

Issues of the literary representation related to historical facts.
The role of the teacher during the period of
the “Macedonian Struggle”

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Résumé : *Cette étude examine les diverses formes que la représentation littéraire des faits historiques concrets entreprend. Plus spécifiquement nous recherchons : a) l'effet de l'expérience et de l'idéologie personnelle dans le récit littéraire et les choix narratifs de l'auteur (type de narrateur, de point de vue, etc.) et b) dans quelle mesure ce type de représentation littéraire forme une représentation parente du genre dans la littérature. Nous examinons le rôle à facettes multiples du professeur (conditions de vie, degré d'instruction, relations de l'état et de l'église, participation au combat armé) dans l'ouvrage littéraire de Georgios Modis pendant la saison turbulente des temps « de la lutte macédonienne » (1904-1908) dans la région du Macédoine Ottomane. Le noyau historique du travail du romancier, qui était un membre des forces armées de la guérilla grecque, élit l'intensité des nationalismes balkaniques pendant le 19ème et le 20ème siècle dans la région de Macédoine (structure de population ethnologique particulière - particularités linguistiques).*

Mots-clés : *Lutte macédonienne, Modis*

Abstract: *This study examines the various forms the literary representation of concrete historical facts undertakes. More specifically we research: a. the effect of the personal experience and ideology in the literary narration and the narrative choices of the writer (type of narrator, point of view, etc) and b. in which degree this type of literary representation shapes a relative - showing gender in the literature. We examine the multifaceted role of the teacher (living conditions, educational level, state and church relations, participation in the armed fight) in the literary work of Georgios Modis during the turbulent time season of the “Macedonian Struggle” (1904-1908) in the region of Ottoman Macedonia. The historical core of the novelist's work, who was a member of the Greek guerrilla armed forces, elects the intensity of the Balkan nationalisms during the 19th and the 20th century in the region of Macedonia (peculiar ethnological structure of population - linguistic peculiarities).*

Key words: *Macedonian Struggle, Modi*

History and Literature

The relation between History and Literature constituted traditionally a field of interdisciplinary juxtapositions. There were times when this relation reached the bounds of common functioning and influence upon the human affective but also there were times when the different techniques used both in Literature and History to depict historical events formed a completely different framework of functioning and perception with both divergent and centrifugal conceptions. As a result, in both contemporary literary mythopoeism and the scientific historical narration the depiction of historical events and their interpretation follow separate paths.

The main axis of differentiation remains, first the classic Aristotelian discrimination, i.e. *History is about the recording of facts whereas poetry is about the possibility of facts happening*, second, the estimate that in the literary gender (romantic biography, literary testimony, historical novel, autobiography) the representation of the facts should simply convince regarding their verisimilitude and should not verify the facts, as precisely the scientific historical narration has to do (Scholes, 1985 : 11-42).

Seen from a different perspective today we can claim, with scientific verification, the removal of the juxtaposition between Literature and History (Barthes, 1960) and to advance to the connection of the political and social conditions under which a text has been written, the writer's social and ideological stance (class origin, ideologies fixations, models, tendencies), and the cross-correlation of many other texts in the frames of an intertextual approach (Bourdieu, 2002 : 14 - 15). However, we should bear in mind that the ways of perception and interpretation of a text are located in a dated social universe and depend on a historical context. The hallucination of a direct comprehension of a literary text conceals the cultural arbitrariness of an anachronistic and ethnocentric tendency, which most of the time seeks in a metaphysical form of thought the replacement of the collective work that the historical science imposes (Bourdieu, 2002 : 461-463).

The autobiography and the testimony - experienced way of writing, which are forms of historical narration, constitute a way of depicting reality seen by the eye-witness and are constructed on the basis of exact representation of the historical fact (Ampatzopoulou, 1998 : 100 - 101). Of course, not only the historical writing but also the literature of testimony as well result from the choice and the reconstruction and hence regress between the individual psychogram and the imprinting of various collective and social behaviours (Bremond, 1993 : 46 - 59). In fact the writer doesn't deal with tangible facts, but with the reverberation of past actions that their results are being shaped mainly in a psychological basis. The literature of testimony, even if it encourages the verisimilitude, does not cease to compose fragmentarily a historical reading and to propose it as the real one. Finally, through the literature we do not read only the text's themes, but also historical and social parameters that shape the world. The words' meanings that constitute the texts do not reflect only one "truth", but they also bequeath us multiple interpretations concerning the human perceptions, ideologies and actions for the same historical fact. The benefit of an interdisciplinary approach of the social reality concerns the self-definition of the individual as this is formed through the social context and the psychological features as well as the

assistance offered for the comprehension of the extent and the quality of the hetero-definition involved in the formation of the self perception each time. From this point of view the triangle between history, literature and psychology seems not only intriguing but also worth exploring.

Objective, research material and the method of analysis

The present inquiring work through a structural-textual analysis investigates the educator’s presence as a literary thematic pattern in Georgios Modis’ literary texts (24 volumes with short stories, novels, annals and biographies) and potentially the effect of the personal experience and ideology in the literary narration and the writer’s narratives choices.

What a simple writer of mythopoiesm asks from his reader is to recognize the straightforward, well-structured narration of events and incidents. However, in Modis’ texts the reader is constantly confronted with his request to silently acknowledge the significance of the historical events that surround the writer’s personal life. It is possible that for this reason other autobiographical texts constitute charming instances of superb literary pages which, however, cannot become popular. How many people can be fascinated with the personal stories of a simple writer and how long for? “The meaning the story has for the people who have truly experienced it does not coincide with the meaning the story takes for the people who learn of it as the other people’s experience”. Consequently, both the biographical and autobiographical presuppositions of Modis’ narration render his narration liable to partiality (Liakos, 2007).

To achieve our goal we have collected and processed all the data found in the literary descriptions that reveal the versatile role of the teacher (living conditions, level of education, relations to both the state and church, participation in the armed struggle in the territories of Macedonia that were under ottoman occupation during the turbulent time of the “Macedonian Struggle”. Our choice is supported:

- i. from the fact that the role of the schoolteacher in the Monastery’s region (an area with neuralgic geographical position and peculiar ethnological composition of its population that portrays lively the ethnological and linguistic peculiarities of the entire Macedonia) is elected in a critical thematic element in Modis’ texts, and
- ii. from the general acknowledgement that the education diachronically constitutes the most important ideological mechanism of each state regarding the controlled incorporation of the younger generations in the established system of institutions, values and perceptions.

The basic tool of the texts’ reading and their methodological approach was a combination of methods used by historical science (examination through historical sources) and literary criticism (simple elements of the *theory of narration* and the logic of *context analysis*) in a effort to investigate the writer’s national ideology that dominates his work, and to depict the historical environment in which it is registered as well. This approach allows us: 1) to study the functioning and structure of the depiction as well as of the relations developed by the individual

protagonist in the place and time of the regenerated historical period and 2) to both indicate the text reading codes and reveal the value system of the writer in question. We finally end up with 5 fundamental categories:

1. The participation of the schoolteacher in the Macedonian Struggle
2. Schoolteacher's culture and education
3. Work and living conditions
4. The relations with the state and the church
5. Schoolteacher's personality and behaviour

Geographical delimitation and Historical frame

As Kiossev (Kiossev, 2004) points in its traditional connotations the "Balkans" metaphor presumes that the local nations are monolithic cultural subjects and, at the same time, naughty rug-rats (who have to be taught lessons and eventually punished). In its analytical aspects, the metaphor is naive whereas in a practical perspective it hardly helps a great deal in sorting things out. A non-critical, substantialist notion lies hidden behind its use - that of the "national culture" - while it is exactly "culture", with its actual ambivalence and non-substantiality, that captures a formidable part of the problem. Yet in this so called cultural process numerous geopolitical and economic factors are involved.

The instability in the delimitation of borders and the presence of many nations are the two most important characteristics of Macedonia geographical space from the antiquity until the beginning of 20th century (Bonidis, 1996 : 13). Macedonia diachronically constituted the key for the control of streets for the East. The state of Macedonia, which reached the pike of its glory and power during the time of Amydas - Philip II and Alexander the Great, was occupied by the Romans in 168 BC and its territories were divided in four semiautonomous regions of the Roman Empire. During the Middle Ages the term Macedonia was simply a geographical term that referred to a sub prefecture of the Byzantine Empire parts of which in the 9th and 14th centuries were taken by the two Slavic hegemonies, the Bulgarian Empire of Simeon (893-927) and Empire to the Serb Czar Dusan (1331-1355) respectively. This area came under the ottoman rules towards the end of the 14th century. Around the middle of the 19th century the European geographers agreed that the boundaries of "Major" Macedonia start in the south from the mountains Hasia, Kamvounia, Olympus and the Aegean Sea spreading in the north from Acrhid and Prespa including Krusovo, Perlepe, Velessa and further east the areas of Stromnitsa and Meleniko, they continue to the west with the mountain range of Pindos and in the east reach the river Nestos (Vakalopoulos, 1988 : 269).

The administrative organization of the Macedonian territory was unstable, at least up to the last fourth of the 19th century. In 1864, when the "vilaeti" institution was established, the administrative organization of Macedonia was stabilized, which, however, was finalized in the decade 1880-1890. Thessaloniki's vilaeti geographically covered the central and Eastern Macedonia and the Monastery's vilaeti the western and northern, respectively. These wider administrative regions, vilaetia, were divided in narrower, the santzakia, which were allocated in many provinces, named as kazades.

Particularly complex was the issue of the ethnic composition of the Macedonian population because the citizens of the Ottoman Empire were distinguished on the basis of religion and not of their nationality. The Christians of Macedonia were subject to the “Rum Millet”, which included Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians and Vlachs. Nor however the language was considered a reliable criterion for the segregation of the populations, because a complex mosaic of languages, dialects and local idioms prevailed in the area.

As far as the Bulgarians were concerned, every Slavic speaking individual was considered Bulgarian and every Greek, or any individual bearing the Greek mentality was also considered Bulgarian, characterised however his strong feeling regarding his Greek origin (Graecomanos). The Greeks considered Greek anyone who would remain faithful to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and would send his children to a Greek School regardless of the language he spoke. The Romanians saw a compatriot in every Vlach - speaking person while the Italians or the Austrians discovered everywhere numerous Albanians in order to establish a strong beachhead that would enable them realize their aspirations in the Balkans. The Turks, on the other hand, usually distinguished between “loyal” and “disloyal”. In general, regarding nationality anyone was what he really wanted to be (Papadopoulos, 1970 : 9). In the writer’s “Macedonian Babel” the protagonists speak at the same time Vlach and Greek (2, 52)¹, Albanian Greek and Vlach (5,57), Turkish and Albanian (2,73), Turkish Albanian and Bulgarian (2,77) Bulgarian and Albanian (13,4), the “Bulgarian - Macedonian” dialect and Greek (5,119). They also sing in Vlach and Albanian (11,115) or they sing Greek folk songs along with Albanian folk ones (5,30).

For clearly methodological reasons we adopt the division of Macedonia in three conceivable geographic areas, where the Christian populations are distributed with the criteria of language and the national constitution (Dakin, 1996 : 11-14 & Bonidis, 1996 : 15).

The southern area, whose northern borders are defined by an imaginary line that connects Kastoria, Naoussa, Thessalonici, Serres and Xanthi. In this area lived mainly Greek-speaking populations with Greek national conscience.

The intermediate area, whose northern conceivable line connects Achrida, Krousobo, Velesa, Stromnitsa, Meleniko, Neyrokopi and leads to Rodopi. In this area Slavic - speaking, Greek-speaking, Vlach - speaking and Albanian - speaking populations lived.

The northern area, which covers the northern department of Macedonia, from the mountain ranges of Sar-Skardou and Rilas up to the Achridas line. In this area Slavic-speaking population was mainly living.

It is worth mentioning that the Greeks and the Vlach-speaking bilinguals concentrated mainly at the urban areas of Macedonia and consisted along with the Jews the upper - middle class while the Slavic-speaking ethnic group lived in the rural areas consisting in its majority the impoverished socio-economic class of peasants. Macedonia being the object of dispute of the Eastern Question constitutes the key leading to the control of the pathways of the East. Despite the last attempts made by the European great powers in order to

save the “Great Patient” with modern western type reforms (Tanzimat, Hattı Humajune) the decay of the Ottoman Empire is accelerated. As a result, the European states along with the Balkan people realized the immediate need for the territories of the Ottoman Empire to be reorganized on a new political basis. At any rate this generalized reformative spirit of this period generated the appropriate conditions leading to the development of an educational and cultural movement. The Turkish government taking advantage of the long-lasting dispute between the Bulgarians and the Patriarchate intervened actively.

On February 27 / March 11 1870 the autocephalous orthodox church of Bulgaria, Bulgarian Exarchate, was founded, which included thirteen provinces out of the thirty that Bulgarians claimed in total. However, the 10th article of the sultan's firman allowed the annexation of other Ottoman provinces in Exarchate in case the population of these regions presented itself at 2/3 as Bulgarian. This controversial arrangement regulated the Bulgarian Question and encouraged immediately the Bulgarian claims in Macedonia. The Greek state and the Patriarchate reacted intensely to the Exarch election, advanced in the unfrocking of the Bulgarian bishops and declared schismatic the Bulgaria Church in 1872. Consequently the systematic multi-sided attempt to force the Macedonian populations to recognize the Bulgarian Exarchate as well as to be educated according to the Bulgarian educational system was intensified being openly supported by the Great Powers.

With the foundation of the Bulgarian Committee (1893) the Macedonian Struggle flamed up, which typically lasted for about forty years (1870 - 1908). Modis' work reflects the peak period of the Macedonian Struggle, 1904-1908, when the armed confrontation between Greeks and Bulgarian is officially recorded.

The educational policy that is followed by the interested states in Macedonia after 1870 is included absolutely in the frames of their national policy in the same space. The governments of these states planned carefully the fight for the territorial distribution of Macedonia through the widening of schools, the dissemination of the language, the education of schoolteachers and priests and generally with the financing support of the school mechanism. Priority was given in the aid of the ecclesiastical and educational mechanisms as the ideological transformations of the national conscience, which was quite in fluid and blurred among the heterogeneous racially and culturally Christian groups. The triptych of religion, education, language as the expression of the national identity of the population, will be mobilized for exploitation of the national conscience idea according to the interests of each nation.

Statistical data reveal that the Greek school net was prevailing in the southern Macedonian zone where the Bulgarian school net was absent. The situation in the northern zone was exactly the opposite as the Bulgarian schools were more than the Greeks ones there. The zones of influence of the two different school nets intersected at the middle zone territories. It is worth mentioning that the Greek educational movement, which had the lead till the end of the 1870-1880 decade, became stagnant during the years that followed (Bonidis, 1996 : 115). At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century new educational

institutions, the teacher - supporting societies appeared not only in the urban centres but also through the Macedonian territory. These societies served the nationalistic rivalry among the Balkan people which was intensified during the second half of the 19th century as they demanded national independence and the formation of new states aiming at the national proselytism of the Macedonians as well as Thracian people that had not yet formed their national conscience. In specific the Greek national attempt to prevail upon as well contribute to the assimilation of the people of these territories was not successful since the people expressing the national policy were late in understanding the special features characterising the populations living in these areas while they gave priority to the Greek-speaking urban centres diminishing at the same time the importance of the peasants living in the rural areas. The result was the unstable and overdue financial assistance regarding the educational needs.

The writer and his work

Georgios Modis, who derives his origin from Monastiri (1887-1975), later representative and minister of the Greek state, deals in mostly with his prolific work (short-stories, novels, chronicles, biographies) with the Macedonian Struggle, having many personal experiences from his attendance in guerrilla army. The geographical space where most of his narrations are unfolded is the wider region of Macedonia and particularly the north-western department of region of the Monastery at the peak period of the Macedonian Struggle 1904-1908.

The historical core of his novels some times is precise and detailed and other times full of folklore narrations. The ethological items are intense in his work as he preserves morals, customs, costumes, nicknames and generally the colour and the atmosphere of the social environment. The reports in space and time are short, while the whole importance of the narration is detected to the importance of the historical facts and to the tragic character of the heroes who often experience situations of horror. As a result, historicity finally overlaps the aesthetic facts. He considered himself as an amateur writer, but he believed that he was writing the History of the Macedonian Struggle.

The writer through a frugal, but vivid narration represents mainly the socio-political and military developments during the end of the 19th up to the beginning of the 20th century. The poetic descriptions of the Macedonian landscape impress his love for this particular space. The use of the narrators varies. The third-person narrator (omniscient point of view) who presents with uncontested prestige the historical facts of the Macedonian struggle alternates with the first-person narrator who deposits his reflections on the correctness of acts and decisions, while at the same moment he himself tries to realize the importance of the moments. The dialogues between the central heroes of each history, who often are genuine and known persons of that season (Volanis, Gyparis, Kottas, Gonos, Ntaltsef, Santanski) particularize the historical core of the texts, as the writer always insists on the historical precision of the episodes which he recounts. These heroes are presented in full detail in Modis' stories, who also achieves to convey attributes of their internal world. The very interesting narrative plot of his novels combined with the accurate and prolific

use of surnames, the satire and the humour subdue the acidity of the stories which concern the tough nationalistic juxtapositions.

Hardly can anyone distinguish foreign influences upon Modis' works. His authorial identity is characterised by autonomy without, however, the writer being able to ensure general supervision of his work. His literary language (demotic Greek) is considered slovenly characterised by irregular punctuation, grammatical and syntactical errors. The writer often uses, mainly in the dialogues idioms with corrupted Greek words, phrases taken from the dialect of Crete and Pontus as well as foreign words and a few Bulgarian, Albanian and French words. In his work we are also meet a few other typical weaknesses such as the repetition of the same story-plot in short-stories with different titles or the fact that he gives the same title to different short-stories (Chasioti, 2004 : 40-41). Finally, quite often the way his narrations are presented even in the same text-collection is problematic since the narrations are not classified thematically or in chronological order. It appears that he writes his stories without preparation either based on occasional pretexts or at even memory stimulant.

1. Modis' work of prose which has been rich but either handwritten without any preparation or printed was rendered recognition after the 1960's². His work was neither well-received by his contemporaries nor attracted kindled the reviewers' interest promptly. The critics have relatively recently "discovered" the merits of his short-stories. In the post-civil war period Modis' work was considered to be an outmoded literary depiction of cold war syndromes. The time when the Macedonian stories were published a new form of writing prevails in the prose-writing of Thessaloniki, the inner monologue, the repertoire of which examines the psychographics of the inner human individual and co-ordinates the Greek prose publications along with the thematic repertoire and trends prevailing in the Western-European publications (Vitti, 1977 : 14-21). Only after the Second World War experience will the tendency regarding national self-knowledge be renewed but again only a few prose writers will re-examine past historical periods since the majority of the most significant ones will turn to the relatively recent past (the Albanian war, the German Occupation and the Civil War) which acted as a stimulus with its yet unhealed wounds.

Modis' texts, anyhow, have not been read and are still not being read widely. This fact is not related to his prose-writing abilities or weaknesses. The nationalistic speech he articulates influences to a great extent the way his work has been received. It offers to a large number of readers an alibi for its marginalization and to others the justification for their attempts to ideologically appropriate it. Concluding, one can support that the literary depiction of these specific historical moments serves both obvious as well as deeper aims. Modis naturally aims at rallying the nation against every enemy but he also attempts the certification of the historical and cultural continuation of the Greek race. However, the glaring moral, full of national pride sermons as well as the inconsiderable reproduction of ideological stereotypes are absent. In his work Macedonia does not only constitutes the space of lived experience or the framework of moral standard study but also the space-time symbol, with multiple possibilities. In a way these possibilities are used as a spatial super ego personification of God, to

denounce the present of Modis era. Yet this reminds us of the psychological use of nationalism. Clearly, the nation has taken over attributes previously assigned only to God. Stathis Gourgouris (Gourgouris, 1996 : 15) in his recent book *Dream Nation* reminds us that “no nation can imagine its death”. Although nations do have a beginning, they seemingly have no end and thus are conceived as at least relatively immortal. They are also conceived as purely pure and perfectly perfect. As Bien (1992) points, nationality is a fiction rather than a truth - a very selective and distorting fiction that includes certain things and excludes or forgets others, more or less the same way that theology distorts the “nature of being”. Gourgouris goes further, calling nationalistic discourse “signs of idolatry” (Gourgouris, 1996 : 31) or the “national fantasy” (1996 : 37), and the institution of the nation a process “akin to what Freud called dream-work” (1996 : 261). This area is constantly activated by the declarations, the mythical jointed-statements as well as the various cultural tensions in order to become the multi-dimensional centre of its universe.

Fundamental categories

1. The school teacher’s participation in the Macedonian Struggle

1.1. “Armed” action

With the revival of nationalism after 1880 teachers and priests were asked to play a distinct role serving the national purpose in the territory of Macedonia and either they were considered at times directly responsible for the sad sight the provinces presented or at other times they were seen as their sole saviors (Vouri, 1992 : 164). The historical information provided to us by Modis’ texts stress both the “armed” and “unarmed” action not only of the Greek but also the Bulgarian schoolteacher. Besides that they also depict another extremely interesting aspect of the issue, the fact that army officers used the teaching capacity in a deceiving way in order to accomplish national aims and objectives. In “armed” action both Greek men and women teachers appear to possess and use with remarkable courage sufficient armament without performing heinous actions (8/107, 8/145, 17/87-92, 96, 187, 20/49, 144-146, 21/218-223, 22/98, 24/96).

The recording of the “armed action” of the Bulgarian school teachers is quite different. The Bulgarian school teachers are shown greater respect by their compatriots and their professional career develops in a different way than that of their Greek counterparts. The Bulgarian school teacher is presented more as an army officer rather than a teacher. He is characterized by an arrogant contact while his activities and criminal actions reveal the cruelty of an uncompromising, despotic character (12/13-16, 14/9-10, 20/64, 22/136, 23/106). We should note here that the negative impact the armed struggle had was more on the Greek than the Bulgarian educational procedure schooling (Vouri, 1992 : 29).

1.2. “Unarmed” action

Modis records various practices regarding the unarmed action of the Greek school teacher who co-operated in numerous ways with the armed partisans for

the promotion of Greek interests during the Macedonian Struggle. The teachers became members of the revolutionary groups organized in the local societies cooperating in various ways but, mainly providing valuable information regarding the Turkish military position and movements (10/107, 11/98, 14/60, 23/89, 24/147-152) while they were distinguished for their secrecy (22/73, 22/77-78). Whenever there was needed, they provided shelter or hideouts to the fugitive partisans (11/97, 14/156-157, 17/14-15, 20/96). In two at least cases they are involved in the murder of people who oppress their fellow countrymen (6/61-63, 17/120-121), while, in another instance they undertake the responsibility to protest on behalf of a number of little Christian villages for the hardships they suffer (8/265). In fact characteristic is considered the case of a teacher who, at the request of the local priest and with almost the whole of the village showing forbearance, has a love affair with the Bulgarian Governor's wife in order to ensure the school operation (15/128).

The reports regarding the "unarmed" involvement of the Bulgarian as well as the Romanian teacher in the Macedonian Struggle are significantly fewer. Modis sees the attempt the Bulgarians do to take on their side the population of the Macedonian interior as proselytism (14/10, 22/34) while he describes the Romanian-schoolteacher of orchid as extremely cruel presenting him as the man behind the murders of Greek local priests (22/208).

1.3. The "disguised face" of action

Modis records the attempt a lot of Greek army officers (8/317, 11/60, 12/124-131, 13/73-75, 115-117, 17/153, 20/102, 185, 24/54-55, 139) and partisans (3/8, 11/13-15, 14/60-62, 21/218-223) made to take the role of the teacher so that they could maintain freedom of movement. They did not want to attract the attention of the Turkish authorities in order to guide in the best possible way the revolutionary action of the local inhabitants according to the interests of the Greek community. Most of the times the nimble mind of these heroes is praised compare to the gullibility and incompetence of the Turkish police-officers.

2. Teacher's education and culture

There is a great diverge between the teaching culture and the education they receive. Besides the studies required for someone to became a teacher were neither specified nor institutionalized by law but every time they were defined by the needs and the manpower of the local societies (8/67-68, 13/96, 15/109, 24/148). We see on one hand, Greek teachers that have studied and graduated from the Great school of the Nation and, on the other hand, teachers that did not even know how to write their names and used the cross-sign as their signature (8/19). Most of the times the teaching stuff was sufficiently trained while the Greek language was not their mother tongue 8/189, 15/206, 20/128, 21/59, 24/147). These teachers had rudimentary grammatical knowledge, knew to read and write a little. Consequently they could not really understand the texts they were reading. Impressive is the fact that the teachers who had finished the high school were greatly admired and respected by the simple countrymen (18/109, 24/148). Scarce were the teachers that had studied abroad (8/219).

Modis' references to the Bulgarian teachers show clearly that the teachers level of knowledge was high since most of the times they had either studied having a scholarship or they had worked earlier at Greek schools of Thessaloniki, at Chios, at Patmos, at Zosimea School of Ioannina and the Ottonian University in Athens (8/182, 183, 18/206, 20/134). It should be mentioned that the Bulgarian educational system in the area mainly due to the way the Bulgarian language is related to the local Slavic dialect as well as due to the fact that the Slavic speaking element prevailed in the area especially at the *santzaki* of Monastery. Besides the Bulgarians had a national ecclesiastical organization of a strictly centralized character that directed the religious and educational penetration in the territory of Macedonia. We have no references to the third national power that organized in the area, the Serbs, who started founding schools in an organized manner after 1887 in the area but the Slavic speaking Christian population had already been attached to the Bulgarian church and educational system.

3. Working conditions and accommodation

The Greek teachers were faced with extreme difficult situations and hardships during the period of the Macedonian Struggle regarding their working or residence conditions. The trained teaching staff trying to ensure the best living conditions turned almost exclusively to the urban Ottoman schools. The Greek schools of the interior operated, as we have already seen, mainly with self taught educators, who had no schooling certificates. The specific problem of the teaching heterogeneity led to the incongruous provision of school education. The places where the teachers worked and lived were usually small with destroyed equipment and obvious signs of desertion. In many instances the teachers worked and lived in the same place. The teachers' payment by the local community each time was scanty and was supplemented with food provision or fuel offered by the local people (2/80, 3/22-23, 8/67-69, 6/134-147, 15/115-117, 20/128, 24/147).

The Greek teacher constitutes both the educator of the children of every community and the personality that expressed the national conscience of the whole community. Despite all these, in numerous instances the Greek teachers were confronted with negative feelings by their compatriots. The way the *Mouhtarides*, the elder local authorities, the school inspectors, the priests received them was related to the conditions prevailing in each village and to the expectations they had of them. When they were terrified by *Komitatzides* or the Turks their behavior towards the teachers was moderate or even cold. When, on the other hand, they expected the teachers to educate their children or to initiate them to resistance movements then their behavior towards the teacher was warm. They were hospitable, they were even willing to clear and prepare the place they had chosen to use as their school, replacing in such a way the lack of state initiative. The *Komitatzides*, the Bulgarian fanatical soldiers, as well as the Turkish soldiers see them with hostility, of course, because they sense that their domination is threatened (5/68-81, 6/134-155, 15/115-130, 17/86-92, 20/128, and 23/93-94). It is worth mentioning that the point that the situation prevailing at the Greek schools at Macedonia regarding the size of the teaching staff compared to the number of students was considered satisfactory since there was one teacher for every 40 students on average (Papadopoulos, 1970 : 243-244).

In the big urban cities, the small country town and the villages where the Greek educational movement developed, a similar Romanian educational movement is also active aiming at attracting the Vlach-speaking population of the territory to the Romanian national idea. These schools operated secretly at first at private homes. However soon the provision of material means multiplied through scholarships regarding studies in Bucharest in Romania, free distribution of books and satisfactory salaries to teachers (1/135, 14/153, 20/174, 22/108). It is remarkable that Modis in his texts does not mention the obligatory sharing the same premises among Bulgarian and Greek schools due to the fact that the mixed-populated communities were not able to support financially separate educational institutes. This obligatory co-existence actually spread the Bulgarian objectives since “the people favoring the Bulgarians” surpassed in number “those favoring the Greeks”. However in one case Modis mentions the brand new two-floored Bulgarian school at Riahova comparing it to the deserted there Greek school (15/115-117).

4. Relations to the State and the Church

During the period the Macedonian territory was under the ottoman occupation the most significant representatives of the Greek educational movement were the local church and the communal authorities, the craft unions and the private sector initiative. The presence of the church and commune authorities as representatives of the educational movement is intense in Modis works. The teacher’s relation to the church and the state is a relation of dependence regarding the teacher’s work and actions not only at school but also in his personal life. The economic factor constitutes the main component of the educational development because Greek schools during the period of Turkish occupation depended directly on the existing economical circumstances and the expression of the private sector initiative due to their private, communal or church based operation. The patriarchate of Constantinople was the one ecclesiastical body in power in the European part of the Ottoman Empire until 1870 after the Autocephalous churches of Serbia and Bulgaria had stopped functioning. The result of the struggle among the churches in the different territories determined the potential of development of the respective school operational mechanism.

According to the existing institutions the responsibility to supervise the operation of the Greek schools belonged to the metropolitan bishops since they were the only appropriate authorities recognized by the Ottoman Empire responsible for educational and church matters. The metropolitan bishops (6/56, 13/115, 14/183-185, 15/1279, 18/192, 22/71, 78) and the inspectors (6/134, 12/148, 22/8, 22/185-190, 23/94) can employ, dismiss, transfer while recommendations for, supervise, pay, contact the Greek teachers. Besides the inspectors undertake the responsibility to send letters to all the people living in a country as well as to those living abroad when more financial assistance is needed for the construction of a new house. The close contact among the teachers on one hand and the metropolitan bishops and inspectors on the other render the teachers directly dependent on the latter regarding their life both inside and outside the school. In numerous cases irregularities have been observed on the part of the clergy and the communal elders regarding the appointment of teachers of their own choice in foreign speaking communities while these communities had clearly shown

their preference towards the self-taught native teachers rather than towards the graduates that were appointed by the Greek state.

5. Teacher's personality and behaviour

Modis in his texts describes various forms of behavior on the part of the teachers. The teacher's behavior seems to be directly related to the environment the teacher functions and usually reveals the teacher's social activities and his active role in the struggle for political domination. The writer, however, seems to be overtly blazed against the Bulgarian teachers. The Greek educators are most of the times depicted as courageous and dynamic (11/60-63, 14/31-32, 183, 17/86-92, 20/178-180, 22/10-14, 185-190) decent (2/50-56, 5/67-81, 11/141, 14/181, 184-185, 11/8-9), sentimental and, above all, good patriots (14/60-62, 21/56, 22/20, 24/148-152). Although their human feelings are not overly stressed, the writer does not omit to present their heroic actions. In Modis' works no aspect of the Greek educator's personality is made a parody of while the Bulgarian teachers are shown to be treating their Greek colleagues in specific and the Greek people of Macedonia in general with inhumanity and cruelty trying to satisfy their demands. They are insolent, sarcastic and they propagandize their claims in a clumsy, crude, obsessive way (5/67-68, 18/90-95, 12/7-10).

Conclusions

Modis' case seems important as he belongs to what the American psychologist Mead (Giorgas, 1995) has called “the reference group”, that is the group that represents the “important others” (key or leading figures like teachers in that era) and acts as a constant pole of comparison, a collective super ego, influencing our world-view and self perception. Thus the research on Modis case reveals many hidden socio-psychological parameters that will be uncovered as the research grows. Apart from that, and yet related with that come the following:

1. The ecclesiastical and educational mechanism that were activated by all the involved nations in the geographical region of Macedonia during the 19th century aimed in the ideological transformation of the national conscience the heterogeneous racial and cultural groups had. The national identity of these groups was proved by religious consent, mother tongue and their educational choice. The gravity, however, that the above educational objectives assume in the programs of each national policy is not constant and unified. Their different evaluation and hierarchy are generally influenced by the political transformations that are indicated in the Balkans afterwards 1880, and more specifically by the developments of the other national forces in the ecclesiastical and educational sector. The weakness to implement most of the announcements in the school practice will constitute the basic trait of educational reality up to the end of Turkish domination in Macedonia.
2. Modis is not of course an objective and reliable witness of the schoolteacher's role during the turbulent times of the Macedonian Struggle in the region of the North - West Macedonia. His discriminatory attitude towards the Greek schoolteacher - who we get the largest volume of information about - is reasonably justified. Impressive, however, is the fact that many times he confronts the foreigner with feelings of genuine humanity, while at the same time he detects the national morals of almost all the partners of the

“Balkan Babel”. However, even if the writer tries not to act propagandistically, the foreign schoolteachers - heroes of his novels are represented at a disadvantage opposed to the Greeks in the terms of education, culture and their personal morals. The Turk or Bulgarian is often presented as a victim of the Balkan nationalism. The writer in any case does not withhold the unpleasant transactions of the Greeks underlining only or mainly those that demean the other, while he tries to avoid - without always accomplishing it - the ethnocentric historical interpretations. On the contrary, many times he incorporates in his narrations facts that the conscience of a propagandist or of a hymnographer of the Macedonian Struggle would have normally suppressed.

3. The schoolteacher’s participation in the struggle is recorded in two ways, in the “armed” and the “unarmed” action. However, exceptionally interesting are the writer’s reports concerning the cases of rebels and officers who misleadingly use the educational quality in order to disguise their activities.

4. The divergences in the education and the culture of the schoolteachers are intense. For the Greeks we find cases from illiterate persons up to particularly educated with noticeable author’s work. Most of them however have acquired elementary grammatical knowledge. More educated, but definitely less numerical are the Bulgarian teachers, and hence we cannot proceed in reliable comparisons. In any case we can conclude that the schoolteacher in the region of the North - West Macedonia during the period we are examining doesn’t have sufficient education.

5. Through the writer’s texts we can easily detect the extremely difficult working and living conditions of the Greek schoolteacher in the North - West Macedonia during the period that we examine, while at the same time the situation is better for the Bulgarian schoolteacher. The classrooms are usually in a sordid condition with obvious the marks of abandonment. The schoolteacher himself is often obliged, apart from his meagre salary, to face also the suspicion of the local authorities in their meetings. In the case of the Greek schoolteacher what are pointed out emphatically are the appealing efforts of the residents to facilitate both his work, and his accommodation in their community.

6. The schoolteacher’s relations with the official state and the representatives of church are relations of dependence and determine decisively his behaviour and attitude towards them. Tax inspectors and Metropolitan employ and dismiss teachers having the vital role in their appointment and payment. Corresponding dependences are also recorded in the case of the Bulgarian schoolteacher.

7. In Modis’ texts both the Greek and the Bulgarian schoolteacher are bold and brave, while the second is distinguished by a more intense aggressiveness. For the writer his fellow-countryman schoolteacher is characterized by an innate politeness, modesty and constriction. He is characterized not only by a rich sentimental world, but also a skill to convince in his associations.

Autobiography, and such is the case with most of Modis’ texts, exceeds the dynamics of simple literature, mainly because it incorporates the speech of testimony, the force of participation of the narrator. The autobiographic narration - testimony is not simply a way of writing that is removed from the *imitation gender* and approaches the *telling gender*, neither a text where the writer is compelled to say the truth - opposed to the fiction that seeks just the opposite - but it proposes a

small dose of accomplice and reciprocation to the reader. He asks at the reader to pretend that he believes him and to allow him to guide him on a fascinating and interesting journey. The autobiographical narration owns this superb quality. It seeks a typical recognition of the significance of the writer’s life. Such recognition is sought neither in genuine mythologist nor in biography or history.

As History is condemned to reach always in a relative truth, most of the modern historians point out how important is the observation of the everyday routine of the social groups in the approach of this “truth”, in order to avoid the trap of the static history (Schmitt - Pantel, 1990). In our effort to light up a historical period, the works of fictions, which are based on the region of History, reveal the structure of the sense of previous times and they contribute via the narration to the transmission of the experienced practice (Apostolidou, 1995). Writers who represent historical periods in their prose are up to a degree also historians, who select and recompose the facts they present. Modis belongs to this category. Of course we should not forget that in novels “we hear” narrators and protagonists “speaking” through a system of significances and codes and not the facts. There always lurks the danger that writers are less interested in the search of the historical truth, through the personal interpretation of the facts, and more in the way in which the issues presented will correspond to the expectations of the reading public.

Notes

¹ The first number inside the brackets refers to the book and the second one to the page the quotation is found in according to the chronological list of Modis’ works. We follow the list throughout our paper in the way that we present it in the Appendix.

² Significant studies are those of Vasilis Laourdas, “Modis’ Macedonian stories”, *Nea Estia*, 72, (Christmas 1962), pages 1852-53, Panagiotis Pistas, “The years 1920-1935 and G. Modis”, *Macedoniki Zoe*, September 1966, Tolis Kazantzis, *Prose writing of Thessaloniki 1912-1983*, Thessaloniki, Vanias, 1991, pages 47-50, etc.

Appendix

In our paper we are using the chronological list of Modis’ works which G. P. Argiriadis cites in his work *The short-story writing of Georgios Modis*.

Macedonian Stories - The tower of Grammatikovo, 1920. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - Georgitsa, 1929. Short-stories
On Macedonian mountains, 1930. Fact-recordings
Macedonian Stories - Geromitros, 1934. Manner-studying novel
Macedonian Stories - The butterfly, 1937. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - Pantef, the dynamiter, 1938-1939. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - War and Occupation, 1947. Chronicle
The Macedonian Struggle and Macedonian leaders, 1950. Biographies
Villages - Castles of Macedonia, 1950. Chronicle
Macedonian Stories - Fifty fatlings, 1954. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - Doctor Gianni, 1957. Short-stories

- Macedonian Stories - The two camps, 1958. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - Christina, 1959. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - The bright shelter, 1960. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - Margarita, 1963. Short-stories
The contribution and influence of Western-Macedonians to the spiritual and economic development of Serbia during the 18th-19th century, 1963. Historical dissertation.
Macedonian Stories - The batty ragged person, 1966. Short-stories
The Macedonian Struggle and modern Macedonian History, 1967. History
Macedonian Stories - War and Occupation, 1967 2nd ed. Chronicle
Macedonian Stories - Unfulfilled Promise, 1969. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - Kripsanes, 1970. Short-stories
Macedonian Stories - The fugitive, 1972. Short-stories
Fights in Macedonia (vol. A'), 1975. Short-stories
Fights in Macedonia (vol. B'), 1975. Short-stories

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