Greek Feminism in the Age of National Invention

2.1 Introduction

The first feminist critique of Greek culture and society occurred in the context of the 1821 War of Independence, more commonly referred to as the Revolution. The latter commenced in March 1821 and ended almost a decade later with victory delivered to the Greeks, courtesy to a large extent of the collective intervention of the Russian, British, and French naval fleets.[1] The vigorous nation-building narratives of the Greek Enlightenment, which foreshadowed the national liberation struggle and which continued throughout the nineteenth century, provided a suitable habitat for the gradual examination of traditional social relations. **1**

This chapter is concerned with the interaction between the two fledgling ideologies of nationalism and feminism as the modern Greek state was being constructed. It explores changing female subjectivities inspired by a climate of nation-building fervour and emergent feminist discourse in the early stages of bourgeois consolidation, which gave rise to new political and social possibilities. **2**

During this formative century, Greece, a predominantly rural country, experienced the contradictions brought on by urbanisation. The emerging urban centres on the one hand and the rural areas on the other represented two distinct but parallel realities, both of which witnessed a redefinition of boundaries between social classes and the creation of new social categories, which are difficult to describe in conventional class terms. The reference to the 'middle strata' (*mesaia stromata*) adopted by this chapter is a term coined by Varika (1987: 9) to describe '. . . the sum total of social groups whose development coincided with urbanisation, the rise of the bourgeoisie and Europeanisation; developments which took place during the years, roughly, 1830 to 1890 in a climate characterised by free trade, the spread of education, the rise of the civil service, the increase in the number of clerks, petit-bourgeois merchants, shop-keepers'.[2] Indeed, it was amongst women located within the middle strata that gender scepticism and a collective feminist consciousness was articulated in the latter half of the nineteenth century, several decades after the first isolated case of individual female protest in the person of Elizabeth Moutzan-Martinengo. The feminists who emerged from this middle stratum located the debate firmly within the nationalist logic that defined their times. The specific identification with the female warriors of the 1821 Revolution was a prominent legitimating feature of this program and constitutes the focal point of this chapter. **3**

Before elaborating on the iconography adopted by Greek protofeminist discourse in the late nineteenth century, it is useful to take a cursory look at representations of women in popular culture before the Revolution. This may help explain the significant impact of the radicalising effects of revolution, in which many women participated as agents of change. Perhaps the richest insights into the predominantly rural social environment of pre-revolutionary Greece are **4** contained in demotic verse, much of which was composed, sung, and transmitted to subsequent generations by women. Other representations of women's lives in traditional Ottoman-Greek society throughout the period of occupation (1453–1821), from the structural considerations to the minutiae, are virtually non-existent. Girls were excluded from the existing school system and, according to Lambros (1918), the lack of evidence indicates that educated women were not visible in society over many centuries. Even in the leading centres of urban culture, such as Constantinople, the women formed a world apart in which they were confined to domestic pursuits and duties.

2.2 Gender Representation in Demotic Verse

The predominantly agricultural basis of Ottoman Greek society continued well into the twentieth century. Depictions of women in demotic song largely reflected the harshness of rural life and the specific predicament of women within its social and economic structure. This predicament was largely determined by the effects of women's traditional commodification through the dowry system of property transmission and, by extension, their special moral responsibilities as embodied repositories of male and family honour as wives, sisters, and daughters. This arrangement underpinned a generalised confinement of women—both social and physical—which varied in degree across the classes, as well as their ambiguous cultural status, an object of both adoration and contempt, as custom turned them into financial and moral liabilities. Most of the roles women assume in the demotic tradition identify them in relation to male kin, rather than as individual agents, and provide if nothing else a poignant portrait of their essential vulnerability in Greek society. Recurrent scenarios in demotic songs convey the repressive behavioural codes governing gender relations, the trauma of forced/arranged marriages, as well as the abduction of women by obsessed admirers. A song entitled 'For She Who Died Unjustly' (in Ioannou, 1970: 127) tells of a daughter who overruled marital conventions in declaring her long-standing love affair with another young man. The song ends when her mother, guardian of old-world morality, responds to this transgression by inciting a beating that is perpetrated by all the members of the family in unison on the daughter, resulting in her death. 5

The event of an arranged marriage as a girl's main rite of passage to adulthood and social respectability (followed by childbearing) speaks to the common motif of fear and trauma felt by young brides as they left the family home to effectively become the property of strangers—the new husband and his family. Recurrent subthemes allude to women's fear of evil parents-in-law and to the misappropriation of dowries. In 'The Bride Who Suffered Ill-Fortune', a well-dowered daughter who had married into a wealthy family in a distant land, gathered her few remaining belongings and returned home in shame after her in-laws spent her dowry following their bankruptcy. 'The Evil In-Laws' (see Ioannou, 1970) tells of a new bride who is poisoned by her parents-in-law after they discover that she is pregnant on her wedding day. 6

There were also songs depicting marital love and particularly the sorrow and anguish of long-term spousal separation, as husbands pursued employment in distant and foreign lands (*xenitia*) or went to sea. But in relation to the popular theme of adultery, demotic songs reveal that, for women, mere suspicion was sufficient cause for the penalty of death, as in the case of 'Menousis', a song from the Epirus region about a husband who slays his wife when he suspects disloyalty (in Mammopoulos, 1966). Other popular narratives tell of the plight of the forsaken woman, or abandonment and emotional dereliction under the very rigid moral codes of the Ottoman Empire. We find, for example, stories of women who seek relief in the 'serpent's poison' after their loved ones abandon them or fail to return from their travels or cease to communicate with them; or stories of young girls impregnated out of wedlock, abandoned by kin, who wait in despair for the birth of their child and possibly their own personal sacrifice. 7

Women are not always presented as the passive and powerless victims of a male-dominated and defined society, however. Demotic songs often draw us to their magnanimity. One such example is a Pontian song depicting voluntary sacrifice. It tells of Yannis, an only son who was approached by Death (*Haros*) while preparing for his wedding. Yannis pleads with Death to give him at least enough time to marry, but Death does not concede. 8

> Yannis, the one and only Yannis, the Yannis like no other
> Yannis is preparing to make joy and wedding
> Death stood by the door and threatened him.
> I came to wrench your soul and to go my way fulfilled
> I plead with you, my Death, with a divine plea.
> (Mammopoulos, 1966: 115)

In his despair, Yannis remembers Saint George and urgently asks for his assistance. Saint George sympathises, rushes to God and pleads with him to grant Yannis more time. God replies: If his parents are willing to offer him half the remaining years of their life, Yannis will be spared. Alas, his parents decline but his betrothed immediately offers to share her years with him: 'the best years of my life are for you and I to share', she tells him.[3] This song can serve as an example of what Ruth Mandel (1983), using the theoretical contributions of structuralism and Greek gender-linked concepts of culture and nature, describes as the role of woman as mediator. A mediator between households—at once a part of two family groups and yet part of neither, both our own (*dikos mas*) and an outsider (*xenos*), and also between the worlds of the living and the dead. It is this role as mediator that imbues woman with an essential liminality to the extent that she concurrently is the instantiation of both nature and culture, and in so being becomes the most likely sacrificial victim in Greek folk song, be it voluntary or involuntary as in 'Sacrifice at the Bridge of Arta'.[4]

Finally, a strand of the genre of particular interest to this study concerns woman's 'other' capacities, which extend beyond mediation; and these include a belligerent side which allows her unprecedented autonomy to be a complete subject. These qualities are usually reserved for the female warrior, referred to as the *andreiomeni.* But the very etymology of this term demonstrates that, in Greek culture, action, heroism, and masculinity are intertwined and the 9 celebrated female warrior is but an aberration of nature—a woman exceptional in her embodiment of or capacity for manly virtues and qualities. *Andreiomeni* is used to refer to feminine bravery. As its basis (in Latin characters *andr-*) is the word for man, the equation of female bravery with masculinised femininity embedded within the Greek language. Other linguistic derivatives are *andreia* (bravery), *andragathia* (heroic deeds at the battlefield), *androgynaikes* (masculine or androgynous women; a term often used to refer to women soldiers), *ethous andrikou* (possessing male ethos/virtues), and *andreiosini* (the virtue of bravery). By contrast, to be cowardly in the Greek language is to be *un-andros* (unmanly).

The heroines of demotic verse can be traced back to the bravery shown by Greek women in pre-revolutionary skirmishes with the Ottoman establishment, as well as their heroic feats during the Revolution. A pre-revolutionary favourite tells of the heroism of the highly mythologised Souliot community, and the women in particular, in staving off the attacks of Ali Pasha in 1792. But the high point is their final heroic stand after the surrender of Souli in 1803, when a group of Souliot women chose to 'dance to their deaths' off the cliffs of Zaloggo rather than fall into the clutches of the Turk-Albanian soldiers who pursued them: 10

> Women of the East, women of the West,
> Some with eyes of blue, others with eyes of black,
> And others still of bright blue, the kind of angels
> Other (women) excel in dance and others in song
> And others in housekeeping and sweet words,
> But manly women, soldier women,
> The East did not have, nor the West.
> These women were born only in Souli,
> These women gave birth to Souliots in Souli,
> Tsavelena will prove it to you, and Despo too,
> And so will Eleni with the spear of Botsaris,
> As will the infamous cliffs of Zalogo.
> What misfortune befell the Kolokotronis clan,
> Enslaved by the Turks, Ali Bey's army
> The humble Anagnostena, abducted by the Laliotes,
> Poor Giorgiakena being carried off to Kalamata,
> but Konstandou was sly and dressed as a man,
> She took the light spear and the heavy rifle
> And joined the men, setting off for Inner Mani.[5]

The female warrior figure in demotic verse has a longer tradition, however, and can be traced to female warriors in ancient and Byzantine Greek myth. Indeed, there are familiar motifs which appear in the more recent folk songs of the Revolution, such as the male disguise, the prominence of horses, the devotion of sister to brother, the choice of suicide over capture, the equation between the defence of Greek honour, and the preservation of feminine virtue or chastity.[6] The poems provide an idea of actual historical events and the way they touched the lives of the women who heard, wrote, and sung these songs. In any case, the demotic depiction of women fighters acted as a conduit of stories for illiterate women who were thus informed not only of historical events but also were given a tradition of armed female resistance, patriotism, 11 and individual feminine agency with which they could identify. Greek women still identify with this tradition today and it has been present in all manifestations of feminist discourse since the foundation of the modern nation-state. I will discuss later the specific use of such imagery by emergent protofeminist discourse in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, for its strategic potential during this period of vigorous identity formation.

2.3 Nationhood and Shifting Gender Consciousness in Greek Women's Writing

The first incidences of Greek women's formal writing can be traced to the years immediately prior to the outbreak of the Revolution, a period often referred to by historians of Greece as the heyday of the neo-Hellenic Enlightenment. As the idea and the possibility of independence, the Greek intelligentsia and other ambitious elites regarded education as the basic and primary means for the revival of the nation while still in the clutches of the Ottoman Empire.[7] It was in this climate that the first organised initiatives for female instruction appeared and the first murmurs of a link between national progress and the intellectual condition of women were heard.[8] **12**

Few Greek women received an education in the nineteenth century, and those who did were trained to become competent wives and virtuous mothers. According to Kitromilides (1983: 47), women's access to education was confined to two social groups. One was the Phanariot aristocracy,[9] which was motivated by the lively French cultural orientation of their milieu. The other group comprised women of the mobile merchant classes and professions who provided the primary social basis of the Greek Enlightenment. While narrow in scope, the educational experiences of these women provided sufficient intellectual stimulation for some of them to commit ideas to paper. Today, we know of eight such literary texts, essays, and translations published between 1816 and 1832. Many of these writers lapsed into silence shortly after the initial public disclosure of their intellectual labours. Most were absorbed by marriage and family obligations. **13**

The new ideal of an educated femininity informed the published works of those conventionally considered to be the Greek nation's first female intellectuals. The women of the Greek Enlightenment found their model of female virtue in Madame Anne Therese de Lambert's *Avis d'une mére á sa fille* (Advice from a mother to her daughter), translated into Greek by Princess Rallou Soutzou in 1819, and uniformly echoed by Phanariot ladies. De Lambert's guide to respectable womanhood advised becoming free of the ignorance and superstition of the traditional female condition (true of France in the early eighteenth century and still true of Greece in the early nineteenth century) as well as 'the frivolity and immorality of worldly modernity' (Soutzou, 1819, in Kitromilides, 1983: 48). As a result, the works of these early writers contained a striking ideological uniformity and a persistent moralistic tone. **14**

De Lambert's model of femininity was shaped by religious values, which was, according to her, the most vital source of inner strength, motivation, and serenity, fashioned out of '. . . the distinctive female virtue of solid, unshakeable bashfulness' (in Kitromilides, 1983: 49). The cultivation of female moral virtues could be facilitated through an appropriate course of studies that would expose the minds of young girls to the moral lessons of Greek and Roman history. The benefits for the woman of this intellectual and moral regimen were twofold: first, she would develop skills so as to excel in her proper sphere of activity, the management of the domestic affairs of the household. This included developing skills to deal with the servants, with whom she should be firm but benevolent, '. . . since servitude is contrary to the natural equality of all human beings'. The second and foremost benefit of the new woman, however, would be her adopting the appropriate attitude towards her husband by lowering unacceptably high expectations, traditionally the source of marital conflict and displeasure. In their place, the mature and virtuous woman would learn that humility and silence were her greatest ornaments. This way she would become what she ought to be: the shadow, the complement, and the loyal companion of her husband. **15**

The prevailing classicism of the Greek Enlightenment, in the morally edifying stories carefully chosen for girls' education, helped '. . . modern Greek women emulate the numerous paradigms of female virtue bequeathed by classical antiquity and thus would satisfy the watchful expectations of foreigners who were observing Greece's strivings for national revival' (Kitromilides, 1983: 51). **16**

Continuing this tradition, another Phanariot lady, Aikaterini Soutzou, chose to translate *Entrennes de Phocion sur le rapport de la morale avec la politique* (1819). In the same year, Roxani Samourkasi, then 13 years old, published a Greek version of Solomon Gessner's *Erastus*, which she dedicated to her father as a token of filial reverence and piety. Roxani was particularly taken with the moral spirit of the work expressed in the relation between family members. In 1818, Mitio Sakellariou from the northern Greek province of Kozani, wife of a leading member of the new class of liberal professionals and merchants, translated two comedies by Italian moralist Carlo Goldoni—*Paternal Love* and *The Cunning Widow* (1818). Her father seems to have overshadowed Sakellariou's efforts as his name appeared in the preface and he received most of the credit from her publishers, who stressed that Mitio's intellectual achievement reflected first and foremost upon her eminent father and husband. **17**

These examples demonstrate above all the influence of the French aristocracy and its values and habits on a Greek national ruling class eager to model itself upon it and moreover to shape the new national culture in its image. Interestingly, De Lambert's book, originally written by one of the cultivated ladies of the literary salons in pre-revolutionary France, first appeared in Paris in 1734, and was adopted with great enthusiasm by the fledgling Greek state approximately eighty-five years later, in spite of the revolutionary events which had engulfed France in the interim. The renowned objections of French women to the French Enlightenment's compounded prejudice against women,[10] signalled by their exclusion from the Declaration of **18**

Rights, was overlooked in the narratives of their Greek counterparts. Feminist sensibilities, which had emerged in 1780s and 1790s France,[11] did not solicit a response amongst Greek women, and this silence continued until the ideals of the Enlightenment had been well established amongst the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and the Diaspora. Indeed the first Greek responses to the radical feminism, which emerged in the early phases of the French Revolution, came from men, and most notably from the radical exponent of the Greek Enlightenment, Rhigas Velestinlis (or Pherraios) (1757–98).

Velestinlis supported the notion of gender equality, and condoned women's equal participation in national defence as well as compulsory education for all.[12] His brand of feminism and other revolutionary initiatives such as the concept of a Balkan Confederation, both famously ahead of their time, failed. However, as Kitromilides states (1983: 45), the need to '. . . rectify the abysmal conditions of female ignorance and superstition, one of the most serious impediments to national progress, had established itself, even if this was not as rigorously pursued as the issue of male education'. **19**

In contrast to Velestinlis, no one expressed more precisely and effectively the Greek Enlightenment's expectation of appropriate Greek womanhood than Adamantios Korais. Korais was born in Smyrna (1748–1833) to a mercantile family, but fled to Montpelier, France, in 1782, in an effort to escape the '. . . conservatism, formalism, and religious fanaticism of the Ottomans' (Velios, 1998: 10). A medical student at the prestigious Montpelier Institute, Korais was inspired by the events and ideals of the French Revolution which he witnessed at close range, and he and other prominent intellectuals of his era began to transfer revolutionary discourse and ideals to the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire. This culminated in a surge of patriotic writings by Korais at the beginning of the nineteenth century, writings which aspired to creating a Greek national consciousness and which are regarded as the basis of the Greek Enlightenment. With the outbreak of the Revolution, Korais became the leading advocate of cultural reform, linguistic purification, and moral reconstruction in Greek life—a critical axes in the establishment of a modern Greek state. The primary cultural medium by which the fledgling nation was to gradually transcend the legacy of Ottoman despotism and embrace the process of democratisation was through education. His ideas were influenced directly by the model of the *Encyclopedie* and by Rousseau who, in turn, posthumously influenced the educational policy of the new Greek state. **20**

Korais argued that the spread of education among women as well as men was highly desirable for the purposes of the neo-Hellenic revival. He believed that education's primary purpose amongst women was to teach them the 'art of life', which alone could produce the female character appropriate for the nation's new moral culture. This female character was to be specifically preoccupied with the production and reproduction of moral values: **21**

> Decency and modesty, which are virtues necessary to all, have been designated by nature as a particular ornament of women. The proof of this comes from the daily experience and judgement with which we all, men and women alike, judge

> those possessing these virtues or the opposite vices. An arrogant or boastful man is criticised less than a boastful woman. An immoral man is condemned by those of virtuous character, but an immoral woman is considered abominable even by immoral men; conversely the praises of a decent and modest woman in the case of a decent and modest man become exaltations. Why? Because the woman is endowed by nature with more gifts conducive to modesty in comparison to man.[13]

The Greek Enlightenment[14] and the new nationalist imperatives acknowledged women as a social group, even if the old forms of undignified subjection and exclusion were substituted for a model of female glorified subservience and exclusion. Women were tolerated as long as they limited themselves to a monologue within their own sex as '. . . public business by necessity requires male management' (Koumas, 1830, in Kitromilides, 1983: 56). By endowing women with some form of cultural recognition, their ongoing exclusion from public life and full citizenship and the ongoing absence of basic human rights continued to be legitimate. 22

Korais's, and by extension, the neo-Hellenic Enlightenment's view of women's education and their national citizenship role borrowed directly from the pioneering French experience which showed an inability/unwillingness to extricate women '. . . from the state of nature just as men were becoming emancipated from it' (Fraisse, 1994: 196). The great paradox of the Enlightenment, Pateman (1988: 8) has argued, was the promotion of the notion of a social contract founded on the principles of equality and the rights of individuals, but which was simultaneously defined by its exclusion of women. That great paradox was transferred to Greece intact by, amongst others, Korais. His enthusiasm for the Rousseauian wisdom about the irrationality of women, and thus their inability to enter into contracts (the imaginary pact that Rousseau's individuals made with the state), is evident in his repeated appeals to his countrymen: 'Brothers, equal in every aspect, with the exception of those which virtue has rendered unequal, let us have no other despot other than the Law' (undated in Velios, 1998: 35). 23

As Pateman has argued, the absence of women from this foundational myth, which made men into citizens of the liberal state, is underpinned by the integral if concealed place of women who are, in fact, incorporated into the liberal state through marriage, through the unarticulated 'sexual contract'. The hypocrisy and contradictions in French Revolutionary constructions of democracy were transmitted intact into the discourses of the Greek Enlightenment. Korais's calls for the education of women aimed to make women better servants for men, as fundamental unequals in the new nation-state. By extension, Korais incorporated the ethical foundations for women's exclusion from political representation and citizenship rights. In his repeated references to 'political man' and his plans for educational reforms which glorified and refined the art of private domestic servitude, Korais unwittingly conveyed that the last remnant 24 of the Ottoman legacy, which remained essentially unchallenged, were the relations between Greek women and men—that is, it mirrored the subservient relationship of the Greeks to their Ottoman masters.

2.4 Revolutionary Iconography and Female Subjectivities

Like their French counterparts, Greek women were not rewarded with political power after the Revolution. Legal and social rights were withheld irrespective of their participation in the Revolution and some renowned cases of armed female valour. Bouboulina may have inspired awe amongst some of her contemporaries who remarked on the 'rarity of such an occurrence in the history of nations; the ability of one woman, wealthy generous and decisive, to mobilise men, money, ships and sons in the service of her country' (Hatzianargirou, 1861, in Xiradaki, 1995: 132). However, this was not reflected in the attitudes of her countrymen and the Greek state itself, when after her death in 1826, she was commemorated as the wife and widow of a respected patriot and wealthy sea merchant who had been killed in battle before the Revolution. 25

A similar fate awaited Mado Mavroyeni. Upon hearing the news of the Greek uprising, Mavroyeni returned to her native home on the island of Mykonos to organise a naval fleet, which she led to war. Like Bouboulina, Mavroyeni donated her vast estate to the War of Independence. In the aftermath, upon her request for a state pension and a medal for her contributions, the fledgling Greek state—after considerable delay—granted her a meagre pension as the widow of a war hero. She died alone in total poverty in 1848 (Aliberti, 1933: 263).[15] 26

While traditional gender hierarchies remained fundamentally unchanged, with the exception of Mavroyeni, they were also unchallenged by women themselves who did not, unlike their French predecessors, utilise the armed contributions of women to improve the lot of women in the post-war era. In France, women's participation in the Revolution had invoked immediate female involvement. In early October 1789, a crowd of 4,000 women from the Paris market districts marched to Versailles to demand that the royal family, the court, and the National Assembly be moved to Paris and that the king assure a steady supply of bread to the city. Months later, the women's newspaper *Etrennes Nationales des Dames* printed an article demanding representation of women in the National Assembly, reminding readers that '. . . last October 5, Parisian women proved that they were as brave and enterprising as men' (in Moses, 1992: 36). 27

To be sure, such national comparisons must bear in mind fundamental differences in national contexts. In France, feminist activity preceded the Revolution. Moreover, women of the popular classes were located at the centre of public and economic space. There was a long tradition of women revolting in the streets of Paris motivated by economic conditions. Paris was already an established city and France was an established nation. By contrast, the Greek nation-state did not come officially into being until the 1830s and its cities were, at best, large villages, in which 28 women were confined to the private sphere. If the rise of a national bourgeoisie in the context of urbanisation is a prerequisite for feminism, it is not surprising that the revolutionary experiences and outcomes for French and Greek women differed, especially since the trajectory of the Greek bourgeoisie as a transformative class has been erratic and all but clear since Independence. To this extent, it is perhaps more accurate to argue that the fashioning of Greek female subjectivities in nineteenth-century Greece was more profoundly influenced by the French Enlightenment's conceptions of womanhood, which were transmitted through education, rather than by endogenous social forces—at least till the last quarter of the century.

Nevertheless, the continuation of Greek women's pre-revolutionary status—their continued exclusion from the public sphere—in post-revolutionary Greece was paradoxical, given that the new national ideal was firmly grounded in the systematic rejection of all elements associated with the Eastern past. How was it possible for such an ideology to co-exist alongside behaviour and practices which were the embodiment of the so-called customs of the East? According to Varika (1987: 38), these remnants of tradition were not in contradiction of the dynamic of Westernisation. They were not archaic relics of an inefficient momentum of modernisation, but rather active, dynamic elements of the present which were fundamental to the structural base of bourgeois ideology, increasing its persuasiveness and appeal (Varika, 1987: 10). Further, she argues, every dominant culture needs to appear like the legal guardian of tradition in order to achieve stability and to preserve its hegemony. The continuous process of embodying cultural elements of the past secures this legitimisation.[16] **29**

In the particular case of Greece, Varika argues that the operation of what Raymond Williams (1980) referred to as 'selective tradition' was especially urgent because the nation's break with the past was exceptionally quick and abrupt, making it impossible to secure obvious continuity. The retention of traditional gender values provided a crucial continuity of the old alongside the radical changes transforming Greek society and creating cultural confusion. Varika (1987: 133) asserts: 'The smartly dressed bourgeois, who would read his French newspaper in the coffee shop *Bella Grecia* at least had one thing in common with his kilt-clad compatriot who sold watermelons on the footpath across the street: they both considered the idea of a woman going out alone to the corner shop utterly incompatible with native tradition and custom'. Hence, the preservation of traditional female virtue and modesty, in some way, softened the blow to dignity of the popular and middle strata. Simultaneously, it functioned as an alibi for resistance against the invasion of foreign customs, even for those who actively participated in the spread and reproduction of these customs. **30**

The events of the Revolution did not create a stake for women in the new order or prompt a feminist movement. Yet its images and narratives provided the new crop of educated women writers with new emotional opportunities and stimulation. Evanthia Kairi, for example, was '. . . a woman of remarkable learning and competence in foreign languages' (Xiradaki, 1956: 72), but she lived in the shadow of her brother, Theofilos, a controversial figure of the Greek Enlightenment, to whom she was devoted. Before the Revolution, Evanthia, like her **31** contemporary Princess Rallou-Soutzou, published her own translation of Jean Nicolas Bouilly's[17] companion to female virtue, *Conseils à ma fille* (Advice to my daughter, translated in 1820), which had originally appeared in 1811 in Paris. The 'salutary advice' rendered to Greek women as a source of moral reinforcement for the 'revival of the nation' was unequivocal: 'Women's modesty resembles the most transparent water which can be transmuted by the most minuscule source of pollution' (Kairi, in Xiradaki, 1956: 32). Accordingly, the ideals of modesty, chastity, and submissive propriety, as well as an unwavering devotion to the male members of the family, especially to the patriarchal father, emerged as the paramount moral lessons.

Kairi's espousal of the dominant morality did not stop her from expressing excitement for the monumental struggles of the Revolution. Her drama *Nikiratos* (1826) deals with the heroic resistance and evacuation of the city of Messolonghi in 1826. It was Kairi's means of participating in the struggle, by paying tribute to the heroic women who sacrificed themselves for freedom and the nation. Kairi, however, clung to established literary conventions as regards her female protagonist, the maid Kleoniki, who remained a secondary character throughout, overshadowed by the male protagonists and especially the patriarchal hero. This kind of dependence upon a patriarchal male figure was reflected in her own life and was part of a generalised social attitude. Her role, as she conceived it, was that of a woman in the world of women. However, she considered it incumbent upon her educational skills to sing the virtues of her compatriot women heroes and to enlighten foreign women about the plight of her homeland.[18] Other works dedicated to revolutionary heroes include Angeliki Palli-Bartolommei's *Ode to Psarra* and *Ode to Messolonghi* (1825). While the moral conformism which had hitherto defined Greek women's writing remained dominant, revolutionary Greece provided the context for the first utterings of a dissident female voice. **32**

The first critique of gender roles in Greek society came in autobiographical form. The autobiography of Elizabeth Moutzan-Martinengo (1801–32) constituted the first conscious case of protest against the myriad forms of subjection and social exclusion imposed on women by Greek culture and society. Her text was written in 1826,[19] towards the end of the Revolution, and marked a significant departure from the work of the timid moralists of the Enlightenment. For this reason she is considered the progenitor of Greek feminist thought. For Moutzan-Martinengo, the news of the Revolution sparked an outcry against the dehumanised condition of women, particularly the women of the aristocracy, and by extension the despair of systematic exclusion from all the projects of humanity. **33**

The special status of women who belonged to the Septinsular gentry meant they were excluded from formal education. As a result, Moutzan-Martinengo was an autodidact. Her self-taught knowledge, however, created a classic conundrum, as awareness of her predicament did not provide her with the means to act against it. As Korais had said in a quite different context, '. . . education fulfils no other function amongst slaves than to make them conscious of their misery and to increase the sighs and the flow of tears'.[20] For Moutzan-Martinengo, the rigid **34** behavioural codes that governed women suppressed every noble feeling and aspiration in them. She felt this no more intensely than on 25 March 1821, when her teacher, Theodosios Dimadis, brought the news of the Greek Revolution to her home.

> Upon hearing his words I felt my blood warm up, I wished deeply in my heart to have been able to gird myself with arms, I wished deeply in my heart to have been able to rush to tender my assistance to a people fighting solely for its religion and homeland and for that much yearned-for freedom which, when put to good uses, brings immortality, glory and happiness to nations. I wished [all this] in my heart but then I stared at the walls of the house within which I was being kept secluded, I stared at the long dresses of female subjection and was reminded that I was a woman, and what is worse, a woman from Zante. (Elizabeth Moutzan-Martinengo, [1826] 1956)

As a daughter of one of the leading Septinsular families in Zante (Zakynthos), Moutzan-Martinengo was not subjected to long hours of hard physical labour as were rural women, but she did have to endure endless hours of physical, spiritual, and intellectual confinement. Moutzan-Martinengo portrays a very narrowly defined life, contrasting it to the vast family estate surrounded by huge walls whose boundaries she was forbidden to move beyond. She was, she writes, '. . . deprived of even the right to breathe fresh, clean air' (ibid.: 25). Domestic space itself was also zoned according to gender. That Moutzan-Martinengo's brother and uncle barely spoke to the women of the house was a demonstration of '. . . the ancient, barbaric and unnatural custom, which demands that women are separated out of human society' (ibid.). **35**

The ideals of the (mainly Italian) Enlightenment, however, figured explicitly in the forceful prose about the importance of education and freedom from demeaning ignorance as the only way of 'one day becoming useful to human society' (ibid.). For Moutzan-Martinengo, education was infused with the power of giving courage to human beings in the pursuit of their freedom and ending the fear that allowed one to be led like an animal by the opinion of others. Moreover, this humanising liberating capacity of education was precisely why men deliberately excluded women from it: **36**

> It is possible that those inhabiting this island of old, barbaric as they still are, contrived to keep their women enslaved. I have arrived at this conclusion because I witness how all wicked men do not favour education and learning for their wives. They are right, by Zeus, because a woman can never learn about the evil conduct of her husband, nor is she able to censure him effectively for it when she never leaves the house and when she is uneducated and ignorant. (Moutzan-Martinengo [1826] 1956: 63)

Thus, while the Revolution did not create a stake for women in the new order or mobilise a discourse in this direction, it did nevertheless coincide with a shift in women's representations of themselves in their writing. The perception of their social role and status as determined by some intransigent natural order gave way to a perception that human relations were governed by humans themselves and were thus subject to change. The paradigm shift represented by the challenge to four centuries of Ottoman tyranny and the revolutionary narrative of liberty and self-determination, provided a firm edifice upon which Moutzan-Martinengo cast doubt on the natural origins of another unjust power system based on gender, simply by identifying it. Moreover, Moutzan-Martinengo was bewildered by the paradox in which 'Greekness' provided men with the pretext for fighting a war for national liberation while, for women, Greekness legitimised the rigid social controls governing every aspect of their existence.

In the five decades between the establishment of the Greek state and the emergence of feminism (1830s to 1880s), the status of Greek women in law was virtually unchanged and unchallenged. The first Greek constitution of 1822, which was modelled on the American 'Declaration of Independence', declared the equality of all Greek men before the law. The numerous constitutions that followed throughout the nineteenth century until the late 1920s continued to exclude women in this manner. Moschou-Sakorrafou (1990: 88), a historian of Greek law, explained that Greek civil law retained the basic framework of the pre-war Byzantine model, as decreed by the Palace in 1835. Social customs and traditions (which differed by region) were also protected in the new order. For instance, the Ionian Civil Code, which forbade paternal inheritance to daughters, remained intact. While spouses were judged as mutually dependent, the male spouse was considered head of the household. The duties of women were limited to the management of the household and the rearing of children; duties which they exercised, not on their own behalf, but on the behalf of their husbands to whom they belonged and for whom the undertaking of such duties would be a humiliation alongside their proper dedication to public life.[21] The dowry that women brought into the home economy was designed to compensate husbands for the economic burden of marriage. As unsovereign entities, Greek women were also unable to enter into contracts.[22] 37

2.5 *Efimeris ton Kyrion—The Ladies' Newspaper*

The conservatism of post-revolutionary politics and culture should come as no surprise. As Moschou-Sakorrafou reminds us, the constitution of the new nation was based upon the French model of 1793 and the American model of 1787, both of which excluded women from political life (1990: 23). The first critique of the constitutional and civil status of Greek women surfaced in the 1880s and coincided with the rise of Greek feminism. 38

Anastasopoulou (1997: 1) claims that '. . . the nationalist context of the nineteenth century both provided a hospitable habitat for feminism but simultaneously created tensions and contradictions as the struggle to define "Greekness" contained an almost irreconcilable paradox: it was hopelessly caught between the drive to modernise and Europeanise, to expel the Ottoman legacy, and the perceived need to rediscover fundamental "Greekness" in the retention of local customs and mores'. Under the pressure to construct and strengthen an ethnicity-specific national identity, both within and beyond the country's geographical borders, a discursive shift occurred from the idealisation of women as fragile, sickly, and passive creatures to fundamental agents for the preservation and transmission of Greek language and culture as mothers and school teachers. This gave them a pivotal role in forming ethnic identity 39 and national viability. The adoption of Korais's logic paved the way to the extension of and increase in the quality of women's education in the late nineteenth century. In 1890, the University of Athens opened its doors to the first female students, almost thirty years after its inauguration. As Varika (1987: 13) observes, '. . . the education of Greek women and the rise of their cultural awareness became a legitimate pursuit that cleared the way for women of the middle cases to be granted the right to paid work and to social and political action'.

The first feminist collective in Greece emerged from the urban petit-bourgeoisie and professional middle classes, mainly schoolteachers. In 1887, Kallirhoe Parren founded the feminist weekly *The Ladies' Newspaper* (*Efimeris ton Kyrion*) in Athens, as a vehicle for the creative expression of educated women who were also united by the commitment to the advancement of Greek women's social and cultural status. The newspaper was managed exclusively by women and printed women's work alone. **40**

This wave of Greek feminists fought for equal educational opportunities and civil rights but also realised the important legitimating function of history. The newspaper focused intensely on women's participation in the Greek Revolution but also mined the whole of human history for traces of women's agency, 'in an effort to develop women's confidence in the possibility of self-determination and to persuade male public opinion that gender equality was a necessary condition for the fulfilment of national destinies' (Varika, 1993: 271). 'Nationalism provided feminists with arguments in favour of women's emancipation and with a model for the construction of a collective identity that marked both the critical potential and limitations of early Greek feminism' (ibid., 272). In that effort, the imagery provided by fighting women, women who had transcended their traditional role in the most radical manner, played a crucial role.[23] *The Ladies' Newspaper*, from its first issue, also functioned as an explicit propaganda instrument for spreading the discourse of women's emancipation and as an effective means of forging a collective women's identity. Throughout the course of its existence, the newspaper's contributors would align their demands with the dominant nationalist concerns of the era. **41**

The newspaper's founder, Kallirrhoe Parren, was the most prominent spokesperson on the 'woman question' (alongside other male liberal progressives like Palamas, Psicharis, Xenopoulos, and Karkavitsas) in Greece, which arose in the context of intense cultural ferment in the 1880s. Born in Crete in 1861, she was employed as a teacher in a girls' schools in Russia, and after her marriage to a journalist, relocated to Athens, where her almost single-handed launching of the newspaper made her the country's first female journalist. The emergence of the paper signalled a new political era for women. It presented '. . . discrimination against women as systemic in the patriarchal, male-dominated order of things, which cut across all social classes', from the hovel of the worker to the crowned heads (*estemennes kefales*) of royalty (17 November 1900). The words of Moutzan-Martinengo were reinvoked by Parren,[24] as if perhaps issuing a delayed response to Moutzan-Martinengo's protest, when she railed **42**

'. . . that only the collective intervention by women could provide the means for altering patriarchal domination'. Parren declared that 'women's family is no longer just husband, children and the home . . . but also the nation, the race and humanity' (1887: 13).

Parren, the founder and editor of the newspaper, remained the most prominent member of the collective throughout its considerable life span (1887–1917). The first edition on 8 March 1887 was well received by Athenian society, with all editions selling out on the first day. The overwhelming success of the paper was startling against the context of deeply entrenched male opposition and prejudice, and challenges at the very least some of our assumptions about the level of women's education and political consciousness at the time. Most of the early articles were written by Parren, although quite soon she had managed to gather around her a significant number of like-minded women who became long-term colleagues and contributors. Parren's efforts to establish her enterprise as a legitimate political vehicle motivated her to establish extensive international networks and alliances. She created a successful network of mutual exchange and recognition between women on an international scale, almost in lieu of the attention and legitimacy Greek feminist yearned for at home. Many of her foreign colleagues and acquaintances, mainly American and French women, intellectuals and feminists, as well as Greek women of the Diaspora, made regular contributions to the paper and added a certain prestige to the enterprise. **43**

The newspaper placed great emphasis on the importance of access to paid work for 'common' women (*gynaikes tou laou*) and on literary pursuits for the women of Parren's own class. Women's writing was perceived as the key means of promoting the spiritual growth which underpinned emancipation, and the paper was intended to provide the appropriate forum for middle-stratum literary efforts and development. These activities underscored Parren's conviction that the salvation and elevation of womankind was in the hands of the middle stratum, as Woolf would echo some years later. **44**

Parren was also a prolific writer—she published her multivolume *The History of Woman: From Pre-History to Today* as well as novels and travel diaries. Her writings emphasised the need for women to be liberated from the tyranny of neighbourhood gossip, which turned their writing into '. . . yet another piece of indisputable proof of our slavish subjugation to inadequate life expectations to which we have become accustomed; to rise beyond worthy and kind sentiments, to rise to the most beautiful expressions of our souls' (21 February 1892). In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Parren's class conservatism and elitism did not pose problems for her feminist aspirations—an elitist feminism was better than no feminism at all. Her political conservatism was most evident in the distance she kept from the issue of suffrage. Or, it can be construed as political pragmatism. While Parren's New Woman was spiritually and ethically equal to man and deserving of all liberty, she delayed the campaign for suffrage, arguing instead for the establishment of basic literacy as a necessary prerequisite before any such considerations were pursued. Parren favoured an 'emancipated yet conservative woman' (*heirafetimeni sindiritiki*) over a suffragette, '. . . as a more appropriate prototype for the **45** first generation of enlightened literate Greek women'. This incremental approach to women's liberty reflected either her own beliefs that (most) Greek women, illiterate and politically unsophisticated, were not ready to assume the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship, or a politically astute exercise of caution as Parren was well aware of the readiness of xenophobic nationalists to discredit feminism as a dangerous import. She arguably had this group in mind when she outlined a campaign that excluded political rights for women as '. . . both the men and women of Greece were ill-prepared for women's enfranchisement since Greece had not yet produced the social-political conditions from which suffrage (ism) had sprung in England and America.' Instead, the newspaper sought to advance:

> . . . the moral and mental education of woman. It follows her activities in America and Europe. It introduces her to female education, female art, literature, history, and economics. It deals with pedagogical problems involved in the raising of children. It presents aspects of women's lives that glorify our sex . . . . It promotes the idea of work as a benefactor of the soul and the mind and proves that only through work is true happiness possible . . . . I never demanded the political emancipation of woman because I have already indicated, we are very far behind; but wherever the law commits an injustice I protest against the lawmaker. That, for which I have been working towards tirelessly, that, which will be the charm and pride of my life, is the establishment of public lycee for girls and the creation of at least one technical college for women. (2 July 1889)

All the claims and demands issued by the newspaper were couched in the nationalist terms of the time and this extended to the framework of Parren's fiction. According to Anastasopoulou (1997: 1), Parren's trilogy entitled *Ta Vivlia tis Avgis* (The books of dawn) promoted a new model of woman—educated and independent but also maternal and capable of raising citizens willing to sacrifice everything for their nation's sovereignty and for the cause of social progress. **46**

Parren's feminism fused tradition with modernity; national progress permeated her campaigns for education and independence, and the reinforcement of tradition contained in the newspaper's pleas that modernity would only strengthen women's '. . . high destiny as wife, mother and citizen by removing them from the dull vanity and disappointment of a life without employment or aim' (12 March 1889). The strong maternalist/nationalist foundations of Parren's feminism unquestionably helped to establish the feminist project in Greece, albeit among a small circle, at a time when Greece was still very much the traditional society of the pre-revolutionary era. The emergence of the 'woman question' was unequalled in its capacity, however, to embody the new tensions and contradictions of a society that yearned to (re)invent itself, especially the fledgling Greek bourgeoisie which strived not only to be counted among the other 'enlightened' European bourgeoisies but also sought a sense of continuity in tradition, especially the traditions governing gender relations. **47**

While the structure of Parren's feminism deserves a full study in itself, it falls outside the scope of this book. More pertinent are the ways in which feminist discourse attempted to balance the traditional and the modern, and the manner in which the particular image of the female warrior heroine of Greek history was deployed to position feminism favourably in the nationalist **48** discourses that defined the better part of the nineteenth century. The remainder of this chapter will thus inquire into the strikingly frequent usage of battlefield metaphors throughout issues of *The Ladies' Newspaper*, with specific references to the women who fought for the establishment of the modern Greek nation-state and who, as Parren explicitly stated, '. . . helped glorify our sex' (8 March 1887).

2.6 Feminism and the National Narrative: Unstable Alliances

Giving back to women the place they had occupied in the struggle for national liberation, and indeed throughout history, was of central importance to nineteenth-century Greek feminism. As Varika has argued (1993: 273), Parren's generation of Greek feminists 'lived in the midst of passionate disputes over the interpretation of the past given the nation-building context, and did not underestimate the powerful legitimating function of history'. Indeed extensive research was undertaken by *The Ladies' Newspaper* to unveil female heroes of the past. **49**

> One of the tasks of *The Ladies' Newspaper* is to turn whole libraries upside down in search of historical arguments in favour of our sex . . . though our sex has played a major part in national history, historical tradition has only included men's action. (8 March 1892)

Rewriting world history to include the contributions of women required a critical rereading of the past, both the myths and the stories of female warriors in Greek history. Parren and her colleagues believed that gender antagonism and male domination determined the interpretation and construction of these stories. This long tradition of strong, fighting women served as both a source of inspiration for the group of women trying to a establish a collective identity—a source of pride and confidence in their sex—and as a fundamental axis on which Greek feminism sought legitimacy within the Greek polity at the time of the newspaper's establishment. **50**

Kallirrhoe Parren's address on 16 July 1889 to the International Congress for the Rights of Woman, which took place in Paris is a case in point. The Congress involved a major gathering of European and American feminists, hosted by the French government, whose purpose was to discuss the 'woman question' in economic, moral, political, scientific, and legal contexts. For Parren, it represented a valuable opportunity to exit her small circle in Greece and to bestow upon her project the glamour and importance of an international audience; to engage with developments in feminist thought abroad; to represent Greek women abroad and to paint a picture which was perhaps at odds with Western assumptions of Greek women as backward 'Orientales' who were untouched by the emancipatory discourses of the West. Indeed, decades later, Parren recalled the looks of wonder amongst some members of her Parisian audience who were surprised to see that 'Greek women no longer [wore] caftans' (15 September 1914). **51**

At the Congress, Parren presented her vision of humanity's epic progress in the title of her address, 'The Greek Woman of the Nineteenth Century in History, Literature and Philanthropy'. She began with the legacy of ancient Greek civilisation, itself constructed upon the efforts of countless militant, dynamic, capable Greek women. Parren's address sought to remind the audience that: 52

> Behind Pericles there was Aspasia. The immortal works of Fedias cast a shadow which engulfed the humble and recoiling Daughter. Arpaliki was buried under Leonidas' loot and Myrtis was extinguished by the music of Pindar's lyre, which she had composed. (16 July 1889)

Since the glory of the Hellenic era had ended long ago, Parren turned her attention to the achievements of Greek women of her century without which the Greek nation could not have come into being. Moreover, the continuation of Greek ethnic identity following the collapse of ancient Greece was attributed to Greek women: 'She became the holy source [Hestia[25]] from which the holy fire of patriotism sprang and whose extinction she prevented! She preserved that immortal fire healthy until the moment came when the symbolic ring of liberty's bell sounded!'

Parren dedicated the remainder of her address to the heroic contributions and courage of Greek women during the War of Independence who did not recoil when the flags of war were raised and '. . . nor were they confined to the kind duties of a nurse, duties which many consider fitting for women's nature during war . . . the infamous and proud Greek mountain ranges are filled with the spectres of the extraordinary women of 1821'. The Spartan attitude to war and human loss demonstrated by the Souliot matriarch Moscho, for instance, '. . . armed to the teeth like Aris (God of War) as she led the women', held high appeal for Parren during this nationalist/feminist narrative odyssey. From Moscho, Parren paid similar tribute to the patriotic heroism of Despo, and then, to the legendary sacrifice of the Souliot maidens at Zaloggo, who chose death over dishonour. She ended her speech thus: 53

> I do not want, my dear ladies, to take advantage of your patience. If I were to follow the evolution of the Greek struggle step by step, and if I were to inspect every bloodied stone on our land, with each one that I would turn over I would discover a woman's tale. The Revolution ended. A small piece of bygone Great Greece gained its independence. Then woman dropped her gun and climbed down from the mountain and returned to her favourite duties as wife and mother. Civilisation, with its beneficial gifts, visited slowly but steadily the New Greece and the formerly ignorant woman felt the urge towards progress and education. (16 July 1889)

On the front cover of this edition, Parren relates to her readers the excitement and joy of having attended the Congress and confessed the awe which her sophisticated foreign audience inspired. There were three other compatriots present in the audience—the leader of the opposition, Mr T. Deligiannis, his niece, and a correspondent from the *Acropolis* newspaper. In her recollection of the warm reception in the aftermath of her speech, Parren noted with pride, that while '. . . I had before me the wisest, most highly regarded women of America and 54

Europe . . . they began to resemble dwarfs against the great simple, naive barefooted Souliot women whose divine death dance I struggled to depict'. Parren conveyed that the power of this images and this history dissolved any feelings of cultural inadequacy she may have harboured before such a 'learned and distinguished audience'. The historical contributions of women fighters were deployed extensively by Parren as early as the newspaper's fourth issue (two years before the International Congress), to create a canon of female patriotic heroism in the service of contemporary feminist goals.

The owner and commander of Greece's first warship, Lascarina Bouboulina, was the first female figure to be celebrated in the newspaper. The 'masculine heroism' of Bouboulina was celebrated alongside the image of the Republican Mother, whom Parren clearly admired, and likened to the '. . . lion-hearted Spartan women who cast off unfit children and disowned husbands who cowered from war'. Thus, for Parren, the role of women in war was far more complex than that of men. In her article on Bouboulina, Parren painted a picture of an exceptional case of female valour. While Bouboulina's bravery in battle is highly commended, Parren sees this as a minor legacy. Like many writers before her, Parren construed Bouboulina's outstanding bravery as androgynous in nature, the expression of a masculine spirit. Parren nonetheless attempted to highlight the feminine virtues of Bouboulina: **55**

> Despite her masculine and somewhat abrupt expression, Lascarina's chest hid the kindest of hearts, a heart indeed masculine (*andriki*) because the more the demands of resistance rendered it beastly, the more her heart mellowed and the tears flowed from her eyes when confronting the sight of a suffering woman or of orphaned infants. (29 March 1887)

For Parren, it is the feminine qualities of Bouboulina, the humanity that she brought to war, which was important. In reference to the salvation of the women of the harem during the Battle of Tripolitsa, she wrote: **56**

> In order to manage to save those women, faithful to her promise to the Turkish ruler of Tripoli, Elmas Aga, on the day of the treaty of surrender, she chose to risk her own life, undeterred by the rage and mania of the Albanian and Greek soldiers, who considered those women to be their rightful prize . . . . I am not thirsty for the blood of the women because they are innocent. I grant you their treasures, their priceless jewellery, but for God's sake, spare their life and their honour . . . . I swear on the eight-day-old blood of my son that in order to reach these women you will have to step over my own body. (29 March 1887)

There are no traces in Parren's description of Bouboulina of the Rousseauian judgement that the '. . . only ennobling role for women in the nation, besides being the complement of their husbands, was to suppress their personal feelings in order to teach their children the virtues of patriotism' (Kitromilides, 1983: 42). On the contrary, women's feelings and emotions were highly prized and valued,[26] especially in war. Parren's maternalism extended beyond women's **57** impulse to preserve intact home and family. For Parren, women's maternal patriotic duty also called the women themselves to the battlefield. But how did Parren reconcile war with femininity?

Parren relied on an uneasy and inconsistent distinction between male and female virtues, the origins of which oscillated between biological determinism and social constructivism in her rhetoric. For instance, while arguing for women's fundamental innocence regarding society's evils, she wrote that marginalisation '. . . prevented the pollution of women by individual ambition and interest' (28 February 1899). Women will rise to salvage humanity from social decline caused by man '. . . who has been maintaining government, hegemony, tyranny and absolute power' since Greece's very beginning. Ultimately, men are to be held responsible for the carnage and the barbarity: '. . . it is the governing and not the governed that bear the responsibility' (10 October 1898). **58**

Parren did not attempt to address the question of how to prevent women's rise to power from corrupting their virtues, which have resulted from their very oppression. At moments she suggested that the special talents of women for peaceful governance could be attributed to (and therefore be safeguarded) by their reproductive role. The first step that differentiated the human being from the brute was taken by woman, '. . . in whom emerged for the first time the feeling of . . . maternal love' and which made her 'defend her infant against the savage instincts of man' (3 December 1900). In contrast to contemporary feminist anti-militarist pronouncements that the logical outcome of women's innate pacifism is abstention and objection to all wars, Parren presented a hybrid archetype which carefully fused the anti-militarism embodied in the 'Moral Mother' (although she at no point articulated it as such or used the term herself) and the strength and independence of the 'Just Warrior' into a unified personality. Bouboulina was the embodiment of this patriotic feminine ideal. **59**

Numerous articles in *The Ladies' Newspaper* were dedicated to women who approximated Parren's feminine ideal.[27] The maternal warrior did not present a paradox, as contemporary feminist conceptions of the Moral Mother would have it. In Parren's thinking it was a natural antipathy for war that mediated between women's innate pacifism and their simultaneous capacity for battle. The presence of women distinguished one war from another—as women's natural aversion to violence and bloodshed could only be compromised in the event of a Just War. The relation between the Reluctant Warrior and the Just Warrior was dialectical: women were drawn to Just Wars and, in turn, legitimised them through their presence. Parren clearly considered the Greek Revolution, in contradistinction to imperialist wars, for example, to be a case in point. She argued forcefully that liberation struggles could not be judged by the same criteria as other wars. In an article entitled 'War and Education', Paulina Rodefski (a foreign correspondent for the newspaper) offered a typical European feminist anti-militarist position. She referred to an article by the French female astronomer Camille Flammarion, in which the latter offered a table of per capita expenditure on war and on education by all the European countries of the period. After recounting the horrific statistics, Rodefski asked: **60**

> And whose sensitive heart was upset by these numbers? Who undertook the task of struggling blindly against the ideas of war? Women! The women of Copenhagen presided over by Mrs Frederica Waeyer published a memo which we quote below: Even though we women can do little to bring peace about, we nevertheless have the power and the inalienable right, as the majority of the population, to demonstrate against acts which contradict our principles. (2 April 1887)

Parren added an editor's response:

> P.S. Greek women are in no position to share the sentiments of our comrade women from Denmark while thousands of our brothers are bearing the burden of tyranny.[28]

The publication of Rodefski's article suggests that Parren understood and respected its purpose. Nevertheless, she drew attention to the specificities of different national contexts in the shaping of attitudes to war, the shaping of feminisms, and to a distinction between unjust and just wars. This reading of Parren's position is supported by her later stand on the Great War, which she vehemently opposed. **61**

2.7 Feminism, War, and Nationalism

Nineteenth-century Greek women writers were influenced deeply by the French Enlightenment and its discontents. Whether immersed in regressive narratives derived from the *ancien régime* (e.g., Rallou Soutsou), inspired by J.J. Rousseau, or by revolutionary themes, they all '. . . followed France's movements or, to be more precise, lived off France's own life' (excerpt from Parren's address at the International Women's Congress in Paris). Nevertheless, the Revolution seems to have left an imprint on Greek women writers. It allowed them to modify imported French metaphors and metanarratives. **62**

In an article about the right of women to vote in local government elections (15 November 1887), the newspaper rebutted the view that, because the defence of the nation was not a part of their duty, women's place was in the home and not in the municipal council. The newspaper enlisted the support of Alexander Dumas Junior, whose definitive response was quoted as: 'Woman does not go to war but she bears soldiers whom she raises with pain and sorrow and whom she dedicates to her country for its defence'. At that point, Parren added: **63**

> Woman, thank God, was not born a soldier; there is enough bloodthirst and greed in men. But if there is an objective need which calls them to mobilise, a long string of women of the temper of Bouboulina, the Souliots and others are ready to rise. There is no doubt about the heroism of women.

Parren applied the Reluctant Warrior/Just War logic to all examples of militarised femininity in myth and history she could trace, beginning with the Amazons, who, she argued, sacrificed their feminine qualities to defend their vulnerable communities after the murder of their male **64** kinsmen by foreign invaders (*The Ladies' Newspaper,* 1914: 67). The plight of the Amazons was likened to that of the Souliot women. A celebration of the military prowess of these warriors was counterbalanced with a lament for the casualties of war, and '. . . the mother who mourns the death of her son, the dishonour and enslavement of her daughter, the bloodshot eyes of a wife as she bids a final farewell to her husband; the naked children who seek their father whom the Turks have slaughtered and their mother who died of the agony and the fear' (1–15 January 1914). Using the imagery of Greek feminine armed civic virtue, interpreted so as to preserve time-honoured Greek feminine virtues, nineteenth-century feminism added many layers to the Moral Mother arguments that they had inherited from France. In numerous articles, these images were used to assess wars, and to differentiate between outcomes of blind male aggression on the one hand and just struggles on the other and, most importantly perhaps, to stake new claims for the role of women in the nation. For the collective at the newspaper, there could be a rationale for war; and in this instance women promptly undertook their duties as wives mothers and patriots. This history was unearthed in direct conversation with nationalist narratives of the era, as the Greek nation-state like all new nation-states before it, required a series of legitimating myths. In the same vein, Parren duly attempted to carve out a space for Greek women in the resuscitation of the glorious national past. Parren's tryst with nationalist logic served feminism well throughout the nineteenth century, including the failed 1897 irredentist war, to which she contributed vast amounts of material assistance and relief work, and the Balkan Wars (1912–13), with which she was actively sympathetic. Both wars were conceived by Parren as instances of defensive nationalism which resulted from the continued existence of subjugated Greek communities, and were therefore just. This logic enabled her to continue citing the Greek Revolution as pivotal to Greek feminist politics and identity, although a budding pacifism in the face of the horrors perpetrated during the Great War eventually threw Parren's framework into disarray.

As late as 1916, Parren still found political inspiration in the Revolution, and the references to '. . . the women who competed with men in the stakes of heroism, self-sacrifice and patriotic fanaticism' continued (3 May 1916). Nonetheless, the outbreak of war in 1914 began to erode old certainties and the hitherto prevailing constructions of the national interest in which Parren's feminism had invested so heavily. As the dominant political factions reshuffled their agendas and narratives to accommodate the new climate, the war demonstrated the ultimate fragility of feminist political alliances in the nation-state power structure. As the nation's leadership prepared for war alongside the *Entente*, Parren established a pacifist stance. By 1915 she and the collective declared open and staunch opposition to the war and determined that Greek women's new national role was as the Peace Corps of Humanity, a natural extension of their role as mothers, wives, patriots, and professionals. 'They were no longer to shed blood but to stem its flow'. The military metaphors that were once used to link the advancement of women to their armed participation in war were transferred to the new cause of pacifism, whose proponents were presented as '. . . a new army without weapons, uniforms and war hymns, but **65** one which wields the priceless weapons of love, self-sacrifice and solidarity. An army which will continue to defend the Nation in peacetime against its myriad internal enemies' (15–28 February 1915).

Eager to reconcile earlier narratives (based as they were on the allegory of armed women) and her newfound pacifism, Parren laboured to make sense, and use, of contemporary images of militarised femininity. Her response to the images of Russian women soldiers of the Entente was one of both exhilaration and anxiety: **66**

> While this dimension of the war does not exactly correspond to the ideals for which women have fought, i.e., for the abolition of wars and against the savage rituals of human bloodletting . . . it will bolster the otherwise diminishing morale across all the fighting ranks. The brother, husband and lover who knows that his woman is fighting more bravely than he, who knows that she will thus have the right to scorn him for his cowardice, that she will be decorated while he will be condemned as a deserter, will surely remain in his position and do his duty. The contribution of women must be examined today in this light, as a moral tonic for the weary disgruntled soldiers, rather than as a symbol of some more general progress. For war is not progress but sheer barbarism and savagery, which hurls humanity backwards and reduces humans to wild beasts. (15–30 June 1917)

Parren's new position was a far cry from the one she had painstakingly established since the founding of the newspaper thirty years earlier. In fact, she was noted for her outspoken objections to a suggestion made by the International Council of Women in July 1889 that their Greek counterparts establish a pacifist section. Parren wrote: **67**

> I was problematised by the proposition that a pacifist section be established. My response to ICW President Lady Aberdeen's missive, to whom I had the honour to write on behalf of my Greek colleagues, was considered somehow caustic . . . . Since we still had subjugated brothers, women and children who were being slaughtered and dishonoured, we could not possibly contemplate pacifism. (January 1890)

For Parren, the purpose of the Great War was unjustified and she altered her position: 'Since the majority of the warring nations are not fighting to liberate their brothers, the mobilisation of women would be paradoxical' (15–30 July 1917). Moreover, Parren proceeded to castigate the pacifist women's organisations of Europe and America for their hypocrisy, as their efforts betrayed an intoxication with the war rather than an objection. Parren condemned the perceived complacency of the Pacifist Women of America in particular, since they, '. . . unlike their sisters across Europe were no longer political exiles, but enjoyed their full political rights. And they ab (used) this privilege to offer their support to Wilson's opponent, because he had a clearer military agenda!' For Parren, this turn of events raised serious questions about past convictions on the transformative power of women in politics. For it seemed apparent that the presence of women in the centres of power did not give voice to an alternative morality or weaken the paradigm of violence in the settling of international political disputes. The muddle of the Great

War also unleashed the problems inherent in Parren's 'Just War/ Reluctant Warrior' paradigm, not least because current events cast grave doubts on the so-called natural affinity of women with peace.

68 For Parren, the Great War was distinguished from others, which she had supported in the past, by its unprecedented levels of mass violence and destruction as well as the vulnerability experienced by small new (Balkan) nations in the face of powerful predatory neighbours. In this formulation, pacifism was the highest form of patriotism and *ethnikofrosini* (national-mindedness). Her shifting attitude can also be partly attributed to Parren's long-standing royalist sympathies. The 'National Schism' between the two dominant power blocs in Greece, the monarchy and the liberal Venizelist camp, led by the republican prime minister Venizelos, found expression during this period, in the king's new-found pacifism and objection to Greek participation in the wars orchestrated by Venizelos. Queen Sophia, whom Parren revered throughout her political life, had appointed herself the spiritual leader of the movement and the founder and president of the Patriotic Association of Greek Women.[29] Parren followed suit and repeatedly praised the relief efforts of the queen to whom she referred to in the newspaper as 'the General and Marshal of the new Peace Army'.

69 Parren's anti-war campaign and her royalist sympathies culminated in her exile in 1917, as the goals of Venizelism (with the help of the Entente) prevailed, and were vindicated, when Greece's war effort was rewarded with vast territorial gains. Parren's exile suggests that her influence in Greek society was considerable, but her absence signalled the demise of the newspaper, bringing this era of feminist activism to a close. It was to be the first of several historical junctures in which the alliance between feminism, nationalism, and militarism would demonstrate its fundamental instability.

Notes

Note 1: Without which the initially successful revolution would have been crushed by the might of the Egyptian armies summoned by the Sultan, following the spectacular defeat of his own troops at the hands of the outnumbered Greek revolutionaries.

Note 2: See Varika (1987: 63).

Note 3: The song's thematic origins can be traced to the ancient Greek myth of Admitos and Alkistis. Alkistis offers her life to save that of her husband, after his parents decline to sacrifice themselves. See Mammopoulos (1970: 115).

Note 4: 'Sacrifice at the Bridge of Arta' describes how the architect's wife had to be immured into the foundations of the bridge to prevent it from collapsing. For insightful analyses of female power in contemporary rural Greek culture, see Dubisch (1986), Du Boulay (1974), Herzfeld (1982), Sant Cassia & Bada (1992), Holst-Warhaft (1992), and Alexious (1974).

Note 5: See Ioannou (1970) for full citation of the verse. The names of female heroines have been highlighted to assist identification for the non- Greek-speaking reader. This extract is translated from Xiradaki (1988: 22).

Note 6: Romaios (1955), for example, finds the model for the *andreiomeni* of the folk songs in the Amazon as she appeared in 'Digenis Akritas' (the demotic songs eulogising Digenis, the mythical defender of the eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire).

Note 7: Except for the Ionian Islands, which were occupied by the Venetians, the French and, finally, the English.

Note 8: See the writing of pedagogue Leondias (1887) and Gedeon (1887). Also see the discussion on Gedeon in Angelou and Elias (1976).

Note 9: The Phanariots took their name from Phanari, an affluent area of Istanbul (Constantinople), inhabited by wealthy Greeks, who enjoyed not only economic but political power within the Ottoman Empire. For instance, the Sultan would often select a (Greek) Phanariot as the 'Despot' of significant provinces such as Blachia and Moldova.

Note 10: See Fraisse (1994), Scott (1989), and Landes (1988) for French women's contribution to and exclusion from the spoils of the French Revolution.

Note 11: For example, see Condorcet's 'The Foundations of Social Choice and Politics' in Baker (1976). Note also that the revival in popularity of de Lambert's book in France in 1804 signalled the defeat of feminist influence under the Napoleonic code and the return to pre-revolutionary models of womanhood until the feminist revival of the 1830s led by the utopian socialists.

Note 12: Rhigas Velestinlis's (Pherraios) main political philosophy works and pamphlets are *The Rights of Man* and *The Constitution.* See Vranousis (1953). See also Zaharopoulos & Todorov (1991); Kitromilides (1998) and (2003).

Note 13: An excerpt from 'Adamantios Korais, Allilographia' (Correspondence), in Kitromilides (1983). For a study of curriculum developments in secondary education for Greek girls in the nineteenth century, see Karastergiou (1986) and Fournaraki (1987).

Note 14: For an excellent (non-feminist) study of the Greek Enlightenment, see the work of Paschalis Kitromilides listed in the references.

Note 15: Other lesser-known heroines of the Revolution include Konstandia Zaharia from Sparta, Savaina from Mani, Asimo Lidouriki from Athens, and Domna Visvizi of Evvoia.

Note 16: See Williams (1980: 13).

Note 17: Bouilly (1763–1842) also wrote a treatise on the subject of conjugal love in 1808, which he called *Lionore.*

Note 18: For more on this work, see Constantinidis (2003).

Note 19: Publication of Moutzan-Martinengo's writings commenced decades after her death. This is a reflection of social attitudes that stifled and even prohibited the dissemination of the intellectual and literary efforts of women in her time, and indeed until well into the twentieth century. K. Porfyris published the most widely circulated reproduction of her autobiography in Athens in 1956. According to Porfyris, in spite of Moutzan-Martinengo's yearning for recognition, her writings were deliberately buried for fifty years after her death. In 1881, her brother, a poet, published her autobiography in a rather half-hearted manner, resulting in another sixty-six years of literary obscurity. In 1947, the Zakynthian intellectual Dinos Konomos had promised to publish over thirty of her scripts, which he had somehow unearthed, in his newspaper *Eptanisiaka Filla*. All of Moutzan-Martinengo's writings, except for the autobiography, were destroyed by the earthquakes and fires that razed the island to the ground in 1953. Finally, when Porfyris pursued its publication in 1954, he was unable to find a willing publisher. Finally, after borrowing the necessary funds, he published it himself in 1956.

Note 20: An address to the people of Chios on 7 May1822.

Note 21: See Moschou-Sakorrafou (1990: 90).

Note 22: A long series of civil laws that were introduced in subsequent decades, as well as the institution of the nation's first Civil Code in 1946, failed to alter women's status. This situation prevailed until the mid-1950s (with the exception of the brief interlude during the Axis occupation when the partisans granted full citizenship rights to women). Suffrage was granted to Greek women in 1956 following considerable Western (and in particular American) pressure.

Note 23: It was published weekly till 1907, after which it became fortnightly.

Note 24: The impact of Moutzan-Martinengo's writings would have been great, one imagines, had Parren's generation known of them.

Note 25: Hestia, in Latin; the goddess of the hearth.

Note 26: In the same instance as she praised Rousseau's philosophical achievements, Parren laments the devaluation of emotion with the collapse of the Old Regime: 'In our century the pendulum has swung the opposite way. . . . Today, sensitivity is a sign of weakness . . . . On this subject we have the following analytical theory to offer; Science is uninterested in emotion, indeed it requires of the scientist to be dispassionate. The scientist must shed all emotion and sensitivity which dilute clarity, and fill one with prejudice . . . . However that frame of mind harbours dangers for the future of democracy' (26 November 1889).

Note 27: For example, *The Cretan Girl* and *Mrs Hegel,* 1887 and 1889, respectively.

Note 28: Note that at the time of publication, less than one-third of the Greek-speaking population lived within the borders of the new Greek state, which was then comprised of the Peloponnese, Roumeli, Attica, Evvoia, and the islands of the Western Aegean (Cyclades and Sporades). Most still lived in areas occupied by the Ottomans, including Ipirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, and the Island of Crete—regions acquired by Greece during the Balkan Wars. There were additional territorial gains after the Great War and the Second World War.

Note 29: This was a relief organisation for disadvantaged families whose sons were mobilised to the front.