

Literary dialects and dialectal literature

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1 Introductory remarks

The use of modern Greek dialects and regional language in literature is the subject of this paper. The representations of dialectal differences in the modern Greek literature of the past centuries cannot be neatly identified. A dialect may be invoked as an object of ridicule or of admiration. It may be projected as another's language or assumed as part of an authorial voice. Literary dialects have been used as linguistic evidence by scholars studying medieval and early modern Greek literary texts. Non-standard dialect literature is closely connected to popular culture and the politics of local identities.

In modern times a new consciousness of linguistic differences within national borders has emerged. The stratification of the vernacular is more distinguishable and alternative linguistic versions are defined by their literary value or status relative to other registers. Major modern Greek writers have exploited mainly elements of the dialectal lexicon in their literary style. Other minor writers attempt to write pure dialectal literature and revive regional speech that is largely extinct. The result is not always authentic, since it is fabricated to a large extent. The literary value of that kind of dialectal literature is usually low, because their main aim is not literary, but rather that of the preservation of the dialect. In regions where the local dialect and folklore is still flourishing, such as Cyprus and Crete, dialectal poetry is extremely popular.

2 Ancient Greek literary dialects

Ancient Greece and its colonies were full of different dialects. However, all of Ancient Greek literature—poetry, philosophy, drama, rhetoric, history—occurs in but six dialects. Several literary genres are conventionally written in a specific style and dialect, the style in which the genre originated, regardless the origin of later authors.

- Epic - the language of Homer, Hesiod, and to a greater or lesser extent influences the language of all Greek poets. Homeric Greek, which is imitated in later Epic poems, such as *Argonautica* and *Dionysiaca*, is an artificial mixture of dialects close to Ionic, Aeolic and Arcadocypriot
- Ionic - the first Greeks to produce prose, the main Ionic dialect work you're likely to want to read is Herodotus
- Aeolic, sometimes also Lesbian or Lesbian Aeolic - the language of the poets Sappho and Alcaeus
- Doric - the dialect family of Sparta, Doric has only meager representation, and that only in certain kinds of poetry

- Attic - the language of Athens and its cultural flowering: Plato, Aristotle and Greek drama
- Koine - this is the language of the empire of Alexander and his Roman successors. Spoken from Rome, through Greece and the Levant, into Egypt.

To the Greeks genre implied a dialect. If you wrote an epic, you used the Epic dialect, no matter what your native dialect was. Ancient Greek literary dialects were not characterised by a large number of idiosyncrasies; they implemented only major dialectal characteristics¹. The common cultivated literary dialects had eminent pan-hellenic qualities and were purified by secondary, minor, local differences. This fact is very important when coming to the history of the Greek language, the sense of belonging to a uniform entity.

Although all dialects are of equal worth and quality, the elevation of a dialect is a multifactor process; communicative needs, convenience, economy of effort, spread of communication.

3 Modern Greek dialects. Literary dialects vs. dialect in literature

3.1 Modern Greek dialects

Spoken modern Greek can be divided into various geographical dialects. There is a small number of highly divergent, outlying varieties spoken by relatively isolated communities, and a broader range of mainstream dialects less divergent from each other and from Standard Modern Greek, which cover most of the linguistic area of present-day Greece and Cyprus. A distinction traditionally made by scholars is made between *dialects* (*διαλέκτους*), i.e. strongly marked, distinctive varieties (Tsakonian, Griko, Pontic and Cappadocian), and mere regional varieties (*ιδιώματα*), less marked sub-varieties of a language. However, most non-Greek linguists tend to refer to *dialects* in general, emphasising degrees of variation only when necessary. The regional varieties of Greek are divided into two main groups, *Northern* (Rumelian, Eritote, Thessalian, Macedonian, Thracian) and *Southern* (Megara, Aegina, Athens, Mani, Peloponnese, Cyclades, Crete, Ionian Islands, Northern Epirus, Smyrna, Constantinople, Dodecanese and Cyprus).²

The linguistic varieties of Modern Greek can be classified along two principal dimensions. First, there is a long tradition of sociolectal variation between the natural, popular spoken language on the one hand and archaising, learned written

¹ Ανδριώτης Ν. Π. Ιστορία της ελληνικής γλώσσας (τέσσερις μελέτες) Θεσ/νίκη Ι.Ν.Σ. [Ίδρυμα Μανόλη Τριανταφυλλίδη]. 1995. Colvin, S. 1999. Dialect in Aristophanes and the politics of language in Ancient Greek Literature. Oxford University Press. Mickey, K. 2008. Dialect consciousness and literary language: An example from Ancient Greek. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 79.35–66.

² Kontosopoulos, N. G. 1999. Dialektoi kai idiomata. In: Kopidakis et al. (eds.), *Istoria tis ellinikis glossas*. Athens: Elliniko Logotechniko kai Istoriko Archeio. 188–205. Kontosopoulos, N. G. 2007. Dialects and idioms of the Modern Greek (in Greek) *Papyros-Larousse-Britannica* 53 (Greece: Language-Antiquity). Athens: Papyros. 149–150. Trudgill, P. 2003. Modern Greek dialects. A preliminary Classification. *Journal of Greek Linguistics* 4.54–64.

forms on the other. Second, there is regional variation between dialects. The competition between the popular and the learned registers culminated in the struggle between *dimotiki* and *katharevousa* during the 19th and 20th centuries. As for regional dialects, variation within the bulk of dialects of present-day Greece is not particularly strong, except for a number of outlying, highly divergent dialects spoken by isolated communities.

Several modern Greek dialects, such as the Cretan and Cypriot, have a rich literary history.³ Before the establishment of a common written standard of Demotic Greek, there were various approaches to using regional variants of Demotic as written language. Greek dialects are recorded in areas outside Byzantine control, first in legal and administrative documents, and then in poetry. The earliest evidence for literary dialects comes from areas under Latin control, notably from Cyprus, Crete and the Aegean islands. Legal documents, prose chronicles and a group of anonymous love poems still exist from Cyprus under the Lusignan dynasty in the 14th centuries. Dialect archives also survive from 15th century Naxos, an island of Cyclades.

It is above all from the island of Crete, during the period of Venetian rule from 1204 until its capture by the Ottomans in 1669, that dialectal variation can be illustrated more fully. Documents preserving dialectal features exist from the end of the 12th century, rapidly increasing in number from the 13th century onwards. During the Cretan Renaissance in the 16th and early 17th centuries existed a flourishing vernacular literature in the Cretan dialect, based on Italian literary influences. Its best known specimen today is the verse romance *Erotokritos* by Vitsentzos Kornaros (1553–1614).

3.2 Dialect in literature

In the past there have been two different ways to study a dialect in literature. As John Kirk (1999: 45) summarises them, one is the dialectological, which uses literary texts as evidence of the spoken language and considers the significance provided by the use of the dialect and non-standard within the literary work as historical evidence. The second approach is stylistic, which considers how effective or realistic of actual speech the language of particular texts is and considers the role and effectiveness of the dialect and nonstandard within the literary work as a whole. It seems however that since either approach is a bit unsatisfactory by itself, a synthesis is needed.⁴

³ Alexiou, Margaret 2002. The Emergence of dialect literature: Cyprus and Crete. *After antiquity: Greek Language, Myth and Metaphor*. Cornell University Press. 28–29. Αλεξίου, Σ. 1985. *Η κρητική λογοτεχνία και η εποχή της. Μελέτη φιλολογική και ιστορική*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις στιγμής. Πούχγερ, Β. 1991. Το Κρητικό Θέατρο. Στο: *Κείμενα και Αντικείμενα. Μελετήματα Θεάτρου*. Αθήνα. Holton, D. 1997. Η Κρητική Αναγέννηση. Στο: *Λογοτεχνία και Κοινωνία στην Κρήτη της Αναγέννησης*. Επιμέλεια: David Holton, μετάφραση: Ναταλία Δεληγιαννάκη, Ηράκλειο: Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης. 3–10.

⁴ Γιακουμάκη, Ε. 2003. Γραπτές και προφορικές μαρτυρίες για το γλωσσικό ιδίωμα της Σμύρνης. *Πρακτικά του 4^{ου} Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Νεοελληνικής Διαλεκτολογίας* (Αθήνα 6–8 Δεκεμβρίου 2001). Αθήνα: Εταιρεία Νεοελληνικής Διαλεκτολογίας. 83–94.

Πιερός, Μ. 2000. Διάλεκτος και ελληνική λογοτεχνία. *Η Ελληνική Γλώσσα και οι διάλεκτοί της*. Κέντρο Ελληνικής Γλώσσας. 59–63.

In *Dialect and dichotomy: Literary representations of African American speech*, Lisa Cohen Minnick combines qualitative criticism with quantitative corpus-linguistics methods to analyze the use of African American dialects in literary texts or in ‘literary dialect’. She justifies this dual approach by arguing that ‘in order to give a thorough evaluation of an artist’s work with respect to literary dialect, neither exclusively linguistic nor exclusively literary approaches can do justice to literature that incorporates imaginative recreation of the sounds of language along with the social themes surrounding the places in time that are recreated’ (Minnick 2004: 149). In her conclusion, Minnick restates her justification for engaging such challenging and unconventional methods: ‘using interdisciplinary methods to access literary texts helps to offer fresh insight not only into the texts themselves, but also into issues of language variation and attitudes surrounding it’ (Minnick 2004: 152–53). Both literature scholars and linguists can appreciate that.

Various modern Greek authors have attempted to use different registers in their literary style. Elements of oral speech are used in authentic story-telling, whereas literary dimotiki has established its own register; words like *θαρρώ*, *σιμώνω*, *δείλι* belong to this register. Scholars who have studied the use of dialects in modern Greek literature note that emphasis is put rather in the lexicon (Seferis, Elytis, Palamas)⁵ rather than in syntax. On the other hand, it is difficult to distinguish authentic dialectal words from neologisms coined by the authors themselves, as happens in the case of Kazantzakis (Charalambakis 1992).

Writers such as Vizyinos and Papadiamandis combine a sort of katharevousa with dialectal dialogues, thus creating their personal literary style. Cavafy employs elements of the Constantinople dialect in his poetry, as well as many other registers of various origin in the same way as Kalvos, Solomos and so on. Most of the major modern Greek writers, at least until the 1930s, have exploited the dialectal thesaurus of Greek as a source of pure and authentic language material for their own literary aims. A dialectal motto, word or phrase, functions differently in the oeuvre of each of them according to its place and role in the verse or the character that uses it in the novel. As Rodger (1992) puts it:

“There are a number of contrasting ways in which non-standard dialect might make its appearance in a fictional text. Perhaps the commonest is ‘dialect as special guest’. The use of non-standard forms occurs only in dialogue, so that the

⁵ See Charalambakis 1992 (for Seferis and Elytis), Χαράλαμπάκης, Χ. (=Charalambakis). 1992. *Νεοελληνικός λόγος*. Αθήνα: Νεφέλη and Καραντζή, Χ. 1995. Μετεπαναστατικός διαφωτισμός και γλώσσα: Η Βαβυλωνία του Δ. Κ. Βυζαντίου. *Μελέτες για την ελληνική γλώσσα. Πρακτικά της 16^{ης} Συνάντησης του Τομέα Γλωσσολογίας της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Α.Π.Θ.* (4–6 Μαΐου 1995). Θεσσαλονίκη. 494–504, Καραντζή Χ. 1997. Η χρήση των διαλεκτικών στοιχείων στη *Φλογέρα του Βασιλιά* (1910) του Κωστή Παλαμά. *Μελέτες για την ελληνική γλώσσα. Πρακτικά της 17^{ης} Συνάντησης του Τομέα Γλωσσολογίας της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Α.Π.Θ.* (22–24 Απριλίου 1996). Θεσσαλονίκη. 658–670 Καραντζή Χ. & Γ. Ανδρειωμένος 1998. The function of dialectal verbs in *Lyrica* (1811) of Athanassios Christopoulos. *Παρνασσός*, τόμ. Μ’. 344–346. Καραντζή Χ. 2000. *Η αξιοποίηση της γλωσσικής πολυτυπίας στη δημιουργία του ύφους. Το παράδειγμα του Ανδρέα Κάλβου*. Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Κώστα και Ελένης Ουράνη.

utterances of the non-standard dialect speaker are in sharp contrast with the surrounding narrative text. Whether the dialect-speaker is introduced to provide color or comic relief or an uplifting blast of old-time peasant virtue, the socio-linguistic point remains: s/he is not 'one of us'—the class of people who read and write novels" (Rodger 1992: 116).

The presentation of dialect in novels often appears to be startlingly inconsistent. Even when the narrator calls attention to the dialect speech of a character, the actual presentation of that speech in the dialogue may differ from what the reader is led to expect.

The literary artist makes up his own selection of dialect features which will serve his purpose of presenting a character. The frequency of occurrence of particular dialectal forms may be somewhat different in the literary dialect from the frequency of their occurrence in the speech which is being represented. Moreover, some exaggeration of the more striking peculiarities may result from the fact that authors may employ 'eye' or visual dialect. On the other hand, some of the genuinely distinctive characteristics of the represented speech may not be given. Any literary dialect, therefore, will necessarily be a partial and somewhat artificial picture of the actual dialectal speech (Ives 1971: 158–9). A good analysis of a literary dialect needs to take into account the linguistic attitude of the author; what he regards as standard or dialectal (substandard).

Dialect, as a major technique of characterization, is the use by characters in a narrative of distinct varieties of language to indicate a person's social or geographical status, and is used by authors to give an illusion of reality to fictional characters. It is sometimes used to differentiate between characters. Writers often use dialects to paint an authentic portrait of the location or time period about which they are writing. The dialect in literature is used to determine the status of the individuals. Dialect is a helpful tool that an author may use in order to make his/her characters well-rounded. By using a certain dialect for a character, the author is actually telling the reader more about the character's background without directly stating anything. The use of dialect makes the characters seem real, believable. It brings the story and characters to life. Dialects are typically used in dialogue or in instances of a very clear and important narrative voice. Oftentimes they are used to personalize the speaker, to imply an origin or to invoke stereotypes associated with the dialect.

The existence of a common stock of forms does not mean that all authors employed exactly the same literary dialect, but that many writers borrowed rather than invented the features they used. Indeed, the primary purpose of a literary dialect was not to create an accurate record of regional speech, but to define the social position or perhaps the social divergence, of fictional characters. Contrasts between dialect speakers and non-dialect speakers delineated broad cultural differences: rural (or frontier) versus urban, uneducated versus educated, even irrational versus rational.

In order for a literary piece to be considered a work of art, it has to stand the test of time. Carefully chosen diction and dialect help accentuate the realism of the characters to the reader and language styles help establish distinct

characteristics and settings. This is the case of D. H. Lawrence, for example. His work is a true reflection of the ordinary speech of the mining community. The language he adopts is situationally determined. An excess of vernacular, special orthographical marking, hyper-dialectalisms are some of the characteristics of his style.

A literary dialect is best defined as an author's attempt to represent in writing a speech that is restricted regionally, socially or both (Ives 1971: 146). The use of regional dialects in creative literature (short story, novel, drama, poetry) gives an authenticity to the creative work. However, people not acquainted with the regional or social dialect have difficulty in fully comprehending and enjoying the literary piece. The Romantic movement gave to folk speech a glamour idealization of localized languages, symbols of national solidarity and territorial integrity. This is closely connected to the emergence of new nationalisms and linguistic romanticism.

The dialect tends to be inflected with realism, as the language of anger and social protest and transgression and also of the language of play and satire, of buffoonery and mockery. Dialect literature and comic opera (from 1700s) have been widely used to make social statements. In most cases there is a humorous element in the use of low dialects. Most successful imitations are caricatures often wrongly taken as a truthful picture of existing conditions. However, many writers often lapse into stereotypes based upon a mixture of personal experience and a conventional set of structures taken from other authors. Some authors use "eye-dialect", which is the literary technique of using non-standard spelling to approximate a pronunciation that is actually no different from the standard, but has the effect of dialectal, foreign or uneducated speech. The whole matter is related to the way each author displays dialect in writing and dialect orthography.

The use of dialectal speech helps reveal the reader's attitudes towards the narrator and characters as well as functioning as a tool used to enhance the realistic quality of the narration. It also reveals the different characters' social mobility when they code-switch and the characters' attitudes towards each other. From a different perspective, the writer represents his characters' language varieties in an orthographic manner true to dialect grammar and phonology, in addition to the way in which the dialect is blended with the standard language by its speakers. Welsh, for example, in *Trainspotting*,⁶ significantly undermines the moral assumptions associated with non-standard varieties by inducing the reader to sympathise with characters in spite of their non-standard language variants and by awakening questions in regard to the source of narrative voice.

Dialectal literature or literary dialects are also very difficult to translate.⁷ In other cases, translators use dialectal elements in translations, for example of Homer, which is written in literary dialect in the first place.⁸ Several dialectal literary works have been linguistically revised by their authors or adapted by

⁶ See Welsh Irvine 1993/1994. *Trainspotting*. London: Minerva.

⁷ Berthele, R. 2000. Translating African American Vernacular English into German: The problem of "Jim" in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*". *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4 (4). 588–613.

⁸ See Ζερβού Α. «Διαλεκτικά στοιχεία στις νεοελληνικές μεταφράσεις του Ομήρου» *Πρακτικά Β' Συνεδρίου Διαλεκτολογίας*. Ρόδος (1996).

other writers, eliminating dialectal uses and normalizing the texts for educational purposes.

3.3 Dialectal literature

On the other hand, local literature, by lesser known writers, is generally supposed to make its appeal to a very limited circle of readers and to command only a small circulation. An approved local dialect is accepted as the favoured or desirable form of speech. In social phenomena, it is the symbolism of the attitude that counts in these matters rather than the objective facts of history. Several local dialects have persisted with an amazing vitality. Poetry written in regional dialect helps preserve local language and way of life in a globalized world.

A challenge of reading in dialect is to decide how far the literary representation distorts speech in order to champion or demean the speaker; how far it regularizes speech patterns to make the dialect seem more distinct than it was; and how far it represents genuine evidence for linguistic history. There is a large number of fabricated dialectal texts published in the local newspapers and magazines which aim mainly at the revival of the local dialects. It is, however, interesting that each geographical area is characterised by a special style, for example, humour and satire is still flourishing in the Ionian Islands, especially Zakynthos and Kefallonia.⁹ Dialect literature is a literary genre where the mixture and entanglement of orality and writing is obvious.

For cultured writers the decision to write in dialect is always a conscious choice, one based on the recognition of the inferior status of the language adopted. Conversely, folk literature, although often in dialect, frequently attempts to approximate to the modes of the national language. The rationales vary enormously, but the one unifying element behind all dialect literature is an allusion, explicit or implicit, to the national literature. Dialect writing tends to proclaim either its ability to reach as high as the national literature or, more frequently, to treat lowly topics that the national literature cannot treat. Sometimes, paradoxically, it claims to do both at once. Not infrequently, dialect-writing offers an explicit parody of the national literature. Parody may then become expressionism, especially if various dialects and the national language are juxtaposed, as occurs in the *commedia dell' arte*.

Much dialect literature in the 19th century was written in the belief that dialects had a unique relationship with the lower classes and a unique capacity to express their earthy, spontaneous wisdom. But writing in dialect could also be adopted as a way of reproducing and preserving the culture of the lower classes, which has always been regional and hence dialectal. Only a minority of dialect writers, however, have aimed at communicating directly with the lower classes.

The tone of dialect writing may have been predominantly humorous, but behind it lay pronounced anxieties over class hierarchies, over racial and ethnic identity and over regional relations. Speaking generally, dialect writing can be

⁹ See Καραντζή (2007) «Προφορικότητα και λογοτεχνικότητα στην κεφαλονίτικη σάτιρα» *Επιστημονικό συνέδριο «Το κεφαλονίτικο γλωσσικό ιδίωμα»* Αργοστόλι 13 Οκτωβρίου 2007. Σύνδεσμος Φιλολόγων Κεφαλονιάς-Ιθάκης (υπό δημοσίευση).

thought of as a literature of internal conflict between different cultures and political causes. In the case of Pontic Greek, spontaneous speech production is no more fluent across Greece. Oral everyday speech is the main register used nowadays mainly from older, uneducated, rural males of the second generation of those immigrants living in the Greek mainland. There are no major differences between the Pontic Greek spoken all over Greece independently of the origin of the immigrants.¹⁰ Although Pontic Greek does not have a rich literary history, recently Kostas Diamantidis attempted to write a modern novel («Τ'αναντί του ρου», *Ελληνικά Γράμματα*) using the dialect.¹¹

The same happens with the urban variety of the Cypriot dialect, which functions as a mechanism of resistance to total dedialectisation. Sometimes dialect variants occur in dialect literature intensifying the divergence existing in the time of the author. The discussion about the use of Cypriot dialect in literature is often placed by scholars and Cypriot authors themselves in a political framework¹². Socially, literary use of dialect is politically charged, because

¹⁰ An excerpt from a site of the Panhellenic Federation of Pontic Associations (Πανελλήνια Ομοσπονδία Ποντιακών Σωματείων- Π.Ο.Π.Σ.): «Η διάλεκτός μας, που όπως είναι γνωστό προέρχεται από την προγονική ιωνική, μπορεί να έχει ατονήσει αλλά εξακολουθεί να είναι η βασική γλώσσα επικοινωνίας στις επαφές μας με τους μεγαλύτερους μας και σε μερικές περιπτώσεις με τους ομογενείς από τις χώρες του Εύξεινου Πόντου. Χρησιμοποιούμε την ποντιακή διάλεκτο στη λογοτεχνία, στις θεατρικές παραστάσεις και στο τραγούδι. Εφαρμόζουμε στην πράξη την συνεννόησή μας στην ποντιακή διάλεκτο, κάνοντας καθημερινό έργο την αδιαφιλονίκητη άποψή μας για τη διατήρηση και την εξέλιξή της».

¹¹ See Nikos Vatoroulos, «Ένα σύγχρονο μυθιστόρημα στα ποντιακά», 24.06.2006, *εφημ. Η Καθημερινή*. «Ήθελα να δω αν τα ποντιακά μπορούν να μιλήσουν για το σήμερα και το αύριο. Η βασική αρχή ήταν να γράψω σε μια γλώσσα ζωντανή, που να παράγει ακόμα χυμούς, μια γλώσσα στην οποία οι άνθρωποι να ερωτεύονται. Ήθελα να δημιουργήσω λέξεις ή να δανειστώ από υπάρχουσες, να μη ξενίζουν, να μη σηκώνουν κεφάλι και κάνουν τις άλλες λέξεις να υποκλίνονται. Το πρώτο μου μυθιστόρημα με τίτλο «Το Ροδόδαφνον», γραμμένο επίσης στα ποντιακά, είχε ποντιακό θέμα. Είχε αναφορές στο χωριό μου, οικειούς ήρωες και ένα δάσος από γνώριμες εικόνες. Η ποντιακή διάλεκτος δεν καλλιεργήθηκε στο χρόνο γιατί δεν είχε λογοτεχνία να την εξελίξει. Είναι μια διάλεκτος πλούσια στο φυσικό της περιβάλλον, από το οποίο τρέφεται. Έτσι λοιπόν, «Τ' αναντί του ρου» γίνεται το πρώτο έργο της ποντιακής λογοτεχνίας με θέμα που εμπνέεται από σύγχρονα ζητήματα. Είναι μια γλώσσα υπαρκτή, ζώσα. Τη γλώσσα αυτή δεν την έβγαλα από τον αέρα. Ένα ρήγμα στην ομογενοποίηση που θέλει να σκεπάσει τις διαφορετικότητες»

¹² "Το να γράφει κανείς στίχους στο τοπικό ιδίωμα αποτελεί χαμένη υπόθεση και "άσκοπη πολυτέλεια" (Γλ. Αλιθέρσης 1949). "Μα εμείς πολεμούμε τώρα αυτή την τακτική [σ.σ. εννοεί τη χρήση της διαλέκτου]. Αν κάποτε λόγοι ιστορικοί επέβαλαν τη δημιουργία κυπριακής ιδιοματικής ποίησης, σήμερα, ιστορικοί λόγοι επιβάλλουν ακριβώς το αντίθετο. Δε θέλουμε να ενισχύσουμε την προσπάθεια της Κυβέρνησης να μας παρουσιάζι σαν "ιδιάζουσαν εθνικότητα" —εμάς τους Κυπρίους— με ιδιαίτερη γλώσσα, ιδιαίτερη λογοτεχνία, ιδιαίτερες παραδόσεις κλπ." (Ν. Κρανιδιώτης 1953). "Μήπως ο Χίτλερ, στον τελευταίο πόλεμο, δεν αποκαλύφθηκε αυτόκλητος προστάτης της λογοτεχνίας στις διαλέκτους της Προβηγκίας και της Βρετάνης; Ό,τι μπορούσε να διασπάσει την εθνική ενότητα της κατακτημένης Γαλλίας ήτανε καλό και συμφέρο. Κι από τους ανθρώπους του Χάρτινγκ και του Κρις όλα κανείς να τα περιμένει" (Στρ. Τσίρκας 1957). See Kostas Montis "Why Cypriots should write in the cypriot idialect as well" (in Greek) and Michalis Patsiardis "Dialectal poetry" in *Symposio Poiisis kai Kitikis*. Ethniki Etaireia Ellinon Logotehnon. Lefkosia 1980, 49–52 and 72–73. See also K. G. Giagkoullis *The cypriot dialect in Literature (From the 11th century till nowadays)* (in Greek) Lefkosia 1986. 53–55., Andreas pastellas "A Problem: Dialectal Poetry" (in Greek). *Kypriaka Chronika* 11 . Lefkosia, 1951. 467–

language represents groups that conflict and try to dominate or eradicate each other through our society's long histories of prejudice of various kinds.

Graham Shorrocks (1996) makes a distinction between dialect in literature and literary dialect.¹³ A literary language is a register of a language that is used in literary writing. The difference between elevated literary and non literary (vernacular) forms is more marked in some languages (e.g. katharevousa vs. dhimotiki). Literary language which is artificial, consciously planned and designed, ends in standardizing the written language. Linguistically, it is impossible to reproduce anyone's speech accurately in writing with few writing conventions for indicating tone, intonation or regional differences in stress patterns. Additionally, there are too many vocabulary items, idioms or grammatical constructions that are not familiar to general readers. Moreover, usage varies widely within dialects among individual speakers and different generations and subgroups, so readers are bound to have different impressions of how realistically or gracefully their own or other dialects are represented in a work of art.

However, literary dialect should not be taken as linguistic evidence. Whether or not literary dialect constitutes a reliable source of linguistic evidence is a question to which linguists have generally been content to respond in a negative fashion. Literary portrayals, they hold, are too much a work of the creative imagination to merit serious linguistic consideration (Sullivan 1980). The attempt to spot down the dialectal elements in literature should not be mistaken for a scientific dialectological study in the way linguistic geography does; a discipline that has produced dialect atlases with invaluable linguistic and ethnological inventories, vocabularies and studies, scholarly journals etc. Along with the continuing collection of slowly disappearing dialect data, interest has recently turned to the sociolinguistic interpretation of the changing dualism between language and dialects. There is, however, a strong demand for a thorough

469. That is why the study of Cypriot literature, its definitions and theoretical problems, are linked to the concept of identity. Savvas Pavlou mentions: «Μπροστά λοιπόν στην αγγλική τακτική η οποία, για να αντιμετωπίσει το αίτημα της ένωσης της Κύπρου με την Ελλάδα, τόνιζε τη διάκριση του κυπριακού πολιτισμού από τον ευρύτερο ελληνικό, την ύπαρξη δηλ. ιδιαίτερων γνωρισμάτων {=κυπριακή ιδιαιτερότητα} που τον διαφοροποιούσαν σημαντικά, αρκετοί Κύπριοι διανοούμενοι εγκολπώθηκαν την άποψη ότι η εμμονή σε ιδιωματικά στοιχεία ενίσχυε το οπλοστάσιο του εχθρού, γι' αυτό πρότειναν την πλήρη εναρμόνιση με τα πανελληνίως καθιερωμένα όσον αφορά, κυρίως, τη γλωσσική έκφραση και τη θεματογραφία. [...] Ο Στρατής Τσίρκας συνιστούσε προσοχή για το θέμα του ιδιώματος, γιατί όπως ο Χίτλερ στον τελευταίο πόλεμο αποκαλύφθηκε αυτόκλητος προστάτης της λογοτεχνίας στις διαλέκτους της Προβηγκίας και της Βρετάνης, αφού ό,τι μπορούσε να διασπάσει την εθνική ενότητα της κατακτημένης Γαλλίας ήτανε καλό και συμφέρον γι' αυτόν». On the other side, the Cypriot author Kostas Montis notes: «Θυμάμαι, όταν εξέδωσα τα πρώτα μου ποιήματα στο κυπριακό γλωσσικό ιδίωμα, ελέχθη από κοντόφθαλμο κριτικό πως αυτά τα πράγματα μας αποκόπτουν από τον εθνικό κορμό. Είναι ακριβώς το αντίθετο που συμβαίνει. Το κυπριακό γλωσσικό ιδίωμα είναι μια ρίζα της πανελληνίας γλώσσας. Μια ρίζα που δεν έδωσε ακόμα τους καρπούς και τους χυμούς που μπορούσε να δώσει εις την πανελλήνια γλώσσα».

¹³ In the memorial volume for Ossi Ihalainen ("Non-standard Dialect Literature and Popular Culture", in *Speech Past and Present: Studies in English Dialectology in memory of Ossi Ihalainen* ed. by Matti Rissanen et al. (1996), Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 385–411).

understanding of the tensions between language and dialects as they are reflected in literature.

4 Concluding remarks

The study of the representation of dialects in literature is a well-established field, but one that is approached with a range of different goals and methodologies by scholars depending upon their disciplinary background. For literary scholars, for example, the most significant aspects of the use of dialects in literature will often be the narrative, poetic or artistic functions of the dialect. For dialectologists, the accuracy of the literary dialect and its relationship to real-world dialects tends to be the focus. For sociolinguists, the attitudes expressed in the text, either overtly or covertly, towards different varieties are frequently the most interesting elements.

The aim of this paper was to show the ways in which dialects have been represented in a wide range of literature, from Ancient Greek to contemporary fiction. We have discussed what various authors are trying to convey, when they write in dialect. This is however extremely difficult, since a linguistic, historical and cultural overview is needed. Literary language, on the one hand, should always sound as something strange, relating to stylistic preferences. Picturesque folkloric patois, on the other hand, project stereotypes and usually aim at the revival of a dialect. The effectiveness of dialects used in literature is still under investigation. The accuracy in dialect presentation, the distortion of speech or its regularization are only a few matters related to this subject, which should be looked into in the future.

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