

Makis Petsas writes about Karen Martin's book "In the dance of the labyrinth"

PRESENTATION OF KAREN MARTIN'S BOOK "IN THE DANCE OF THE LABYRINTH"

I feel that centuries have passed since the last time I participated in a similar event, due to the dystopian conditions we experience in health, but not only. And I honestly think that, if something is missing, almost torturously almost, it is not so much the norms of everyday life or the most relaxing recreational element of life as that lively creative breath that the direct communication of creators and spectators-readers with the vehicle offers. speech and art, in all its forms. That liberating cultural activity that constitutes a refuge, but also a stubborn act of continuing life and expression directly, through life, mediated by the otherwise useful modern technological tools. And of course, *Radamanthis* publications, always pioneers, they take care to remind us of this non-negotiable authentic communication.

Karen Martin attempted something risky and extremely difficult, but at the same time rare: To resort to a largely unexplored historical - and even prehistoric - period to draw material and performances and create a modern novel. The result justifies it.

The power of "In the Dance of the Labyrinth" is based on its originality, both in form and content, in the deep historicity it exudes, but also in the psychographic penetration that characterizes its ethnographic dimension. It is certainly a fascinating - although the word has been misused and misused - literary text. The special interest it arouses in the reader lies, in my opinion, in the following particular elements:

-Fiction writing is intertwined with a number of historical, philosophical, psychological, anthropological and other extensions and implications.

-It is impressive the careful and gradual construction of the character of the heroine on her anxious attempt, through the historical dive she attempts, the reflection and the search, to lead to self-knowledge and to the fundamental reconstruction of the essence of her life.

-Although, of course, the goal is not the historiographical record, the historical approach of the text is excellent, with the necessary reductions in modern reality, and the regeneration of the atmosphere of the Minoan era, a period that for the most part experienced its dominance matriarchal

organization of society, which, despite being scientifically substantiated, remains relatively unexplored, but also challenged by anti-historical interpretations.

The main character of Karen Martin, Cressida, through her, in the tragic sense of the word, adventure, the abrupt reversal of fortune, finds the occasion that she subconsciously sought to confront her past and future. Through an extraordinary narrative trick, she falls on the prehistoric past of humanity, looks back at the entries in the collective subconscious from that time, to draw strength to exorcise the demons she has dragged since her childhood (hovering over the narrative - never to deliberately analyze the incidents - the figure of an authoritarian father and a submissive mother).

Like an explosion, a world of revelation rises before her. The social roots of this world, its pedestals, its structure, its morals, its rituals push the heroine on a path of purification, purification of the soul, as she traces the causes of the racial and mental oppression she has experienced.

The appeal to the collective subconscious, the immersion in the distant past, the consequent change of perspective towards the experiences and representations of life form the basis for the attempt to map and decipher the mind, the soul, the ambitions, the very existence of Cressida. Whether this is achievable on her part is left to the reader to discover, perhaps turning to himself.

A weapon of the author, but also a coherent element of the text, become the exceptional narrative techniques that he masterfully treats:

-The boxing of the historical narrative, which works in the context of the dream element. The historical memories have as a shell the dreamy escapes of Cressida.

-The purely symbolic character of place and time. Evolution is structured on two time levels, that of the Minoan era and today, which are intertwined harmoniously, in a magical, fairytale way. The creative mixing of the myth, the apparition, the dream element with the modern reality embossed the timelessness of the distributions.

-The utilization in imaginary terms of primordial separate female deities and forms. Mother Earth, a symbol of fertility, euphoria, but also of natural harmony, Pythia, placed in another place and time, the legendary Amazons.

-The symbols of the Minoan era with a modern meaning (the labyrinth, the urovorous serpent, the catalytic role of blood, human sacrifice).

-And of course an exquisite, evocative, mystical, without any exaggeration, description of the rites of the matriarchal era in the Minoan context. With a sharpness that certainly could not be rendered without the solid and expressive linguistic performance of Iosif Alygizakis.

Of particular value in Martin's work is the extensive representation and recording of the social institutions and manifestations of the given social structure of the Neo-Palace Minoan Era, before and during the transition to the Post-Palace and the new conditions of social hierarchy. The special, positively distinguished and prestigious position of women during the matriarchy era was intertwined with a completely different, communitarian-type social organization. It was certainly not inversely exploitative, as some claim, it was not a product of inequality, but of the particular importance of dealing with the household as a public affair, as a central economic activity in the context of community coexistence.

The overthrow of the matriarchy, as the great Friedrich Engels notes in his monumental work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, marked a world-historical defeat of the female sex, the beginning of the very class differentiation as the first manifestation, the inequality, the consequent humiliation, which passing through all the exploitative socio-economic systems reaches to the present day and takes expressions like those that stigmatize season and topicality. It was, therefore, economic-productive and not biological or abstractly patriarchal the reasons for this overthrow that accumulated the unbearable double oppression of women, socio-economic and racial, to this day. That is why getting rid of this deeply anachronistic situation presupposes radical economic and social upheavals and upheavals and not hollow declarations of equality, like the ones that are coming to the fore today,

I consider this retrospection to the teachings and practices of the period of matriarchy to be a trigger, a call from the author to women, but also to all, to realize that it is not a natural phenomenon to cultivate stereotypes and oppressive patterns. The recourse to prehistoric roots, which Martin seeks, signifies the whole treatment of the issue of gender-based violence, of gender relations in general, and testifies that these distinctions are as deeply rooted as they are anti-social and anti-historical at the same time. And they non-negotiable require uprooting.

Finally, I consider the book to be a triumph of redefining not only social relations, and the very relationship between man and nature, but also the true identity of each. The story of the women of the matriarchal era, the story of Cressida, as eloquently stated in the flow of the book, is the story of every woman, every man who wants to follow in the footsteps of the eternal search. Let us also seek this meaning by wandering through the pages of the novel and let us dare to walk in these paths.

Good reading and thank you for your patience and attention.

Karen Martin loves Crete and has studied it deeply. With her novel, she offers us a fascinating glimpse of history, in the era of Matriarchy on the island. The protagonist of her story, Cressida, travels to Crete on a course of self-knowledge. She is trapped in a cave, and there, unexpectedly, she will make a long journey through time, when the Great Mother was worshipped on the island. The author, with literary mastery, gives us incredible images and descriptions of the ceremonies and the daily life of thousands of years ago. At the same time, however, the narrative is not lost in the labyrinth, but holds the thread that leads back to the light... A truly fascinating novel.