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IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS IN NARRATIVE: THREE NOVELS ABOUT AND FOR CHILDREN

In the present paper we shall deal with three novels, at least two of which are aimed at children as their intended addressees: Penelope Delta's *Τρελαντώνης* (1932), Elias Venezis' *Αιολική Γῆ* (1953) and Alki Zei's *Τὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας* (1963). In them, the main characters, Andonis [Benakis], Petros and Melissa, respectively, are also children of almost the same age, i.e. about eight years old¹. The narration is mostly in the first person in *Αιολική Γῆ* and in *Τὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας*, and in the third person in *Τρελαντώνης*. Unlike *Αιολική Γῆ*, however, in *Τὸ καπλάνι [...]* we do not have an adult narrator, through whose memory the child's experience is filtered later. Also, whereas in *Αιολική Γῆ* we notice an alternation of fixed internal focalisation (events presented from the child's perspective) with zero focalisation (since young Petros is absent from some of the situations presented to us), in *Τὸ καπλάνι* Melissa is the only transmitter of the story to the reader throughout the narrative. As for *Τρελαντώνης'* narrative, although one might be tempted to see it focused on Andonis, it would perhaps be more accurate to speak of an extra-diegetic narrator who is partial to Andonis and plays with distances from other characters.

These three novels have many features in common². What I have

1. Andonis is eight years old (*Τρελαντώνης*, p. 92), and so is Melissa (*Τὸ καπλάνι*, p. 100). Petros is six years old but his sister, Artemis, one of the leading characters of the novel, is eight (*Αιολική Γῆ*, p. 28).

2. We could compare, for example, the characters who are depicted as embodiments of family life, or the symbolic threatening entities within that life (the king's dog in *Τρελαντώνης*, pp. 16, 116ff.; the καπλάνι, i.e. an embalmed sort of animal in *Τὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας*, pp. 14, 62, 151; and the young bear in *Αιολική Γῆ*, pp. 193, 240). Interestingly, both the dog and the καπλάνι have eyes of different colours each.

chosen to examine in this study is how Greek and international politics of the authors' times intrude into narrative and by what kind of narrative means political ideology is conveyed.— For though we are talking about novels for children —or, perhaps, exactly for this reason — politics is conveyed, albeit implicitly and indirectly, within the framework of the pedagogical nature of these novels.

Chronologically, the story is situated: (a) in *Τρελαντώνης*, in Piraeus, in the 8th decade of the 19th century (to my mind); (b) in *Αἰολική Γῆ*, on the west coast of Asia Minor opposite to Lesvos, in 1914³; and (c) in *Τὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας*, on an island in the Ikarian Sea, a little before and a little after the Metaxas dictatorship.

It is clear that all three narrators are politically progressive and, each in his/her own way, fond of their country. They dislike monarchy, priestcraft in the Church, political and nationalistic fanaticism, foreign rule, war, dictatorship and Fascism. On the one hand, they express themselves as if they did not like politics in general. On the other hand, they are not willing to dispense with «old values» such as family upbringing and discipline, democratic tolerance, peace, and their sense of Greekness.

If we attempted a general appreciation of the way in which ideology and politics are interwoven with narrative in these novels, we would qualify the author's method in *Τὸ καπλάνι* [...]⁴ as explicit, in *Αἰολική Γῆ* as symbolic - allusive, and in *Τρελαντώνης* as implicit and pedagogically cunning. In order to justify these terms, we shall examine the social stratification of the main characters' environment, as this can be perceived through the narrative, and the traces of their class adherence. Afterwards, we shall study the particular ways in which ideology or/and politics creep into narrative, i.e. the narrative means and the characters who are bearers of politics in the story. Finally, we shall try to demarcate the narrators' notion of Greekness and the patriotic sensibility they aim to foster in the minds of the authors' intended young readers; herein lies the instructive effect of narrative in these novels, which is manifest particularly in Penelope Delta's work.

3. *Αἰολική Γῆ*, p. 229.

4. It is worth noting that this interesting and successful novel (translated into more than ten languages and reprinted more than forty times) has been unanimously ignored in all the important histories of or introductions to modern Greek literature.

It is true that the application of such concepts as social structure, class consciousness, ideology, and even politics, to novels and fictional characters, which are, in the ultimate analysis, nothing but printed words on a piece of paper, could be challenged. Nonetheless, since some of the prominent (post-)Marxist critics of our times⁵ contend that «literature is vitally engaged with the living situations of men and women: it is concrete rather than abstract, displays life in all its rich variousness», and that «the story of modern literary theory, paradoxically, is the narrative of a flight from such realities [...] , from real history», in this paper I shall borrow for a while their lenses through which I shall examine these three novels I chose to present, without trying to flee from historical reality. At any rate, history has always weighed heavily upon the literature of countries such as Greece.

(I) SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS

All of the main characters in these novels belong to well-to-do families of the upper middle stratum of their society.

Melissa and Myrto's father in *Tὸ καπλάνι* [...] works at a bank. The family owns two houses (one in the capital of the island where they live and one presumably on another island opposite to the capital⁶) and employs a (female) servant, Stamatina. Their forefathers owned larger estates, which they liquidated later to meet the needs of the family⁷. Melissa and Myrto are generally considered *παιδιά καλῶν οἰκογενεῶν*⁸ and their family are apparently in very good terms with the political and religious authorities of the region⁹. Their grandfather

5. See e.g. T. F. Eagleton *Literary Theory*, p. 196ff., from where the following quotations are taken.

6. It is not clear where the country house is situated in *Tὸ καπλάνι*: 'Η ἐξοχή, ποὺς πηγαίνουμε, είναι ἀπέναντι στὴ χώρα (i. e. the capital of the island), στὴν δὲλη μεριὰ τῆς θάλασσας. Τῇ νύχτα, μποροῦμε νὰ βλέπουμε, ἀπὸ κεῖ, δύα τὰ φῶτα τῆς χώρας [...]. Μισή ώρα μὲ τὴ βάρκα ἀπὸ τὴ χώρα καὶ φτάναμε στὸ Λαμαγάρι (Melissa's words, pp. 27-28). It may well be on the opposite extremity of a bay.

7. "Εχουμε δύως τὸν Πύργο μας στὸ Λαμαγάρι, γιατὶ, κάποτε, πρὶν πολλὰ χρόνια, ὁ μπαμπάς τοῦ παπού (sic) είχε ἀποθῆκες, μὰ τὶς πούλησε, γιὰ νὰ σπουδάσει ὁ παπούς καὶ ν' ἀγοράσει τοὺς 'Αργαίους του (*Tὸ καπλάνι*, p. 28; author's emphasis).

8. *ibid.* p. 107.

9. See e.g. the regular visits of the prefect and the bishop, one of which is rendered in pp. 17-22 of *Tὸ καπλάνι*.

is regarded as the wisest man in the island¹⁰ and is presumably a Venizelist¹¹, but their cousin, a student of chemistry in Athens, is a communist¹², and this, though tolerated by the family, causes a lot of trouble to their public image¹³. In the country, Melissa and Myrto play with children both from poorer and from richer families:

Δε τέ θέλαμε, δύνασται, νὰ φοροῦμε παπούτσια, γιὰ νὰ μοιάζουμε πιότερο μὲ τὰ παιδιά ἀπὸ τὰ τσαρδάκια. Πάρα πολὺ τ' ἀγαποῦμε τὰ παιδιά κι' ἀς λένε: «Μαρή Μυρτώ! Μαρή Μέλια!» Οταν βλέπουμε κανέναν ξένο στὸ δρόμο καὶ μᾶς ωτάσει κάτι — ἀπαντοῦμε χωριάτικα, γιὰ νὰ νομίζει πώς είμαστε ἀπὸ τὰ τσαρδάκια. [...]» Αν μᾶς ἔβλεπε κανείς, θὰ ξεχώριζε, πώς ή Μυρτώ κι' ἐγώ δὲν είμαστε ἀπὸ τὰ τσαρδάκια. Τὰ ὅλα παιδιά είχανε κι' ὅλας μαυρίσει. [...] Σὲ λίγες, δύνασται, μέρες θάμασταν καὶ μεῖς ἔτσι [...] — Θὰ λέγαμε: προύν', κτάλ', σαπάν', σακάτ'...

(pp. 31-32; author's emphases)

«Ητανε ή Πιπίτσα! [...] Πιπίτσα! Μὰ μπορεῖ νὰ ὑπάρξει πιὸ γελοῖο δόνομα; Δὲν τὴ χωνεύουμε καθόλου. Ό μπαμπάς της έχει σχεδὸν δλες τις ἀποθῆκες τοῦ κρασιοῦ δικές του [...]»

(p. 32).

From the juxtaposition of the two above passages it becomes clear that Melissa in her capacity as narrator is partial to children from lower social strata whereas unfavourable terms are used about Pipitsa, who is thus depicted as the spoiled, dislikeable representative of the *nouveaux riches* in the community. The narrator is a perspicacious observer of her own and her sister's differences from other people, and does not fail to stress them adroitly, whether the comparison involves members of higher or — more often — of lower classes:

Μὰ ή Σταματίνα ή καῦμένη ούτε τὸ δόνομά της δὲν ξέρει νὰ γράψει (p. 17);

ὅλα τὰ παιδιά ἀπὸ τὰ τσαρδάκια έχουνε κάτι λυπητερές ιστορίες, πιὸ λυπητερές κι' ἀπὸ τοῦ Δαβήδ Κόπερφηλδ (sic, p. 44);

10. "Ολοι στὸ νησὶ τὸν λένε «ό σοφός», *ibid.* p. 10.

11. *ibid.* p. 23.

12. *ibid.* p. 99.

13. *ibid.* p. 62.

ὅποιο παιδί πληρώνει κανονικά δίδαχτρα, δέν τ' ἀφήνουν ποτὲ στὴν λέδια τάξη κι' ἀς εἶναι κουμπούρας. "Οποιος εἶναι μὲν ἔκπτωση, λιγάκι νὰ μὴν πάει καλά — κινδυνεύει (p. 112; Alexis explaining to Melissa the system of the private school they attend. Author's emphasis);

φοροῦσε ἔνα παληὸν φόρεμα κι' ἀπὸ πάνω μιὰ ξεθωριασμένη κλαδωτὴ ποδιὰ (sc. Alexis' mother, p. 117);

ἡ 'Αντιγόνη δὲν εἶναι οὕτε «κανονικὰ» οὕτε «μὲν ἔκπτωση». Εἶναι «δωρεάν». Ή μαμά της δουλεύει παραδουλεύτρα στὸ σπίτι τοῦ κυρίου Καρανάση κι' ἔκεινος ἀντὶ νὰ τῆς πληρώνει μεροκάματο, πῆρε τὴν 'Αντιγόνη στὸ σχολεῖο (p. 142);

σὰν τοὺς τσιγγάνους, ποὺ μένουνε στὸ οἰκόπεδο, πίσω ἀπὸ τὸ σπίτι μας (p. 146).

Within the young girls' family, there are different political inclinations: the grandfather, the mother, the communist cousin, and perhaps Stamatina, belong to the progressive camp, and Melissa — the narrator — is influenced by them. The aunt alone belongs to the royalist-philodictatorial camp, and is joined for a while by Myrto, who is influenced by the pro-Metaxas ideology of her schoolmaster. As for the father, his only preoccupation seems to be not to lose his job because of the repercussions of any behaviour which would expose him in the eyes of his superiors. Obviously, it was not easy to find a new post on a small island during the Metaxas dictatorship.

In *Tρελαντώνης* the situation is similar to that depicted in *Tὸ ξαπλάνι*. A distinguished family of the Greek colony of Alexandria¹⁴ is about to move to Athens, probably foreseeing the violent expulsion of the Greek community from Egypt. The move seems to be prepared step by step and organised wisely by the family: the uncle and the aunt are first sent with the family's children to spend a summer in Piraeus. Other relatives have already settled there. Towards the end of the story (and of the summer) the children's parents arrive to join the rest of the large family (four children), which is rich enough to rent one of the Ziller houses near the one used by the royal family¹⁵, and to em-

14. Perhaps based on the family of Emmanuel Benakis.

15. During the reign of King George I, see *Tρελαντώνης* p. 217.

ploy an English governess for the children, a cook and a handmaid¹⁶. However, the children here do not have the wide social experience of Melissa and Myrto in *Tò κατλάνυ*: Andonis and his siblings live a richer home life, since they are four, and play and talk with children from families of the same rank. The opportunities when they have to measure themselves against “real life” are rare, e.g. when Andonis destroys by mistake the whole of Barba-Yannis Kanatas’ merchandise (a load of pitchers):

‘Ο ‘Αντώνης σήκωσε τὸ κεφάλι [...] — Εἶναι πολὺ φτωχός, εἶπε, δὲν ἔχει οὔτε παπούτσια (p. 207),

and when he meddles in a fight with stones between «street urchins»: χαμίνια τοῦ δρόμου, p. 240.

Country life and farming determine the social structures in *Αἰολικὴ Γῆ*. The narrator belongs to a family of landowners who employ many ploughmen on their farm. The four children (one of whom grows up to become the adult narrator of the story) spend their summers in the farm¹⁷ and the rest of their time in the town. The people live close to nature and are bound up in cultivating the land. In this late survival of feudalism, although nobody is oppressed and the interpersonal relations are straightforward and communication is smooth, yet each landowner holds the uncontested supremacy over his territory and, in return, he protects and maintains everyone in it (e.g. against the danger of alien incursion). Thus, the structure is clear and simple: a few landowners, and a multitude that work for them. In between, there moves a wandering throng of travellers, story-tellers, smugglers, robbers, dealers, hunters or shepherds:

Τὸ ὑποστατικὸ ἡταν σὲ πέρασμα τοῦ μεγάλου δρόμου ποὺ ἔνωνται παράλια τῆς Αἰολίδας μὲ τὴν Πέργαμο, κι ἀπὸ κεῖ μὲ τὸ ἐσωτερικὸ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς. “Ἔτσι, σχεδὸν πάντα βρίσκονταν ταξιδιώτες τοῦ μεγάλου δρόμου. “Ηταν Ἐβραῖοι, Ἀρμένηδες, Τοῦρκοι, Χριστιανοί, φτωχοί, ἀρχοντες, πραματευτάδες, ἀρρωστοι. Φέρναν μαζί τους τὶς μοιζηες τους, τὰ πάθη καὶ τὶς δυστυχίες τους, τὰ νιτερέσα καὶ τὶς τρέλεις τους. [...] “Οταν τὸ βράδυ τοὺς ἔβρισκε σιμὰ στὰ μέρη μας, ἔρχονταν στὸ ὑποστατικὸ νὰ βροῦνται καταφύγιο γιὰ τὴ νύχτα: τροφὴ καὶ προστασία ἀπὸ τ’ ἀγρίμια. (p. 75)

16. *Τρελαντώνης*, pp. 13, 15-16, 20, 42, 101.

17. *Αἰολικὴ Γῆ*, pp. 24, 30.

In this way, the four grandchildren of the old landowner Yannakos Bebelas are in a position to gain a rich experience of the multifarious world surrounding them, apart from their direct contact with nature.

* * *

In all three novels, although the main characters — children — are justified in not being fully aware of their class identity, they constantly observe and express their differences from other people. Thus their class consciousness is gradually shaped along with their self-knowledge and enrichment of experience. Representative passages from the three novels will be quoted next, in corroboration of the above conclusion.

From *Tὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας*:

Ἐγώ δὲ θέλω νάχαμε μπαμπά συγγραφέα, — λέσι ἡ Μυρτώ. Γιατί, τότε, μπορεῖ νὰ τρέχαμε καὶ μεῖς στις γειτονίες, νὰ ζητᾶμε δανεικά παπούτσια. (p. 122)

Ἐ, ἀφοῦ εἶναι ὁ Νίκος κομμουνιστής, θὰ γίνω κι' ἐγώ, ἄμα μεγαλώσω, — μοῦ εἴπε ὁ Νώλης. (p. 99)

Γύρισα καὶ τὴν κύτταξα. "Οχι, δὲν ήτανε αύτὴ ἡ ἀδελφούλα μου! Ἦταν ἔνα κορίτσι, ποὺ τόχα δεῖ στὴ γιορτὴ τοῦ σχολείου, νὰ στέκεται πλάι στὸν κλέφτη τὸν Κόσκορη καὶ νὰ χαιρετάει φασιστικά. (p. 151, Melissa "disowning" her alienated sister; author's emphasis).

From *Τρελαντώνης*:

Εἶδα στ' ὄνειρό μου πώς πέθανε ὁ Μπαρμπαγιάννης Κανατάς. Καὶ πέθανε, λέσι, ἀπὸ πείνα, γιατὶ δὲν εἴχε πιὰ δραχμές, ἀφοῦ σπάσαμε δόλα του τὰ κανάτια. (p. 200, Pouloudia's words)

From *Αἰολικὴ Γῆ*:

Φεύγουν πρῶτα οἱ ἄνθρωποι ποὺ δούλευαν στὸ ὑποστατικὸ μας, γυναικες κι ἄντρες. Φορτωμένοι τὸν μπόγο τους περνοῦν μπροστὰ ἀπ' τὸν παππού, ποὺ στέκεται στὴ μεγάλη πόρτα, ἔνας - ἔνας. Σκύβουν κλαίγοντας, φιλοῦν τὸ χέρι του, κ' ἐκεῖνος τοὺς ἀποχαιρετᾶ καὶ τοὺς εὐλογεῖ. (p. 303)

Bearing always in mind the convention which we set in the last paragraph of the introduction to this paper, one can say that Melissa, the narrator in *Tò καπλάνι* [...], seems to be the most conscious of her and her family's status, while Petros of *Αιολική Γῆ*, and Andonis of *Τρελαντώνης* come in the second and third place respectively. Andonis is kept the least informed about the adults' activities, compared to the main characters of the other two novels:

—Νὰ τῆς τὰ πουλήσεις; ἔκανε δὲ Ἀντώνης, [...]. Ναί ... αὐτὸς ἐπιτρέπεται... Καὶ ὁ πατέρας πουλᾶ μπαμπάκια στὸ γραφεῖο... αὐτὸς εἶναι ἐμπόριο... [...] 'Ο Ἀντώνης δὲν ἤταν καὶ τόσο βέβαιος. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπὸ ἐμπόριο δὲν ἤξερε καλά. (pp. 182-3)

(II) IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS IN NARRATIVE: WAYS OF INTRUSION

In this section I shall study how elements of political ideology appear in narrative in these novels, leaving their mark upon the education, family and professional life of the characters, and influencing the children.

In *Tò καπλάνι* [...] the lion's share of the perception and expression of underlying or explicit political assumptions is Melissa's, who informs the intended reader using the first person (singular or plural). She is an unusually perspicacious observer, who perceives the adults' professional relationships, the fascist predispositions of some of them even before the establishment of the Metaxas dictatorship, the democratic anti-royalism of others, the brain-washing that her sister Myrto undergoes at school, and the persecutions of the democrats by the dictatorial regime. Not only does her communist cousin, Nikos, sensitise her to the notions of dictatorship, fascism, royalty, democracy, communism, and civil war; she is also allowed to be present at the political discussions of the adults, unlike Andonis (i.e. *Τρελαντώνης*) or Petros (in *Αιολική Γῆ*)¹⁸, before whom such discussions are very rare. Melissa is able even to get and faithfully transmit first-hand information about other characters' political beliefs:

—Σταματίνα, ἐσύ μὲ ποιὸν εἶσαι; Μὲ τὸ Βενιζέλο ἢ τὸ βασιληά;
—Μὲ τὸν κακό μου τὸν καιρὸ εἶμαι, [...]. "Οποιος καὶ νάρθει, μονάχα

18. This is also the reason why Petros cannot be the narrator but as an adult.

ἐμένα ποὺ δὲ θὰ φωτήσει. 'Εγώ, ἔτσι κι' ἀλλοιῶς, δούλα κι' ἀγράμ-
ματη θάμαι. (pp. 23-24)

Melissa also witnesses her sister Myrto's alienation due to school propaganda: it is the period of the organisation of Youth Columns (EON) in every Greek school. Schools become barracks and the pupils are taught to ape (pseudo-)military manners. Myrto is skilfully induced to see her participation in her school's Column as an honourable distinction and this leads her to a break with her own sister, to an inner division and estrangement from her own family¹⁹.

In *Αἰολικὴ Γῆ* the adult narrator reconstructs — through his memories as a child or his later information — the beginnings of the first world war, the first persecutions of Greeks by the Turks in Asia Minor, and adumbrates the collapse of the Μεγάλη Ιδέα.

Another means for rendering the above situations is the symbolic use of images from nature as foretokens of the imminent Disaster (see e.g. the fight against jackals, pp. 50-52; wolves looking for the way to the sea, p. 41; Petros' killing of the weasel — an image with many functions on the symbolic level —, p. 140; his fall from the eagle's nest, p. 195; the hunter's death, p. 238).

The other important landowner of the region, Vilaras (p. 160 ff.), who is also an educated man, plays a useful role in the story, since it is he who informs the others of the developments in Europe a little before the outbreak of the war, and explains to them the importance of each event and the interaction between them²⁰. Vilaras' British daughter-in-law is occasionally assigned a similar role²¹.

But the most skilful insertion of political ideology into narrative, in comparison to the two other novels, is to be observed in *Τρελαντώνης*. Here, perhaps because the narrator is extradiegetic, as was indicated

19. This tension, which is also one of the significant threads of the whole plot, is finally resolved in a rather awkward way on the part of the author: [...] εἰπε ὁ παπούς σοβαρά. [...] Κι' ἐν γίνει ὑποχρεωτικὸν νὰ γίνετε (sic) φαλαγγίτισσες καὶ δὲν μποροῦμε νὰ κάνουμε ἀλλοιῶς, θὰ πάτε μά, στὴν ψυχὴ σας μέσα, δὲ θάσσαστε φαλαγγίτισσες. (*Τὸ καπιλάνι*, p. 166). But Myrto's problem was exactly that she could not bear the split of acting in one way and feeling in another!

Notice also the 'political' discussions between the two sisters, e.g. in pp. 22-23, where Melissa supports Venizelos and Myrto proves a fervent — though premature — royalist.

20. *Αἰολικὴ Γῆ*, pp. 272-3.

21. *ibid.* p. 292.

earlier, the author can distribute subtle shades of political ideology to the words of more than one or two characters. The subtleness may be linked to the author's pedagogical aims. Indicatively we note: the sexist opposition 'boys vs. girls' (Andonis vs. Pouloudia); a slight antiroyalism (narrator, Andonis, Pouloudia); anticlericalism (Andonis); anti-Semitism (Alexandra, Pouloudia, Andonis) as well as teaching against it (uncle Zorzin); the ideology of expansion of the Greek state over Crete, the Ionian islands, the Dodecanese, and Cyprus (Alexandros, Andonis—if we situate the story some years before the Cretan Revolution of 1897); fear of Turkish ferocity (Andonis), etc. Particularly the issue of anti-Semitism should perhaps be related not to the story time (1870s) but to the narrative time (1930s). In addition, we come across mentions of words such as *δικτάτορας*, *μοναρχία*, *ἐπανάσταση*²², which are used by the narrator figuratively in his description of the children's relationships with one another.

(III) GREEKNESS AND PATRIOTIC SENSIBILITY

At least two of the novels we are studying, i.e. *Tὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας* and *Τρελαντώνης*, are addressed primarily to children, but all of them can be read as pleasurable by adults. *Τρελαντώνης* in particular is animated by a Hellenocentric spirit peculiar to the ideology of «Greater Hellenism» of the first decades of the century, which stressed the existence of Greeks around and outside the official Greek state (Egypt, Asia Minor, Constantinople, etc.) and was often abused by the politicians as a basis for various irredentist and expansionist obsessions. In this novel, however, we find only healthy forms of this Hellenocentric ideology as a private organising principle of family life, and not as a slogan in the mouths of politicians.

It is exactly in this sense that one could read *Tὸ καπλάνι* [...], namely as a denunciation (through mockery and other more direct means) of the bankruptcy of Greek politics when it appropriates Hellenocentric ideals; these are then reduced to an arid nationalism and, further, even to Fascism. *Tὸ καπλάνι* [...] can be seen as a novel which negates state ideology. The author, writing probably in the late 1950s, does not seem interested in proposing explicitly just another operative ideology. She is content with exposing the excesses and the ridic-

22. *Τρελαντώνης*, pp. 37-38.

ulousness of fascist regimes. At this point I would like to quote two passages from *Tò καπλάνι* [...], which, though lengthy, are characteristic of the ironic method and style of this novel.

—Σ κ ο ũ ρ α τὰ πράγματα, — ἔλεγε ὁ μπαμπάς.

—Δὲν πιστεύω νὰ πᾶνε γιὰ δικτατορία; —ξαναρώταγε ὁ παπούς (sic).

—Ποιοὺ σ κ ο ũ ρ α, σᾶς λέω, — ἀπαντοῦσε ὁ μπαμπάς.

[...] Οταν ρωτήσαμε τὸν παπού τί θὰ πεῖ « σ κ ο ũ ρ α τὰ πράγματα» μᾶς εἶπε πώς θὰ πεῖ: Θτι ἡ δημοκρατία πέθανε. "Οχι ἐκείνη τοῦ χρυσοῦ αἰώνα τοῦ Περικλῆ, ἀλλὰ ἡ σημερινή. "Τστερα, μᾶς εἶπε ἔνα ἀρχαῖο ρητό, μὰ τόσο ἀρχαῖο, ποὺ δὲν καταλάβαμε τίποτα.

"Ετσι, ὅταν γέννησε ἡ γάτα μας δύο γατάκια, τὸ ἔνα σκοῦρο, σκοῦρο γκρίζο, καὶ τὸ ἄλλο ἄσπρο, τὰ βγάλκμε μὲ τὴ Μυρτώ: Σκοῦρα καὶ Δημοκρατία. 'Ο παπούς γέλασε πολύ, ὅταν τοῦ τὸ εἴπαμε, ἡ θεία Δέσποινα, θμως, ἀγρίεψε: —'Εμεῖς φταῖμε, ποὺ κάνομε συζητήσεις μπροστὶ στὰ παιδιά! (pp. 36-37; author's emphases)

[...] Μιὰ φορά, [...] τὸ βράδυ, ἐνῶ δοιοι εἶχαμε καθήσει στὸ τραπέζι, ἔγώ σηκώθηκα, μιὰ στιγμή, νὰ μαζέψω τὴ Σκοῦρα καὶ τὴ Δημοκρατία, γιατὶ ἡ Σταματίνα εἶπε πώς ἄρχιζε νὰ ψιχαλίζει. Τὴ Σκοῦρα τὴ βρήκα ἀμέσως, μὰ ἡ Δημοκρατία — ἄφαντη. Τότε ἄρχισα νὰ ξεφωνίζω: «Δημοκρατίασια!» "Οσπου μάκουσε καὶ ἤρθε. Δὲν πρόλαβα νὰ μπῶ στὸ σπίτι καὶ μ' ἄρπαξε ὁ μπαμπάς ἀπὸ τὸ χέρι. Νόμιζα πώς θύμωσε γιατὶ σηκώθηκα ἀπὸ τὸ τραπέζι, μὰ κεῦνος τάβαλε μὲ τὸ γατί.

—"Η θὰ τὸ πετάξετε, — λέει, — ἡ θὰ τοῦ ἀλλάξετε όνομα. Δὲν ἔχω ὅρεξη νὰ χάσω τὴ θέση μου στὴν Τράπεζα!

Τὸ γατὶ τὸ βγάλκμε [i.e. thenceforth] "Ια, μὰ αὐτὸ ποὺ ἀκούσαμε παραήτανε πιὰ παράξενο. Νὰ διώξουν τὸν μπαμπά ἀπὸ τὴν Τράπεζα γιὰ ἔνα γατί!

—Θ' ἀλλάξεις κι' ἐσύ όνομα στὴν ἀρραβωνιαστικιά σου; — ρωτήσαμε, μὲ τὴ Μυρτώ, τὸ Νίκο. (pp. 54-55)

The above episode, prepared step by step in the course of the first passage, is a masterly example of the way in which irony, intense symbolism and allegory are conveyed in the text. It is a powerful combination of discursive means by which the ancestor-ridden state education is ridiculed, the implications of the abolition of democracy are shown vividly, and the irrationality of the dictatorial regime is mocked.

In contrast, the character of the grandfather in *Tò καπλάνι* as the right-minded, wise and substantially educated man, who does not

boast of his knowledge of antiquity, but knows how to draw principles of life upon it, is implicitly raised by the narrator almost to a model figure of a Greek²³.

In *Aiolikή Γῆ*, too, the grandfather is the main character who, without being institutionally educated, has the wisdom and the experience of life:

Μονάχα ὁ παππούς ἔμενε ἀτάραχος καὶ κοίταζε τὴ γῆ, τὰ Κιμιντένια καὶ τὰ σύννεφα. Εἶχε φτάξει στὸ σύνορο τῆς ἀρχοντιᾶς καὶ τῆς γαλήνης ποὺ δίνει νόημα σ' ὅλα τὰ ἐγκόσμια ἀντικρίζοντάς τα μονάχα σὰν περιστατικὰ Μεγάλου Νόμου ποὺ δὲν εἶναι στὴ μοῖρα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου νὰ τὸν μάθει. 'Η ἀγωνία γιὰ τὴ γῆ, σ' ὅλη τὴ μακριὰ ζωὴ του, ἡ πικρία γιὰ τόσες βροχές ποὺ δὲν ἥρθαν, ἡ χαρὰ γιὰ τόσες ἄλλες ποὺ ἥρθαν στὸν καιρὸ τους καὶ γονιμοποίησαν τοὺς σπόρους, καταστγασαν τώρα στὴν ἡμερηθεώρηση τοῦ κόσμου, στὴν ὑποταγή: «'Αν τὸ θέλει ὁ Γιαραμπής [i.e. God], θὰ βρέξει», «Δὲν τὸ θέλει ὁ Γιαραμπής, καὶ δὲ θὰ βρέξει. Βλογγημένο τ' ὄνομά του!»

"Οσο γιὰ τὸν καρπὸ ποὺ χάθηκε — καλά! "Εδωσε τόσον ποὺ δὲν γῆ στὰ χρόνια ποὺ πέρασαν! Πάλι: Θὰ δώσει στὰ χρόνια ποὺ θὰ 'ρθουν.

(p. 73)

Such Herodotean virtues of endurance and conciliation with God and Nature gather a Hesiodean momentum, when one thinks that not only the grandfather is obviously no longer alive in the adult narrator's time, but also that his Asia Minor homeland no longer exists after the extinction of Greater Hellenism in that part of the world. *Aiolikή Γῆ* can then be read as the nostalgic epitaph of a lost paradise, where politics did not impinge on everyday life, and man lived bound to the earth, in harmony with nature, and with his inner equilibrium undisturbed:

Ναι, λίγο χώμα ἀπ' τὴ γῆ τους. Γιὰ νὰ φυτέψουν ἔνα βασιλικό, τῆς λέσι, στὸν ξένο τόπο ποὺ πᾶνε. Γιὰ νὰ θυμοῦνται.

[...]

Γῆ, Αἰολική Γῆ, Γῆ τοῦ τόπου μου.

(last page)

23. It is worth stressing the express anticlericalism in this novel. See e.g. *Tὸ καπιλάνι*, p. 18ff.: 'Ο δεσπότης καθότανε μαζί μὲ τρεῖς χωρίες καὶ παιζανε χαρτιά. Τὸ χέρι του ήτανε χρύσο [...] (the narrator Melissa's words).

The bond of that 'golden Greek generation' with their land was visible on their serene faces, in their love of God and Nature. For Venezis, endurance is presumably part of the essence of Greekness.

CONCLUSIONS

So far we have studied the ways in which the authors of these three novels fasten elements of political ideologies to narrative: intra- or extra-diegetic narrators or a combination of both, implicit or explicit insertion, pedagogical effects upon the (young) reader's mind, denunciation of undesired situations, assignment of political comments to one, two or more characters, promotion of model attitudes or figures. We notice striking differences in the degree of directness of the narrative, such as between *Τρελαντώνης*: Μά θεῖς, οἱ Ἐβραῖοι ἔχουν θρησκεία; (Pouloudia's words, p. 92) and *Τὸ καπτλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας*: 'Ακοῦς ἔκει νὰ θέλετε νὰ θάψετε ἄνθρωπο! 'Ετσι οἱ φασίστες μόνο κάνουν (Nikos' words, p. 65), as well as in the characters' political awareness, like between, again, *Τὸ καπτλάνι* and *Αιολικὴ Γῆ* (—Σεράγεβο, λέσι ὁ Βηγλαράς. Εἶναι ψηλά, στὰ μέρη τῆς Βοσινίας. 'Ο παππούς είναι ἀπλούχος, [...] — Γιατί; λέσι. 'Αφοῦ γίνεται τόσο ψηλὸς τὸ κακό, γιατί θά 'ρθεῖ ἴσαμε ἐμάς ἐδῶ, στὴν Ἀνατολή; p. 272).

In years of tension between a nation's struggle for cultural (if not political) independence, on the one hand, and imperialism in its various manifestations²⁴, on the other, literature does not need to argue its way to political relevance. Many times in the twentieth century, there was certainly a tension of this kind in Greece. That is why it is not arbitrary, in my opinion, to borrow Marxist methods when studying the intrusion of political ideology particularly into the fiction of those years. On the contrary, it may even prove enlightening.

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24. Terry Eagleton, *op. cit.*, p. 215 ff.



ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Νικόλαος Κ. Πετρόπουλος, «Ιδεολογία καὶ πολιτικὴ στὸν ἀφηγηματικὸν λόγον: τρία παιδικὰ μυθιστορήματα μὲν ἥρωες παιδιά».

Τὰ νεοελληνικὰ μυθιστορήματα *Τρελαντώνης* (1932) τῆς Πηνελόπης Δέλτα, *Αἰολικὴ Γῆ* (1943) τοῦ Ἡλία Βενέζη καὶ *Τὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας* (1963) τῆς "Αλκης Ζέη, ποὺ γιὰ κύρια πρόσωπα ἔχουν παιδιὰ καὶ διαβάζονται ἀπὸ παιδιὰ — ἥ καὶ ἀπὸ παιδιὰ — εἶναι τὸ ἀντικείμενο τῆς μελέτης. 'Ο σκοπὸς εἶναι νὰ ἔξεταστεῖ σ' αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα πῶς ἡ ἐλληνικὴ καὶ διεθνῆς πολιτικὴ ὑπὸ τὸ πρίσμα τοῦ/τῆς συγγραφέα ὑπεισέρχεται στὴν ἀφήγηση καὶ μὲ τὶ εἴδους ἀφηγηματικὰ μέσα μεταδίδεται στὸν ἀναγνώστη πολιτικὴ ἰδεολογία, καθὼς τὰ κείμενα λειτουργοῦν διαπαιδαγωγικά. 'Η ἀνάλυση μένει κοντὰ στὴν ιστορικὴ πραγματικότητα, καὶ τὰ κοινωνικὰ δεδομένα λαμβάνονται σταθερὰ ὑπὸ δόψη. Σύμφωνα μὲ τὴ μέθοδο ποὺ ἀκολουθεῖται, ἐπισημαίνονται οἱ ἀφηγηματολογικὲς ἰδιοτυπίες τῶν τριῶν ἔργων (ὅπως τὸ εἶδος ἐστίασης τῆς ἀφήγησης καὶ ἡ θέση τοῦ ἀφηγητῆ). καὶ οἱ ὄμοιότητές τους (κυρίως ἡ ὑπαρξὴ διδακτικοῦ καὶ ἰδεολογικοῦ στόχου).

Προσδιορίζεται τὸ ἰδιαιτερὸ ιστορικὸ καὶ πολιτικὸ τοπίο, ὅπου κινοῦνται τὰ πρόσωπα σὲ καθένα ἀπὸ τὰ τρία μυθιστορήματα καὶ χαρακτηρίζεται ὁ ἀφηγητὴς ὡς φορέας ἰδεολογίας καὶ στὶς τρεῖς περιπτώσεις προοδευτικῆς καὶ πατριωτικῆς: ἀποστρέφεται τὴ μοναρχία καὶ τὴν κληρικοκρατία, τὸν πολιτικὸ καὶ ἔθνικιστικὸ φανατισμό, τὴν ξένη κυριαρχία, τὸν πόλεμο καὶ τὴ δικτατορία, ἀλλὰ καὶ δὲν ἀποχωρίζεται τὶς «παλιὲς ἀξίες» του — οἰκογενειακὴ ἀγωγή, ηθος, δημοκρατικὴ ἀνεκτικότητα, ἀγάπη γιὰ τὴν εἰρήνη, καὶ ἔνα ἰδιαιτερὸ αἰσθημα ἐλληνικότητας.

Τὰ κύρια πρόσωπα καὶ στὰ τρία μυθιστορήματα εἶναι παιδιὰ εὐκατάστατων οἰκογενειῶν τοῦ ἀνώτερου κοινωνικοῦ κύκλου τῆς μεσαίας τάξης. 'Η συνείδηση τῆς ταξικῆς τους ταυτότητας δὲν ἔχει ἀκόμα διαμορφωθεῖ καὶ ἡ εὐαισθησία τους διαρκῶς ἐμπλουτίζεται ἀπὸ τὶς συναναστροφές καὶ τὰ παιχνίδια τους μὲ παιδιὰ οἰκογενειῶν διαφορετικῆς κοινωνικῆς θέσης. Τὰ γεγονότα τοῦ καιροῦ τους, μὲ τοὺς ἰδεολογικοὺς ἀντικτύους ποὺ ἔχουν καὶ τὶς διχογνωμίες ἀκόμα ποὺ προκαλοῦν στοὺς κόλπους τῆς οἰκογένειας, διαπαιδαγωγοῦν τὰ παιδιὰ σὲ αὐτογνωσία. 'Η ώριμασή τους μπορεῖ νὰ διαβαθμιστεῖ, τόσο ἐσωτερικὰ μέσα στὸ κάθε μυθιστόρημα, ὅσο καὶ συγκριτικὰ μεταξὺ τῶν τριῶν μυθιστορημάτων. "Ετσι π.χ. τὸ πιὸ συνειδητὸ ἀπὸ τὰ (παιδικὰ) πρόσωπα εἶναι τὸ κορίτσι ἀφηγητῆς στὸ *Καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας* (Μέλισσα) καὶ ἀκολουθοῦν ὁ ἀφηγητὴς στὴν *Αἰολικὴ Γῆ* (Πλέτρος) καὶ ὁ κύριος ἥρωας στὸν *Τρελαντώνη*

(Αντώνης), ή δπωσδήποτε ό εξωτερικός άφηγητής πού μιλάει (σε τρίτο πρόσωπο) για λογαριασμό του.

Η ίδεολογία και ή πολιτική συνυφαίνονται με τὴν ἀφήγηση κατὰ διαφορετικό τρόπο σὲ καθένα ἀπὸ τὰ τρία μυθιστορήματα: στὸ Καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας ἡ μέθοδος εἶναι ἀμεση και διεισδυτική, και ἰδιαίτερα δξεία εἶναι ἡ καταγραφή τῆς ίδεολογικῆς ἔξαρτησης πού ὑπέστη ἡ ἀδερφὴ τῆς ἀφηγήτριας ἀπὸ τὴν προπαγάνδα τῆς νεολαίας τοῦ δικτάτορα Μεταξᾶ (ΕΟΝ), ἐνῶ στὴν Αιολικὴ Γῆ ὁ τρόπος διαπλοκῆς τῆς πολιτικῆς ίδεολογίας στὴν ἀφήγηση εἶναι συμβολικός-ὑπαινικτικός και στὸν Τρελαντώνη ἔμμεσος και παιδαγωγικά εὔπτροφος, μὲ τὶς λεπτεπίλεπτες ἀποχρώσεις πολιτικῆς ίδεολογίας πού δ συγγραφέας ἐγκατασπείρει στὰ λόγια τῶν διαφόρων προσώπων τοῦ ἔργου.

Μὲ παραθέματα και πυκνές ἀναφορὲς στὰ κείμενα ἀποσαφηνίζεται ἐπίσης ἡ ίδεα τῆς ἑλληνικότητας πού προβάλλει ἀπὸ τὰ τρία ἔξεταζόμενα μυθιστορήματα: πνευματώδεις ἐπικρίσεις τοῦ παραλογισμοῦ και τῶν ὑπερβολῶν τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ μεγαλοϊδεατισμοῦ (*Τὸ καπλάνι τῆς βιτρίνας*), νοσταλγικὴ ἔξαρση τῆς καρτερικότητας και τῶν ὅλων ἀρετῶν πού ἀνέδειξαν και σφράγισαν τὸν οἰκουμενικὸ ἑλληνισμὸ (*Αιολικὴ Γῆ*) και, τέλος, νέα αἰσιόδοξη αἰσθηση μιᾶς ὑγιοῦς ἑλληνικότητας (*Τρελαντώνης*).