

a very satisfactory way. For that we must thank and congratulate the author.

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Pandelis Prevelakis, *‘Ο ΄Αρτος τῶν Ἀγγέλων. Περιπέτεια στὴν Ἰθάκη*. [The Bread of the Angels. Adventure in Ithaca]. Athens, 1966. pp. 293.

After *Ho helios tou thanatou* ("The Sun of Death," 1959) and *He kephale tes Medousas* ("The Head of Medusa," 1963), this novel comes to complete the trilogy to which the author gave the common title "The Roads of Creation." The theme of the trilogy is the charting of the intellectual and emotional progress of a poet-novelist from childhood and youth to self-exile to experiential exposure and back again to the roots. It is, in other words, an account of the struggle for self-integration and fulfillment, which finally fails.

Generally speaking, all of Prevelakis' fictional works fall more or less into the category of the imaginative chronicle, his favorite genre, of which he has proved himself a distinguished master. *To Chronikomas politeias* (1938), *Pantermes Krete* (1945) and even his previous trilogy *Kretikos* (1948-50) are imaginative chronicles of a kind, all intended to be "testimonies" of times and places in Cretan history. To this rule the present trilogy makes only one exception: this "Testimony of my Age" is far more personal. People and events are valued as reflected in the hero-author's personal experience. He is their touchstone in his effort toward self-realization.

This self-realization (in creativity, in art, in the art of words) needs, however, to be understood in Prevelakis' own terms. Being deeply a Cretan, like his great friend Kazantzakis, and deeply devoted to his tradition and its ethical, heroic, and democratic values, he understands self-fulfillment only within the framework of that tradition (with no provincialism whatever) and for the sake of it.

The first novel, "The Sun of Death," gave us Georgakis' childhood and early youth in his native Rethymne, the tragic loss of his parents, his upbringing by a pious and clever aunt—the very embodiment of all the Cretan folk virtues—who schooled him in his folk tradition. Next a self-taught man, Loizos, became his beloved mentor to open his eyes to the world, to art and philosophy. In their Socrates-Phaedo relation-

ship, the master taught his pupil to make it the purpose of his life to express "the soul of Greekness."

The second novel, "The Head of Medusa," subtitled "A Year of Schooling in my Century," took Georgakis to Athens where he was dialectically exposed to the ideological agonies, attitudes, and trends of thought of the period between the two World Wars. The exposure was to equip the young man, in his search for a consciousness of self, with the power of facing the Medusa, the chaotic madness of the changing modern times. He finally decided for a return to the teaching of his mentor and to the feeling that he belonged to his people and his tradition his earth, language, race.

With this in mind, in "The Bread of the Angels" (Dante's *pan delli angeli*), he hopefully returns to his Ithaca after twenty years, to give it his intellectual offering. Yet, like Odysseus, he does not recognize his land and his people, nor do they recognize him for what he tries to be: their savior. So much have the World War, the ensuing civil war with the communists, and the atomic bomb era changed everything that he finds himself a stranger in the midst of corrupt and embittered beings who have lost their selves, their individuality, their tradition, and the harmony and meaning of their lives. With difficulty he discovers and recognizes his old mentor—now a double personality, wearing a social mask for the sake of convenience and self-protection—only to lose him soon afterwards in a shocking death. In contrast to Loizos as an intellectual, who would make concessions to reality and practicality that finally seem to engulf him, Georgakis remains the searching idealist throughout.

From his utter despair at the loss of his old guide he is momentarily rescued by the solace of an illusion. Ariadne, an embodiment of idealistic beauty and innocence, seems to him a promise of love. The terrible discovery follows. The ideals are only ideals at a distance. Ariadne is a half-paralyzed invalid and his half sister. The hero departs again.

The simple myth of the trilogy is only an elementary foundation. On it, with his inimitable style, Prevelakis builds superbly the struggle between the outer and the inner world, the dialectics of self, his symbolism, internal monologues and tense dialogues, and above all a faithful, sincere, and inspired picture of our modern agony and our alienation.

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