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In Search of the Hill's Monsters: Children in Front of the Face of Evil

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Abstract

It is well known that history repeats itself. Greece faced multiple economic, political and social problems in the past decade. Prominent Greek children's and adolescents' writer Loty Petrovits-Androutsopoulou foresaw the danger of the neo-Nazi's movement revival almost twenty years ago. In her teen novel, *The Monsters of the Hill* (2002), the writer describes the adventurous story of two teenage girls trying to help a little immigrant boy from Africa. At the same time, she refers to the parallel story of two German-Greek teenagers living in Germany whom German neo-Nazis have attacked. According to research, racist and extreme right or left movements and groups are present in times of social and economic crisis and in everyday life during prosperity and growth. They need to belong somewhere; Parents' negligence towards children and the simple and straight way of thinking that these movements follow attract young people and consist some of their main characteristics. The danger of them reappearing is always present, so everybody must stay alert and open their eyes. The two young heroines prove with their stance that protecting vulnerable and sensitive social groups is everyone's obligation, from children to adults and extends to state authorities.

Keywords: Loty Petrovits-Androutsopoulou, Neo-Nazis, immigrants, racism.

Περίληψη

Είναι γνωστό ότι η ιστορία επαναλαμβάνεται. Η Ελλάδα αντιμετώπισε πολλαπλά οικονομικά, πολιτικά και κοινωνικά προβλήματα την τελευταία δεκαετία. Η σημαντική Ελληνίδα συγγραφέας παιδικών και εφήβων Λότη Πέτροβιτς-Ανδρουτσοπούλου προέβλεψε τον κίνδυνο αναβίωσης του νεοναζιστικού κινήματος πριν από σχεδόν είκοσι χρόνια. Στο νεανικό της μυθιστόρημα *Τα τέρατα του λόφου* (2002) η συγγραφέας περιγράφει την περιπετειώδη ιστορία δύο εφήβων κοριτσιών στην προσπάθειά τους να βοηθήσουν ένα μικρό αγόρι μετανάστη από την Αφρική. Παράλληλα, αναφέρεται στην παράλληλη ιστορία δύο Ελληνογερμανών εφήβων που ζουν στη Γερμανία και έχουν δεχθεί επίθεση από Γερμανούς νεοναζί. Σύμφωνα με έρευνες, ρατσιστικά και ακροδεξιά ή αριστερά κινήματα και ομάδες είναι παρόντα όχι μόνο σε περιόδους κοινωνικής και οικονομικής κρίσης, αλλά και στην καθημερινή ζωή σε περιόδους ευημερίας και



ανάπτυξης. Η ανάγκη να ανήκει κανείς κάπου, η παραμέληση των γονιών προς τα παιδιά, ο απλός και ευθύς τρόπος σκέψης που ακολουθούν αυτές οι κινήσεις ελκύουν τους νέους και χαρακτηρίζουν αυτά τα κινήματα. Ο κίνδυνος επανεμφάνισης είναι πάντα παρών, επομένως όλοι πρέπει να παραμείνουν σε εγρήγορση και να έχουν τα μάτια τους ανοιχτά. Οι δύο νεαρές ηρωίδες αποδεικνύουν με τη στάση τους ότι η προστασία των ευάλωτων και ευαίσθητων κοινωνικών ομάδων είναι υποχρέωση όλων, ξεκινώντας από τα παιδιά έως τους ενήλικες και τις κρατικές αρχές.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Λότη Πέτροβιτς-Ανδρουτσοπούλου, Νεοναζί, ρατσισμός, ρατσισμός.

Introduction

Neo-Nazism is a subject that was rather unusual to find in Greek children's literature until recently. In the last decade, the stormy economic, political and social developments have drastically changed the picture in crucial aspects of everyday life.

Travelling back in time, Nazism appeared as a formal ideology of the German state when Adolph Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933. Six years later, in 1939, World War II broke out, and many countries around Europe suffered under the Nazi occupation. In Greece, the first political party affiliated with the fascist ideology was founded in the decade of the 1920s by Ioannis Metaxas, a former army officer (Tsoukalas, 1981: 43). In August 1936, Metaxas took advantage of the turbulent political situation in Greece and established a dictatorship after a coup d'état. Metaxas' regime bore some national-socialistic characteristics, such as the Nazi salute and the youth organisations (Petraki, 2006, pp.11-18; Gkanoulis, 2016, p. 28). Metaxas himself was a Fascism sympathiser (Petraki, 2006, pp. 11-18), but when Italy declared war against Greece in October 1940, he was forced to join the Axis. After the final defeat of the Greek army against the German Nazis in April 1941, many parts of Greece suffered hell on Earth under the boot of the German yoke from 1941 to 1944. Whole cities and villages were ravished due to the robust Greek Resistance movement leading people to torture and execution and wiping out the Greek Jew community. The list of the martyrdoms in Greek territory has no end: Kalavryta, Distomo, Chortiatis, Kaisariani, Doxato Dramas, Kerdyllia Serron, Viannos and Ierapetra in Crete, Ligiades in Ioannina to name but a few.

Nazism and fascism first emerged in Greece mainly as nationalism during the *Interwar era* (1918-1940) (Gkanoulis, 2016 pp. 12&15). The first nationalist union appeared in June 1916 amid *World War I* (1914-1918) in the field of the Greek army (Gkanoulis, 2016, p. 12; Kordatos, 1955-1960, v. 13, p. 462). Usually, this kind of organisation is aimed at preserving national identity, religious faith and protecting the nation against any external threat (Gkanoulis, 2016, pp. 15-16, 18, 21; Gazi, 2011). Some had a deep anti-Semitic character (Tsiaronis, 1999, pp. 25, 102; Gkanoulis, 2016, pp. 21-23). Even if they tried hard to be established, they never had a severe effect among Greeks in comparison to Italy and Germany, where they indeed found popular support (Boresja,



1984; Payne, 1995, p. 320; Gkanoulis, 2016, p. 20; Elefantis, 1979, p. 201). They ended up with the coup d'état by Ioannis Metaxas on the 4th of August 1936, as referred to above.

During the *Nazi occupation* (1941-1944) of Greece, multiple movements were established by Greek Nazi sympathisers having the support of the Nazi occupation force (Mazower, 2006). The notorious *Security Forces* (*Τάγματα Ασφαλείας*) were established by the collaborationist Prime Minister Ioannis Rallis (Markezinis, 1994, pp. 287-290; Fleisser, 1988, p. 363; Hondros, 1984). Another Nazi sympathiser organisation, {E.S.P.O. (Zaousis, 1987, p. 137; Chatzivasilieou, 2001, p. 110), took similar action. These groups assisted the Nazis in preserving order. After the end of the Nazi occupation and the subsequent *Greek Civil War* (1946-1949), far-right groups continue to act in Greek territory, namely Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, *Organisation X* in Athens under the guise of the anti-communist struggle (Sikos, 2000; Sarafi, 2002; Zafeiropoulos, 1956, p. 154; Fleisser, 1984) committing a series of crimes like torturing and beating up civilians of opposing political views, terrorising them, looting their homes and even raping defenceless women at times (Marantzidis, 2002; Zafeiropoulos, 1956, p. 156; Katsoudas, 2016). They were not connected to the army, but they constituted some militia against the leftist members of the Resistance and many ex-partners of the Nazis (Karkanis, 1981, pp. 30-34; Dordanas, 2011, p. 36). This historic period is known widely as *White Terrorism* (Alivizatos, 1984, pp. 454-456).

In the '50s, we can trace many short-lived or long-lived far-right nationalistic organisations. They are loosely or entirely closely connected to the army, the state secret services and sometimes to the US factor in the context of the *Cold War* (1945-1991) (Tsoukalas, 1981, pp. 136-137; Kleitsikas-Sperantsoni, 2003, p. 61; Murtagh, 2005, p. 78; Ganser, 2005, pp. 215-216). The coup d'etat of 1967 temporarily strengthens the far-right political tendency in Greece. When the dictatorship collapsed in 1974, short-lived groups occasionally emerged (Gkanoulis, 2016, p. 105). The far-right organisation of *Golden Dawn* was established in 1980 (Gkanoulis, 2016, p. 110), claiming it would never be involved in politics (*Golden Dawn-the journal*, 1980). Its members were initially far-right supporters, unemployed, hooligans, skinheads, and people of the underworld (Chasapopoulos, 2013, pp. 22, 29). They published a self-titled journal where unsigned articles with social-nationalistic, racist and anti-Semitic subjects appeared (*Golden Dawn-the Journal*, 1980). From 1990 to 1998, members of the organisation were accused of participating in more than 50 assaults in Athens, Salonika, Patra, Komotini and Chania (*Eleftherotypia*, 1998). The most severe action was a prominent Golden Dawn member's near-fatal beating of a young history student in Athens in 1998 (Psarras, 2009).

The emergence of neo-Nazism in Greece

A long time later, in October 2010, a member of the extreme right-winged party of *Golden Dawn*, which until then was getting a meagre percentage in the national elections without electing any representatives in the Greek parliament, is elected counsellor in the city of



Athens (Papadopoulos, 2010). Many incidents occurred between the members of the Gold Dawn and immigrants throughout the country. During the national elections in May 2012, the Neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn came third, receiving a high percentage of around 7% (Results of Greek Elections May/June 2012). It was shocking news, overwhelming the whole country, especially when this was repeated in the run-off in June. Between the two elections, the spokesman of the party slapped the face of a renowned Greek female journalist on Greek TV (To Vima, 2012). Feeling empowered by their entrance into the Greek parliament, Golden Dawn started to show its real face. Many foreigners living in Greece were persecuted and humiliated by party members and supporters. Three Egyptians who were then working as fishermen in Keratsini, near Athens, were attacked by a group of Golden Dawn supporters in June 2012, ending up in hospital (JailGoldenDawn, 2014). Meanwhile, groups of party members and supporters playing a role respective to that of the Nazi raid guilds visited open-air markets and hospitals to check the identity and the residence permit of the immigrant salespeople and elderly helpers. In January 2013, they assassinated the Pakistani immigrant Sakhzat Lukman in the middle of the night as he was cycling to work (JailGoldenDawn, 2013).

The peak of Golden Dawn's illegal action was the assassination of the hip hop musician Pavlos Fyssas in Keratsini, aka *Killah P.*. Fyssas had openly expressed his opposition to the party's activities in Athens' poorest suburbs where they tried to recruit new members by helping poor and unemployed Greeks mostly financially. Fyssas' opposition led to his assassination by a party supporter in September 2013. This tragic fact led to the arrest of leading members until gradually the party disassembled (JailGoldenDawn, 2015-16). A few days before Pavlos Fyssas' assassination, Golden Dawn's members attacked a group of Greek Communist Party members, beating them up and sending nine people to hospital with injuries (JailGoldenDawn, 2014). The final exoneration for the victims of the Golden Dawn and Greek society, in general, came with the party's conviction in October 2020 for Pavlos Fyssas' assassination (Papadopoulos, 2020).

Many discussions have been made about why a considerable part of Greek society stood by the side of a neo-Nazi party. At first, analysts expressed the opinion that this was a reaction to the multiple economic and social crises the Greek society had been undergoing, resulting in the significant loss of income, a drop of living standards, unemployment and consequently, impoverishment. Globalisation seems to have played a crucial role (Held-McGrew, 2002, pp.173-180). The matter is far more complex, initiating in the history of extreme right-winged movements and parties, the mismanagement of the immigration issue (Kapsalis, 2018, pp. 112-115, 345), and the corruption in political life and the public sector. Nonetheless, we cannot exclude the profound belief of a small part of the population in the superiority of the Greek tribe due to its long ancient history.

Realism in Children's Literature- Greek Children's historical novel



Realism in children's literature is a subject that has often concerned children's books' authors and scholars. They all agree that we must not hide the truth of social events from children. Still, they should be presented in a proper and adjusted way according to the children's age (Petrovits, 1990, pp. 25-29, 50-55; Kanatsouli, 2004, p. 18; Papadatos, 2016, p. 24). In Greek social children's novels, there are three categories of social issues referring to interpersonal relationships-personal matters, social problems and universal problems (Papadatos, 2016, pp. 23-39; 2009, pp. 56-65). Loty Petrovits (1983, pp. 50-51) herself believes realism should be imprinted in a way that will not make children feel despair or afraid but foster hope for the future instead.

Although many Greek children's and adolescents books refer to the Greek Resistance against the Nazi occupation, there are not any books referring to the neo-Nazi movements until today. Greek Resistance during World War II took legendary dimensions, the strongest and the bravest. Many children's book authors wrote novels and short stories concerning their memories from that era or unfolding original stories. We can mention some talented authors, namely Alki Zei, Georges Sari, Kalliopi Sfaellou, Loty Petrovits-Androutsopoulou, Pantelis Kaliotsos, Irini Marra, Iro Papamoschou. These stories are mainly about the heroic stance of children-heroes towards the enemy of their country, their participation in the *Resistance* movement and their personal, painful course from childhood innocence and carelessness to maturity (Anagnostopoulos, 2001, pp. 181-205).

The Monsters of the Hill (2002) by Loty Petrovits-Androutsopoulou

The Greek author Loty Petrovits-Androutsopoulou foresaw the future danger of the neo-Nazi movement revival in Greece when she published her realistic-social novel (Aytzis, 2004; Ilia, 2008) for older children and teenagers, *The Monsters of the Hill (Τα τέρατα του λόφου)* in 2002. Two twelve-year-old girls and close friends, Olga and Irini, found a little boy from Africa, Samuel, being attacked by some young racist boys: “*You, filthy negro!*”, “*Hideous bastard*”, “*You are going to die, stupid, you and everyone like you!*” (Petrovits, 2002, p. 14). They help him to attend to his wounds by bringing him to Olga's house, whose mother is a doctor. Olga's family knows Samuel's family. They are peaceful people, immigrants from Africa living in the area: “*This man works all day, said one Olga's father to her grandmother. He stays all day at the university, and at sunrise, he downloads and uploads products in the open-air market to make a living, he studies all night. In the end, he will get sick*” (Petrovits, 2002, p. 26). They are working hard and Samuel's father is trying to get his degree as a doctor. The company of the racist young boys returns and seeks revenge. It is then that a series of tragic events happen.

The novel is written in first-person and third-person narrative in the form of electronic messages Irini is sending to her grandmother, that lives in the USA and from the perspective of the ubiquitous narrator. The use of a journal, letter or, nowadays, an electronic message has been a popular narrative form in children's literature since the beginning of this literary genre.



The families of the two girls, Olga and Irini, represent the average Greek urban family. Their parents are well-educated, and well of who they care about their children and have a close relationship with them. They live in a historic neighbourhood in the centre of Athens, where immigrants reside. The coexistence between the dwellers and the new inhabitants of the area has recently been difficult because of the degradation of the historic centre of Athens.

Characteristics of the novel-Transtextuality

In Loty Petrovits' work, we often find the element of *intertext transtextuality* (Platanitis, 1997, pp. 171-172; Compagnon, 1979, p. 337). Many heroes found in previous novels appear in the next, too. In her previous novel, *I am Mistaken, Mr. Neuger!* (1989), the author describes the story of Alexis Neuger, Olga's father. Alexis' father, Frantz, was an Austrian soldier forced to fight on the German Nazis side. He played a crucial role in rescuing many women and children in the Holocaust of Kalavryta in the Peloponnese in December 1943. Frantz passed on his ideology against war and racism to his son, Alexis and Alexis fulfilled his father's wish for that tragic event in World War II. Olga's parents are trying very hard to help Samuel and his parents to escape the lethal threat they are facing. Her father explains to her why the little boy has been attacked by the company of the young men on the basketball field and that it's not the boy's fault. So, he is also passing his healthy and peace-making ideology to his daughter.

Irini's family also has the same social and financial profile. Her grandparents immigrated to the US for a better future. Irini is aware of what they had to cope with in their new country and how important it is to be hospitable and tolerant with those coming in a foreign country searching for a better life.

Olga and Irini also appear in the author's previous novels, *Who Is Going to Write about Our Dog?* (1999) and *The Mystery of the Summer Santa Claus* (2000). Samuel's family is described as a typical immigrant family from Africa. They have come to Greece from their poor country, Nigeria, to build a better future for themselves and their children. They are peaceful and work very hard. Samuel's father, Mr Dickon, is studying to become a dentist while working as a salesman in the open-air market. His mother takes care of her family and works very hard, too. Apellis is a little older, a distant cousin of Olga and a good friend of both girls. He appears in the previous novels *Canary and Mint* (1996), *Who Is Going to Write about Our Dog?* and *The Mystery of Summer Santa Claus*. Hans is the Greek-German brother of Philippos, who is getting married. In the novel *I am Mistaken, Mr Neuger* appears as a little boy!

Another immigrant heroine is Ms Lyn from the Philippines, who works as a cleaning lady. She has two daughters, Nelia and Theresa and was working as a nurse in her homeland. Nelia speaks Greek fluently and is part of the immigrant children's company in the novel *The Mystery of Summer Santa Claus*.

Mr Lefteris is a Greek pensioner who lived and worked in Australia. He came back to Greece; he lives in the same neighbourhood and makes toys for the little



immigrant children in the basement of his house. Mr Lefteris is one of the main heroes in the author's novel *The Mystery of the Summer Santa Claus*.

The group of young neo-Nazi boys consists of three persons, Fritz, Miltos and Anestis.

Other heroes that reappear in *The Monsters of the Hill* are Philippos and his future wife, Christina. We find them in the previous novels of the author *House of Five* (1987), *I am Mistaken, Mr Neuger!*, *A Song for Three* (1992) and *Yousouri in the Pocket* (1994).

According to Elena Staniou (2014, pp. 381-382) in *The Monsters of the Hill* we find the most reappearances of fictional heroes from previous novels of the writer, mainly from the novels *Who Is Going to Write About Our Dog?* and *The Mystery of the Summer Santa Claus*. Some of these heroes will not appear again in another novel of Loty Petrovits, but they all are overwhelmed by the tragic events.

Three more significant transtextual references in the novel are the article about Neo-Nazi's attacks against Greek immigrants in Germany that appear in the former popular Greek newspaper *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* and an extract from work *About Alexander's Destiny or Virtue* by the ancient Greek writer Plutarch. Finally, little Nelia appears to read an older book by the writer addressed to younger children under the title *Fairy Tales from Africa* (Staniou, 2014, pp. 380-381).

The district of Exarcheia in Athens

Olga's and Irini's families live in the district of Exarcheia, near the centre of Athens. Exarcheia used to be a safe, lively place, highly popular with Greeks a few decades ago (Kairofylas, 2000, pp. 146, 149, 151, 152-153). It was the place of residence of several famous and wealthy Greek families. Artists, writers and students alike used to hang out in the area (Krasas, 2001, p. 3). The decline started immediately after the fall of the Colonels' Junta in 1974. There are various reasons why the centre of Athens provided housing for a high percentage of immigrants. Big cities of South Europe are developed in a compact urban web, with higher buildings, narrower roads and suburbs closer to their centre, in contrast to the big cities of Northern Europe. The land uses (residence, trade, artisanship, industry) are mixed and social groups inhabit the same areas and not distinct areas as in the European North (Leontidou, 1997). Many families belonging to the middle and upper social classes moved to the northeast and southeast suburbs of the city between 1971 and 1991. As a result, many apartments and many basements which housed cottage industries were left unoccupied; the elderly residents of the apartments who remained in the centre gradually died, leading to a drop in the rent prices and making them more approachable to the impoverished groups of immigrants. The centre of the city always constitutes a transport hub for the rest of the city, the country and abroad and a place where immigrants can find cheap accommodation and open spaces like parks and squares where they could meet with their compatriots (Papatzani, 2015, p 44; Maloutas et al., 2013). Athens's centre has been densely populated since the first decades of the 20th century (Papatzani, 2015, p. 57). In the late '60s, the development quotient rose to 30%,



preventing new building construction. Many blocks of flats were built in place of older detached houses as their residents were persuaded to give them up because they were provided with new apartments built in place of their old houses (Maloutas, 2013, p. 46). So the centre of Athens housed many immigrants from different countries and cultures, thus causing anxiety and frustration to the dwellers of the district, making them feel insecure about being surrounded by foreigners as the crime rates rose and certain anarchist groups conflicted with the police.

The criminal features of the Neo-Nazi group in the novel

Five main events in the novel signal the criminal character of the neo-Nazi group that harasses and chases foreigners and those who help them. The former event concerns the beating of eight-year-old Samuel from Nigeria because he is black. The group members think the boy is inferior because of his skin colour and country of origin, a stereotypical belief of Nazism that collapses under modern scientific findings. They insult the boy by calling him a *filthy black, bastard, orangutan*. Moreover, archaeological research has concluded that the first humans on Earth were located in Africa. The latter event is the fire they started in Mr Lefteris' basement, where he made toys for immigrant children. In the neo-Nazi ideology, it is unacceptable for someone to help the undesirable foreign intruders in any way. No one should help them or show hospitable intentions. Mr Lefteris and a little immigrant girl are hospitalised with severe burns. Mr Lefteris dies. Another day, the group attacks Mr Dickon, Samuel's father, in a local coffee shop. They call him names, and they end up exchanging fists. The next time they meet him, his son and Olga beat Mr Dickon to death and kidnap Olga because she defended them. Their belief in their so-called moral principles is unshakable. That is why they try to blow up the church where Philippos and Christina are about to marry, but thankfully police arrest them just in time.

The gang of three friends has all the features of a criminal organisation. They insult, beat, kidnap and even murder people who don't agree with their ideas or feel that they violate their firm beliefs. Everything is unquestionable and unassailable in their microcosm. In the novel by Loty Petrovits, they are described as skinheads, without their own will, uneducated and eager to impress their like-minded people in Germany. An older friend of the girls, Apellis, says they are antisocial and bullies, people not worthy of being taken seriously. These characteristics compound the classic profile of a neo-Nazi supporter.

As Olga is kidnapped and guarded by the three neo-Nazis, Hans, a young Greek-German, also mentioned in the author's previous work, who has come for his brother Philippos' wedding, appears in their hideout as the German neo-Nazi representative they have been waiting for. They escape together. Olga speaks German too because her father is half Austrian, and they can communicate without being perceived. Hans, Philippos' half-brother from Germany, narrates a shocking story about their sister, Gerta. Gerta is a student at a German university sensitised to the subject of neo-Nazism in her native country. She works on her thesis about the famous Polish humanist Janusz Korzack who



didn't abandon the orphan Jewish children he was attending in his institution and followed them to the concentration camp where they were sent. She had also protested against a refugee camp arson, a bomb attack against Russian immigrants and the assassination of an African immigrant by neo-Nazi supporters. Her Greek name irritated them, too. One night they attacked her, pushed her away and curved the swastika on her forehead. This is a real fact that happened in the mid 90's to a young Greek immigrant in Germany. Such news dominated the Greek media for many days. Hans explains to the girls that only a few Germans embrace this ideology, and most of the country's population desires a peaceful coexistence with people and believes in equality and justice.

Irini also writes her grandmother an e-mail about the neo-Nazi movement in Germany by quoting relevant passages from a story published in a popular Greek newspaper.

The notion of evil

According to philosophy, there are two forms of evil: the natural and the moral (Giannaras, 2008, p. 17). Humans in Western philosophy are responsible for their wrong choices and the harm that might come of them. Humans are part of nature and are subject to the instincts of self-preservation and pleasure (Giannaras, 2008, p. 31). The representatives of *Enlightenment* think that the notions of good and evil are social inventions without any cause or purpose. The people's perception of good and evil is subjective (Giannaras, 2008, pp. 32, 35-36). Social evil takes place within human society. Karl Marx defines social evil as a result of external factors of the environment and social inequality. Sigmund Freud claims it results from inner human impulses (Matsoukas, 2009, pp. 25-26).

In the modern era, prominent philosophers of the Enlightenment like Leibniz and Immanuel Kant have claimed their theories about the existence of evil. Leibniz introduces the notion of *poetic justice* (*θεοδικία*) using categories of legal speech (Neiman, 2015). He wants to prove that God allows the existence of evil on purpose. He thinks that God is forced to allow the existence of evil because He is restricted by the eternal ideas which contain the substance of every object in platonic terms. Every divine action is intentionally good in the possible best world. Leibniz distinguishes three kinds of evil: metaphysics, natural and moral (Neiman, 2015).

Immanuel Kant examines the notion of evil in the secular field. According to his theory, anyone who does not act morally only because something should always be done in such a way as to follow the rules of morality is likely to incline towards radical evil (Kant, 1996, p. 6. 32; Andrianopoulou, 2015). This tendency escalates based on human weakness to act morally to an extent against the moral law where love predominates. The only way for humans to be considered moral is always to act considering the common good (Andrianopoulou, 2015).

The modern philosopher Hannah Arendt, starting with the coverage of Adolph Eichman's trial in Jerusalem as a journalist, develops her theory about the commonplace



of evil. Arendt sees evil as an act that can be done mainly by ordinary people rather than ingenious leaders (Intzevidou, 2013, p. 28). During the trial, she saw Eichmann as an ordinary person who was neither intelligent nor fluent. He kept saying that he was carrying out orders and had little to do with the responsibilities attributed to him about the Holocaust (Arendt, 2009, pp. 33, 46). Arendt believes that evil spreads like fungi. Thought is predetermined, and there is no space to analyse the facts (Arendt, 2009, p. 330). Only when humanity learns its lesson, there is hope evil will be prevented.

The group of neo-Nazi supporters in the novel causes harm and pain to innocent people. Their actions can be characterised as *hate crimes*. A hate crime is a violent action against a person because of their colour, religion, origin, sexual orientation, gender etc. (OSCE, 2010: 13). In forensics, a hate crime doesn't always happen due to the perpetrator's hate for the victim but quite often is attributed to deep-rooted prejudice, e.g. Jews are wealthy (Lima, 2013, p. 13-14). The perpetrators don't usually know the victim (Papathanasiou, 2015, p. 15), commit their crimes in open spaces (Chakraborti et al., 2014, p. 31) and are usually men (Chakraborti et al., 2014, p. 56; Iganski & Smith 2011; Smithson et al., 2011; Williams & Tregidga, 2013, p. 46). In Greece, hate crimes are mostly committed by groups of people who think they are protecting their country (Racist Violent Record Network Annual Report, 2018, p.15).

In the novel by Loty Petrovits, the members of the neo-Nazi group correspond to the characteristics described above. They are young boys, marginalised, facing social and financial problems. The stereotype that immigrants and refugees are to be blamed for the high unemployment rates is one of their primary arguments in favour of their hostile behaviour. Another cliché concerning their perseverance to drive off foreigners from their country is the perception that they need to maintain the purity of their nation without extraneous elements, which might worsen it. According to Theodor Adorno (1950, p. 228), people a *possibly authoritarian personality* (conservative, attached to long-established middle class, values, submissive to the authority of the group, aggressive to everything they consider opposes their values, cynic, cruel etc.) are more likely to be attracted in far-right or dogmatic ideologies. Although they are expected to rebel against these oppressive mechanisms, they cannot do so and fight what they consider to be different (Adorno, 1950, p. 233). The writer's stance through her fictional hero Mr Neuger is that crimes like these should only brought to justice.

Conclusions

In *The Monsters of the Hill*, the heroes, Mr and Ms Dickon, their son, Samuel, Ms Lyn and her daughters, Nelia and Theresa, are pictured as the typical immigrants who come to a foreign country pursuing a better life and are working hard to adjust to a different society and achieve their goal. Some of them speak Greek fluently, as Mr Dickon and Nelia do. They have been unfairly prosecuted and targeted by the neo-Nazis. Others are seriously injured or lose their life. All of them, along with Olga, Irini, and the girls' friends and families, face a dangerous, paranoid social tense (Lukens, 1995, p. 68; Karpozilou,



1994, p.178), which are trying to deal with every legal means. This kind of conflict about immigration is relatively common in children's novels (Karpozilou, 1994, p. 178). The depiction of the novel heroes follows, to some point, the stereotypes that are common in children novel's referring to immigrants, the native inhabitants who take their side and the racist groups that oppose their presence (Christomati, 2018, p. 62). Immigrants are shown as kind, good-hearted, scared, and willing to adjust to the new country without causing any trouble; the native inhabitants appear to be supportive, progressive, and open-minded, whereas the racist groups that oppose their presence as ruthless, aggressive, ready to commit crimes, mentally blind-folded. The story's ending is not exactly happy but hopeful, following the modern trends in children's literature (Kohl, 1995, p. 68).

The danger of neo-Nazism is present in every time and place. There are always vulnerable people looking for consolation and thus joining such groups to pursue purpose and perspective. In a time of peace and prosperity, two young girls resist and stand up for a younger boy being prosecuted for his colour and origin. Many adults in their place may have looked the other way. The education they have received from their families seems very important, especially when their parents are exemplified by their behaviour. Everyone must be free to live, believe and be accepted as they are without compromise that insults their dignity and human rights. Violence and crime are condemned as punishment because someone is different from us and has another view of reality and the world. Evil constitutes a part of our world, but we always have the choice to resist and change things for the better, even help those who are causing it. Vigilance and tolerance are necessary conditions to create a better world.

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