



# LEONIS

*by* George Theotokas

George Theotokas (1905–1966) belongs to the “generation of the thirties” which has given Greece some of its finest writers, including the two Nobel Prize winners, George Seferis and Odysseus Elytis. His essay *The Free Spirit* (1929) has been claimed as the manifesto of that generation, and his work as a novelist, short story writer, essayist, dramatist, and founder and editor of literary journals has secured for him an important place in modern Greek letters and as a social and cultural critic.

A “confessional novel,” *Leonis*, set in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Constantinople on the eve of the First World War, is regarded as Theotokas’s best literary accomplishment. It belongs to the literature of adolescent youth and is, in fact, the story of Theotokas himself, the story of the “artist as a young man” at a most crucial moment in twentieth-century history when he “heard the War approaching.” It is a delicate, sensitive analysis of adolescent youth with Constantinople and its environs as its immediate landscape but Europe in the ear of the Great War as its all-encompassing canvass.

Among Theotokas’s other works available in English are his celebrated novel *Argo*, which portrays a developed picture of adolescent life and the fate of Hellenism in Constantinople during the Asia Minor Disaster and in Athens during the interwar years, and his play *The Game of Folly Versus Wisdom*.

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