Biblical personae and background as he de-emphasizes the rôle of Lot's curious wife, adds naturalistic dimensions to his two amoral daughters (Ruth and Rachel), creates a strange allegorical character in the beautiful Angel of the Flaming Hair (the catalyst of the twin cities' destruction), and drastically transforms Lot into a Kazantzakian 'seeker of God' who develops into His outspoken defier and opponent as he protests His 'ways to man' — to echo Milton here. Abraham remains recognizably Biblical; while the flat, functional, King, Queen, Nego Slave, and Voice of God, merely serve the mechanics of the odd plot.

Commentators have complained about Kazantzakis's unbalanced mixture of traditional, naturalistic, allegorical, and merely functional elements and personae in this drama — a phenomenon of The Odyssey, Freedom or Death, and other texts by the Cretan — that mar or at least flaw it, as their Baroque details clash and obscure the initial intent, thus disturbing and disorienting the «innocent» reader. Kazantzakis, however, was not writing a religious «Mystery» or a «Passion Play». This play is an Everyman not to a Renaissance faithful but to a modern existentialist, or at least, skeptic.

Kazantzakis's concept of God — initially deceptively traditional, and then shifting back and forth — soon develops into an evolutionary concept tempered by the Bergsonian élan vital in Nature, as God behaves irrationally, or amorally, or both, and thus challenges and frustrates man (i.e, Lot) in his agonized struggle to comprehend and to come to terms with his Maker and Master. Despite its major or minor flaws as a piece for the stage, Sodom and Gomorrah is quite impressive in its dramatization of honest Lot's efforts to be, in the first place, and to remain, a man of God, a follower of an inscrutable and whimsical Force in the cosmos, which sets traps (the original killing of the King's small boy, and the incestuous involvement with his daughters later on) during a life of blind obedience and submission to its indifferent will. Lot can't forgive God for having made him a sinner and a criminal at will, thus violating his conscience, sense of freedom, and sense of responsibility for his life and actions. Too honest to accept 'salvation' from the conflagration on this «God's» terms — to follow Abraham like a sheep in his flock — Lot braves and challenges God as he asserts his independence from and opposition to Him. «Who is greater, God who is deathless, or this worm, man, who rides on the sea and air, changes the course of the waters, tames the wild beasts, burns the works of God upside down, and dies? I am that worm, Lord! Kill me! I am Sodom and Gomorrah! Burn me to ashes!» exclaims this Promethean Lot tragically concluding that God «is not just, He is not good, He is only Almighty. Almighty, but He is Nothing else!» (p. 89), refusing to continue being a pawn in this absurd God's hands. This reminds me of Dr. Rieux's similar refusal to accept Father Paneloux's interpretation of the absurd death of an innocent child as «the will of God», in The Plague (1947) of Albert Camus, who, incidentally, was an admirer of Kazantzakis.

For all their shortcomings as specimens of modern drama, Comedy plus Sodom and Gomorrah remain two bold, pioneering, and honest testimonies to their
author's and to man's, existential *Angst* at the meaninglessness, at the absurdity, of mankind's long and passive dependence on Something that does not exist; or, at least, on Something that is not what it has traditionally been supposed to be.

*The University of Athens*  
M. Byron Raizis


This bulky study took a long time to be realized. It appeared in the aftermath of the festive spirit created by observances of the U.S. Bicentennial; and its diligent maker must be congratulated on its scope, thoroughness, and organization.

*Hellenes and Hellions*, that is, nice guys and scum of Greek nationality or origin as characters in American literature, is a panoramic survey that begins around the period of the Greek Revolution of 1821 and reaches up to our days. The book is divided into seventeen Chapters, whose individual titles actually explain the method and structure employed in its making. These are: 1) Nineteenth-Century Attitudes, 2) The First Greeks in American Fiction, 3) The Greek as Immigrant, 4) Greeks Between the Wars, 5) Growing Up Greek-American, 6) Greeks with a Southern Accent, 7) The Legend of Tarpon Springs, 8) The Greek as War Hero, 9) The Greek Lover, 10) The Fiction in *Athene*, 11) The Greeks of Petrakis, 12) Private Eyes and Victims, 13) Thrillers Set in Greece, 14) Children's Literature, 15) Freaks and Other Hellions, 16) Country Full of Greeks, and 17) Conclusion. Notes (mostly page references to texts and other sources), a Bibliography (several hundred items, some in Greek), and an indispensable Index (names, places, titles, topics, themes) complete this colossal and useful volume.

The reader observes that Professor Karanikas has started with a diachronic examination of historical, sociological, and cultural data (Chapters 1-5) and corresponding texts; then (Chapter 6) he expands into a synchronic survey of the Greek character in action in various geographic locations in the United States, focusing on those with pronounced differences. A third group of Chapters delineates individual Greek types (i.e., the lover, warrior, tycoon, swindler, gambler, detective, etc.), while the final Chapters concentrate on good quality fiction from the Chicago magazine *Athene* of Demetrios Michalaros, and the pen of Harry Mark Petrakis, the foremost American author of Greek (Cretan) extraction. The literature that Dr. Karanikas discusses in Chapters 10 and 11 marks the «coming of age» of Greek-American creative writing. The Chicago group around the late Michalaros paved the way, so to speak, for such excellent books by Petrakis as *Lion at My Heart, Pericles on 31st Street, The Odyssey of Kostas Volakis, A Dream of Kings, In the Land of Morning, The Waves of Night, Stelmark, and The Hour of the Bell*, so far. His touching *A Dream of Kings* was made into a motion picture starring Anthony Quinn, as was before it Tom Chamale's war story *Never So Few*, starring Peter Lawford and Frank Sinatra. In the footsteps of these two trail-blazers follow competent prose writers like Tom Doulis, Elia Kazan, Charles Jarvis, and a host of others who have presented real, unglorified, Greeks as protagonists.