



Book Review

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Defenceless
by Dimitris Hatzis
Rodakio, 2006
166 pages
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Published for the first time in 1966 by “Themelio” publications, the book “Defenceless” (Ανυπεράσπιστοι) was also published by other firms and today is available by “To rodakio” publications.

The writer Dimitris Hatzis is among the most important Greek novelists of the First Generation of Postwar Writers. His heroes are everyday people, who try to deal with many of the modern society’s problems. They are poor, powerless, defenceless.

“Defenceless” is the third literary work that Hatzis published. The book consists of the following seven short stories: “Commonplace Symbols” (Τετριμμένα Σύμβολα), “Saint George” (Αϊ-Γιώργης), “Ebb’s Time” (Ωρα της φουρονεριάς), “Defenceless” (Ανυπεράσπιστοι), “A victim of the Occupation” (Ένα θύμα της Κατοχής), “The Essential” (Το ουσιώδες), “The Baptism” (Το βάπτισμα).

What these short stories have in common is the denial of hopes and expectations and the giving up of dreams. The heroes make efforts to overcome their problems, but in the end they go back to the point they started. Now defeated, more disappointed than ever, they have to continue living a life that never indulged their desires, never made them happy.

Marianna dies without experiencing the happiness she dreamed so much of, having earlier uncomplainingly abandoned her dreams. Katerina withdraws from her new young and beautiful friend, after realizing her ugliness; destroying none the less her and her husband’s peaceful life. Kostantis tries to escape from a life cut off from the world because of his mother, who is a hawker. He ends up returning back to his mother and the care of his younger, handicapped brother. In the frozen and hostile mountain soldiers and partisans do their utmost to stay alive. Anestis makes anguished efforts to gain money during the Occupation by the Germans.

Ambitiously trying to fulfill his expectations he falls

victim to his own dreams. Gerasimos Kourtis returns to the seaman’s life after failing to adjust himself to the land’s way of life. A boy and a foal unwillingly leave back their childhood and start growing up by working in the field. All of them experience changes in their lives; changes that they cannot control, and take the heroes away from happiness.

