Postgraduate research - Modern Greek studies

Maria Antonopoulou (PhD)
The development of Marxist aesthetics and literary criticism in Greece: the case of Kostas Varnalis

The aim of my thesis is to examine the contribution of Kostas Varnalis, an emblematic writer for the Greek left, to the formation of Marxist aesthetics and literary criticism in Greece by examining a little-studied part of his work, his aesthetic and critical writings (1925-1958). In the first part of my thesis I analyse the development of the writer's aesthetic theorization and its impact on the construction of Marxist aesthetics in Greece, starting from his adherence to scientific aesthetics and early elaborations of Marxist aesthetics, moving on to his active support of socialist realism and ending with his late elaborations on realism. In the second part I explore the writer's involvement through his criticism in literary disputes and the formation of the literary canon compared to the part played by other critics of the Greek left.

Paschalina Domouxi
Politics, autobiography an
narrative experimentation in Greek women's fiction (1945-2000) (PhD thesis)

My thesis explores the interrelation between politics, autobiography and narrative experimentation in Greek women's writing after 1945. In particular, it focuses mainly on the first generation of women writers to emerge shortly after the end of the Second World War (apart from Melpo Axioti who was first published in the 1930s) and attempts to explore how their writings relate to Greece's the turbulent recent history and the politics of the first post-war decades. The thesis takes the work of four authors (namely Melpo Axioti, Mimika Kranaki, Margarita Lymberaki and Tatiana Gritsi-Milliex) as case studies and discusses them in the wider context of Modern Greek fiction and women's writing. It is argued that by connecting the political with the autobiographical and by attempting to respond to new literary trends, these authors manage to produce novels which diverged considerably from and challenged mainstream political narratives, especially in the late forties and fifties. Through a combination of politics and formal experimentation, they challenged established ideas and questioned the modes of representation of politics in literature. As a result they were able to articulate quite complex works which went beyond the conventions of the dominant political narratives, especially in the polarized atmosphere of the first few decades after WWII. The thesis also follows these authors' progress over the years and examines how they made the transition to a more experimental approach to politics through their fiction.

Georgia Drakou (MPhil)
Regionalism, Primitivismand National Ideology in GreekTravel Writing (1850-1880)

My research aims to study Greek travel writing about the Greek countryside from 1850 to 1880, focusing on showing the variety in the travellers' different representations of rural areas and people, ranging as they do from the archaeological, historical and folklore mapping of rural Greece to descriptions of 'primitive' living conditions. My main focus will be on the ways in which these representations contribute to the making of Greek national ideology in the nineteenth century.

Maria Lefaki (PhD)
Papadiamantis' short fiction: social change and urban alienation

With the aim of making a contribution to research into the relationship between society and literature, my PhD thesis explores the social dimension of Alexandros Papadiamantis' short fiction (1887-1910). Focusing on the texts and highlighting the various social aspects raised by his narratives the thesis offers an insight into the way Papadiamantis responded to an era of transition. My research will go on to explore the social context – both rural and urban – and the characters in his short stories in an attempt to shed light on the way Papadiamantis' fiction reflects the nature of Greek society at the turn of the twentieth century.

Panagiotis Sfalagkakos (PhD)
Inside the Shade of the Elm: A Thematic Approach to the Novels of M. Karagatsis

M. Karagatsis (the *nom de plume* of Dimitris Rodopoulos, 1908-1960) was — and is — a well-known Greek writer, considered one of the prose writers known as the 'Generation of the thirties'. Prolific and wide-ranging, he published a large number of works of fiction and non-fiction during his short lifetime. He is one of the few writers of his day who is still very popular in Greece; his books continue to outsell not only those of his contemporaries, but also those of many of today's writers. The thesis explores the broader themes found in his novels, in an attempt to explain his unabated popularity. Is the key to be found in the potential diversity in his novels? And if there is diversity there, does it change over time? Does it increase or decrease? What lies below this diversity? Is there a unifying theme or ideology to be found in his work? In short, do the main themes found in his novels, their diversity (if any) or any unifying link between all of these help explain his success?

Anastasia Stamoglou (PhD)
Evolution or Revolution? Educational Policy and the Teaching of Literature in Early Greek Secondary Education (1977-2003)

My thesis examines educational policy on the subject of Modern Greek literature in early Greek Secondary Education (Gymnasia) in the period 1977-2003, as framed in the relevant institutional documents for its teaching (curricula and school textbooks). To be precise, it investigates the influence of the three major Educational Reforms in post-dictatorship Greece (1977, 1999 and 2003) on instructional design and seeks to interpret the observed changes in curricular expectations, methodology and educational material for the teaching of literature. Adopting a relational methodological approach, the research aims to evaluate the degree of consistency in educational policy, not only for each set of data (curricula and textbooks of each reform) but also comparatively over time.

Eleftheria Teleioni (PhD)
Nikos Kazantzakis and travel writing

Nikos Kazantzakis's contribution to travel writing will be examined in this PhD thesis. The famous Greek novelist had a genuine love of travel, which led him to visit most European countries, the USSR, China, Japan and the Middle East. During these travels, Kazantzakis wrote more than 300 reports, which he sent to various Athenian newspapers, and which later became the main source for his five travel-books (*Journeying*, *Spain*, *England*, *Japan-China*, *Russia*). In my PhD thesis I will endeavour to evaluate the significance of travel in Kazantzakis's life and work. After examining his travel writings as a whole and comparing him with other travel writers, conclusions will be drawn both on the place of his travel writing occupy in the rest of Kazantzakis's oeuvre and on his overall contribution as a travel writer. A close, critical and comparative reading of Kazantzakis's travel writings as a whole will hopefully provide a deeper understanding of this prominent figure in Greek literature.

© University of Birmingham 2015