



THE AMBASSADOR OF GREECE
TO AUSTRALIA



Message

Canberra, 19 May 2015

I would like to congratulate the Greek Bilingual Bookshop for the initiative to present Dr. Maria Zarimis' book "Darwin's Footprint".

Dr. Zarimis, a biomedical scientist and scholar of Modern Greek brings to us with her book a very interesting dimension on how evolution theory has fertilised the Greek intellectual thinking.

The concept of evolution has proved to be a very interesting dimension for new argumentation on issues which have affected Modern Greeks since the 19th Century, that is national identity and language. It fertilised a discussion on how we can improve ourselves in terms of culture and mentality and the proper education for our youth.

Dr, Zarimis refers to the acquaintance of eminent Greek poets and writers with Darwinnism. Allow me to focus on two big spirits of Greece: Kostis Palamas and Nikos Kazantzakis.

Palamas very eloquently spoke about the war of ideas. He linked the continuity of the greek language to the continuity of the Greeks. The demotic language was the "the living, uncultivated language of the people". For Kostis Palamas all great ideas "are not born suddenly and at once, but are made, evolve return, never the same, but always varied; but in their essence, the same. And one such example is Darwinism".

Nikos Kazantzakis is equally eloquent expressing his state of mind like this: "the trouble with our times is that we are caught up in the middle. On the one hand, we have lost our spontaneous appreciation of the world's beauty; on the other, we have lost our faith in the heavens above. We cannot be

pagans because Christianity has poisoned our attitude towards material things. Darwinism has destroyed the perfect spiritual world, which is the necessary basis of Christian behaviour. We are thus the melancholy victims of a transitional age.”

And I will conclude with the tasks Kazantzakis entrusts us with as a moral duty to our ancestors in the process of the continuation of humanity:

- Feel within you all your ancestors.
- Continue their work
- Pass on to your child the great mandate to move on and become better.

Finally, I cannot omit Grigorios Xenopoulos’ remarks on God and Science. His position will be that no scientific theory can touch on the concept of God. Science and Religion are the closest friends and one helps the other for the prosperity and progress in humanity.

We thank Dr. Zarimis for her scientific work and the opportunity to remind us how the illuminated minds of Greece received evolutionary theory as progressive European intellectuals endowed with a long history and culture.

This thinking remains timely today more than ever.

I thank you very much for the opportunity to communicate with you on this beautiful occasion.

Haris D. Dafaranos

Ambassador