

Acta
Universitatis
Danubius



COMMUNICATIO

Myths' Shifting in the Works of Haxhiademi

Saranda Buzhala¹

Abstract: Etehem Haxhiademi is an Albanian author between the two world wars period. Based on his writings, we have seen him as the author of classical models of dramaturgy, and meanwhile his tragedies as subject taken from Albanian antiquity and the Middle Ages, from ancient mythology, as well as from the biblical one, who creates them by giving the spirit and the era in which he lives. This work is therefore focused mainly on these mythical models of Haxhiademi, which were observed with the help of the comparative method, sometimes also analytical. Even with the help of intertextual interpretations, very serious conclusions have been reached about the shifting and remodeling of the myths of Greek Antiquity, the biblical ones but also the Albanian myths by Haxhiademi. Through the confrontation of contrasts, Haxhiademi brings the classic model of tragedy in verse. We have seen that the myth is identified with the real historical events, that the author has mythologized the life and history and that at the same time replaces the mythical heroes in time and space. The fact that the tragedies of this author are extended beyond the Albanian borders, in the ideological and semantic aspect, shows that this work is of great interest to be considered as a comparative approach by literature-lovers.

Keywords: Haxhiademi; classical models; dramaturgy; mythical; Greek Antiquity; mythical heroes; comparative

¹ University of Gjakova, Republic of Kosovo, Address: Rectorate, Str. "Ismail Qemali", n.n. 50 000 Gjakova, Republic of Kosovo, Corresponding author: saranda.buzhala@uni-gjk.org.

Introduction

E. Haxhiademi, the author of classical models of dramaturgy (instead of introduction).

Ethem Haxhiademi¹ is the author of seven written tragedies in the Albanian language, the themes of which he took from antiquity and the Albanian Middle Ages, from ancient Greek mythology, as well as from the biblical one, giving them the spirit and the era in which he lived. Thus, he elaborates on attractive themes and fierce conflicts, through tragic characters with virtues or vices, following the principles of classicism. So, Haxhiademi will change the themes taken from history, the myth and legend, by putting them in the service of addressing important ethical-moral, social and political problems, thus creating new characters and conflicts.

The meaning of Haxhiademi's dramatic text comes from the relations with other texts not only Albanian, but also beyond, using different markers, codes and literary traditions, which lead us to intertextuality. Therefore the process of reading it has to do with the movement along the texts belonging to the literary system. In creating his seven tragedies, E. Haxhiademi respected the basic thematic tendency of classicist playwrights. All his effort was in constituting a form of writing, less cultivated in Albanian literature, drama. This genre, due to its conventionality, in Albanian literature could only follow the paths previously trampled by others.

Shifting of Biblical Myth

Haxhiademi with a biblical hypertext, "Abel" brings not narration, but action, as Aristotle said when he discussed of tragedy, which he called drama (action), thus alluding to drama². Highlighting tragedy as the main form of drama, Aristotle asserted its sources, which was the Greek epic. When he mentioned the Greek epic, he first listed the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey". Haxhiademi, knowing very well Aristotle's Poetics, applied all the rules we encounter in it.

¹ He was a teacher, clerk, writer and political activist of the National Front. He was born on March 8, 1902 in Elbasan, the son of Emin Haxhiademi. After finishing the Elbasan High School, in 1919 he went to Lecce, Italy to be prepared for the fourth year of high school, he learned Latin and showed interest in Virgil's "Bukoliket". He attended the upper classes of the gymnasium in Tyrol, Austria, where he also graduated. In 1924 he began his studies in Berlin for Political Science at the behest of his family. In the Vërlaci government he would work as director of the Office of Local Entities in the Ministry of Interior headed by Maliq Bushati. After the entry of the communist regime, he was the head of the branch of the Writers' League in Elbasan. Ethem Haxhiademi was with the National Front and Mit'hat Frashëri during the Second World War, so after the war, in 1947 he was arrested and sentenced to death. With the intervention of Aleksandër Xhuvani, his life was spared, but he remained in prison where he died a few months before the end of his sentence, in 1965.

https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethem_Haxhiademi.

² The form that gives importance to the action and not for the narration. See: Aristotle, Poetics, Renaissance, Prishtina, 1984.

In addition to taking the subject from myths, he also gave attention to the structure of tragedy, according to this poetic.

However, Haxhiademi will make some changes, by eliminating the parody, stasis and exodus, and giving a new dimension to the episode, thus joining the ranks of the neoclassicists. By taking into consideration that Bilba has been and continues to be a source of various literary subjects, we also understand its connotative power, that infinite figurativeness that it has in itself. By not escaping the many connotations of this holy book, Haxhademi builds on the theme taken from the Bible the tragedy "Abel". Biblical myth is now transformed into literary material, as a form of neoclassical tragedy.

It is understandable that we are talking about the author taking a biblical theme. But when we try to point out the shifting of this theme, we see that the author will put human relations at the core, before the divine ones, because the utilitarian and didactic character of tragedy brings it down to earth, by giving importance to family education, as the main pillar of brotherly love and not the bond of blood, which is the divine bond with which we are born. Also, another transformative stage is making sacrifices: already they are not dedicated to God, but to the parents, by automatically lowering the proportion from the divine to the earthly plan, in which case it becomes familiar. By reducing the treatment of this theme from the transcendental level, in the construction of interpersonal relationships, the guilt tends to be left to the parents as bearers of the education of the children and as judges of Cain's work, as fratricide.

The hate that they incite in Cain towards his brother is gradual throughout the text. On various occasions they deny the works of Cain, behaving indifferently and ungratefully to his deeds for the parents. These and many other cases we encounter in the debates between them, lead to the idea that the author already blames the parents.

Being in the midst of jealousy, Cain kills his brother, unable to find himself in the play on words by their parents. Abel, on the other hand, polite and loving, is killed by his brother. But the parents, who are supposed to create a balance between the children, take on the role of judge, at the same time becoming the main instigators of this murder. Haxhiademi transforms this myth, because part of the blame now lies with the parents, who, having different and unequal communications between the children, influenced the creation of strained relationships between them.

Recontextualization of Ancient Mythology

A characteristic that differs Haxhiademi's works is the use of concrete nouns in the title. This stresses the authorial mark, which continues and is consolidated in the text. On the other hand, being nouns or characters already known from history or culture in general, they also take on the role of paratextual indicators, however, in the text the author often transforms these figures.

In the dramas "Ulysses" and "Achilles" the myth is identified with real historical events, mythologizing life and history. The tragedy "Ulysses" reasserts the human need for the family. Haxhiademi creates this need not by presenting the already known vicissitudes of Ulysses to rediscover Penelope and Ithaca, but other vicissitudes. By creating a new odyssey, not that kind of traveling and searching for the homeland, but that of traveling to kill and to take revenge. Haxhiademi redimensions the ancient myth into another interesting space. Resemanticization is noticed in the theme that the author has chosen to bring back, which starts from another tragic moment. And, as a result we have misfortune and anxiety, because of the event of gods of predestined fate, to quarrel with his wife and to be killed by his son Telegoni, who had with Circe on his return from Troy to Ithaca.

The innovative sign of the myth is revenge or blood feud father-son, which is not unknown to Greek mythology¹. Thus, the dramatic conflict in "Ulysses" takes place with the murder of his father by his son, this hero of the Trojan War. Even according to mythology books, it is claimed that there was a myth that claimed the murder of Ulysses by his son. *"According to later poetic works, Odysseus, after many years, was allegedly killed by Telegon, his second son, who was born to the magician Kirka, after his departure from the Eea island. Telegram allegedly clashed with Odysseus in the duel which arose when he was looking for his father, arrived in Ithaca, where his companions had hastened the quarrel. Not thinking he had opposed his father, Telegon struck him with the sword. "Then they say that he took the body to the island of the witch Kirka, to his mother, and there he organized the magnificent funeral for her", it is said in the myth brought by Vojtech Zamarovsky to "Heroes of ancient myths" (Zamarovsky, 1985, p. 370).*

As for the myth, with all the drama and fatality that the myth of Odysseus has in itself, the playwright highlights two other moments, which increase his dramatic tension. Initially we have the punishment of an abandoned love. So the boy who kills his father, because of the feeling of abandonment and no doubt of ignorance. As well as, brashly revenge that turns heroic, majestic and merit into irreversible punishment into aloofness and blindness.

In short, repatriation, betrayal, jealousy are at the center of Haxhiademi's first tragedy, "Ulysses", which stands out from the attractive subject with many surprises. Performed in five acts, it develops conflicts that follow one after the other, thus creating dramatic

¹ The cord of father-son killing begins from the main deities of Olympus, Uranus-Kronos-Zeus, and then continues to the family of Atreus.

situations, which in some cases are artistically unmotivated, because the fate of the characters is predetermined by the deities.

Having the myth as a base, as an essence, but changing the theme in the text, Haxhiademi brings new elements. While in Homer Achilles gets into the war, motivated by the murder of his soulmate, Patroclus, in which case he is killed by Parid, in Haxhiademi's "Achilles", Achilles falls into the trap driven by the feeling of love for Polyxena, ending up dead from Parid. Presented from a different perspective, the figure of Achilles is intertwined with the author's message, which gives the innovative spirit of tragedy. By not ignoring the role of predestined fate in Greek antiquity, Haxhiademi builds the course of events of the tragedy under this predestination as well.

Love, fate and betrayal are the three crucial pillars on which Haxhiademi's tragedy is written. Escaping the myth of origin, Haxhiademi gives a new image to the myth, because now the Achilles' bravery, selfishness or manliness will not be at the center, which attributes we face whenever we talk about him. The figure of this ancient hero will focus on the event of love, in which he dives and in that of betrayal, in which he falls. At the same time, fate, as we know it from Greek myths, will be the main determinant of the events in this tragedy as well.

With themes from Greek mythology, Haxhiademi also creates the tragedy "Diomedes". As we saw in the other two tragedies with the same mythical theme, now, in this tragedy we encounter a replacement in time and space of this mythical hero. Homer dedicates the entire fifth song of the "Iliad" to Diomedes, his unparalleled bravery and deeds in this war, as a brave and outstanding strategist. Also, according to books and myths in general, his figure is distinguished for deeds and bravery, for advice and for readiness for opposition and war.¹ However, Haxhiademi does not intend to acquaint us with the heroic works of Diomedes, which are offered to us in the verses of the "Iliad", but introduces us to the myth of his migration to Italy.

At the same time, the author will combine the mythical theme with legendary heroes and nouns from ancient Illyria. As he tried the characters of other tragedies through numerous intrigues, so he will try Diomedes, who falls prey to betrayal and traps and killed by brother. Already love, lies, betrayal and greed become the impetus for the tragic end of this prominent figure of Greek mythology.

Albanian Historical Myth

In the context of tragedies, which they have as their theme the history of Albanians, we have the tragedies "Alexander", "Pirrua" and "Skanderbeg". The author takes these Albanian myths to recreate them. The purpose of myth is to transform meaning into form. *"Indeed, the best weapon against myth is the production of an artificial myth. This recreated myth will*

¹ For more information, see: Vojtech Zamarovsky, Heroes of Ancient Myths.

be a mythological truth. Since myth takes from discourse, why not to take the myth. It would suffice for this to make it the beginning of a third chane in the semiological chain, establishing meaning as the first term of a second myth. "Literature offers some great examples of this artificial mythology," says Roland Barthes (Barthes, 1957, p. 209). When some myths are taken, in the broadest concept, as words, as narratives or as events, within the dramatic form of these texts that we will examine, tension is produced with the myth itself. Their elaboration is a deliberate technique of the author.

The tragedy "Alexander" brings the paradigm of glorification of the future leader and king, Alexander, restrained and reasonable man, who knows how to maintain warmth and balance in the confusing flow of events. Nysret Krasniqi chooses to call it an architectural mythos, because they take the subject or mythos as a starting point by marking darker or more distant historical figures such as Alexander or Pirrua: *"This architectural mythos, which nevertheless has factual premises, is transformed into Haxhiademi, in order to bring the intention that the problems for the heir to the throne are not the product of the relations of the father (Philip) with the son (Alexander), nor with the relations with other kingdoms, but derive precisely from the mixing of the family with the domination of crime and disbelief in the family connection"* (Krasniqi, 2010, p. 95).

In "Alexander" the theme focuses on the struggle for power, where the idealization of law and good people is exalted. The conflict is intra-family and the intrigue revolves around a vicious circle, which will inevitably be fatal for one party. War for power, jealousy, love and sincerity drive action forward. Therefore, through simple action and situations that prepare each other, the final brings the triumph of law. Once again, human intrigues come to the fore, leading to murder, death and revenge, but in this tragedy they also bring the coronation of Alexander, king of Macedonia. Thus, the historical myth is transformed to a degree, which comes as a result of the loss of family ethics. For, the throne is not the source of controversy, because King Philip inadvertently falls into 'tragic guilt' causing even the most tragic end. Once again, the didactic character of the work stands out.

When we consider the dramatic development of Haxhiadem's next tragedy, "Pirrua", we also see a historical dough, which has a didactic and humanistic character. Also, in this tragedy, the author uses a historical myth, which by bending it through human intrigues, makes it earthly and message-giving. As long as the two shared the throne together, Neoptolemus and Pyrrhus, everything was in order, but when the plans and intrigues for taking power began to be woven, then the dramatic development took off. Princess Kadme is the one who instills the wick of intrigue, bringing forward the tension and bringing about the tragic end of the characters. Through five acts, the tragedy "Pirrua" brings to light the event that takes place by not many characters and the drama of these actions. Wearing the human and family veil as a historical theme, Haxhiademi tries to convey once again through his tragedies the message against the evil schemes of the struggle for power.

And, after the death of Neoptolemus, Gelon and the poisoning of Cadmus, Pyrrhus becomes the sole king of Epirus. Such actions do not accompany at all the character of Skanderbeg,

who is the other historical figure in the next tragedy of Haxhiademi. On the contrary, in the tragedy of the same name "Skanderbeg", the author will highlight the virtues of this national figure, who, although faced with intrigue, betrayal and conspiracy, does not waver from his human attributes. "This time I present to the honest singers another tragedy, the subject of which is our national hero Skanderbeg; We say we get it from our most sober history." (Haxhiademi, 2000, p. 9)

So, this tragedy, although it bears the name of our hero in the title, is an act that speaks of the betrayal of Moisi Golem and the intrigues of his wife, Zanfina. The figure of Skanderbeg is molded in the dimension of majesty. The line of pure mythology of Skanderbeg is now followed as a legendary enlightened and far-sighted hero, the destiny of Christianity, a worthy husband, a wise and prudent man. In this form, the focus is on the woman, Zanfina, who starts the whole dramatic conflict, that of revenge, power struggle and betrayal. By divesting the myth, to 'have on' it again, Haxhiademi leaves the main role to the woman, who now, as a sign of revenge for not winning the love of her husband, Moisiu, and the lost of her first love, Karol Muzakë Topinë, plots the plan intriguing for revenge against Skanderbeg. On the other hand, Skanderbeg, not being influenced by all these deeds, forgives and accepts among himself people who had betrayed him, becoming once again a symbol of generosity. But, exactly these apologies are unacceptable for Zanfina, who, as Sabri Hamiti claims, sees them as a moment of captivity and not of kindness and therefore commits suicide. And, once again, the moralizing purpose of Haxhiadem's tragedies is highlighted, which tends through the retelling of these myths to give general messages that kindness overcomes greed, envy and betrayal.

After observing at the transformations or shiftings that this Albanian author brings in details, we can conclude that Haxhiademi marks an innovation with the way he recontextualizes these myths. At the same time, the opportunity to see mythical subjects from different fields and times makes his literary work richer and more interesting. Whereas, his creation in the dramatic form of writing and the confrontation with the conventionality of this creative form in the Albanian culture gives the proper importance and position to Haxhiadmi in Albanian Literature. The seriousness and art brought to these tragedies increases us the curiosity that in future research we will expand the study of these writings, especially in intertextual reports, as well as his writings in verse.

References

- Apolloni, Ag (2010). *Parabola postmoderne/ Postmodern parables*. Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik.
- Barthes, Roland (2000). *Myth today. A Barthes Reader/Myth today. A Barthes Reader*. Ed.Susan Sontag. London: Vintage.
- Barthes, Roland (2016). *Mitologjitë/ Mythology*. Tiranë: Pika pa sipërfaqe.

Calinescu, Matei (2012). *Pesë fytyrat e modernitetit: Modernizmi, avangarda, dekadenca, kiçi dhe postmodernizmi/ The five faces of modernity: Modernism, avant-garde, decadence, kitsch and postmodernism*. Dituria, Tiranë.

Chandler, Daniel (2002). *Semiotics for Beginners*. London: Routledge.

Fraj, Northrop (1990). *Anatomia e Kritikës/Anatomy of Criticism*. Prishtinë: Rilindja.

Gashi, Osman (2005). *Miti dhe romantizmi evropian/European myth and romanticism*. Prishtinë: Kosova Pen Center.

Gashi, Osman (2014). *Letërsia dhe mit/ Literature and myths*. Prishtinë: Om.

Hamiti, Sabri (2002). *Vepra 8/ Act 8*. Prishtinë: Faik Konica.

Hamiti, Sabri (2003). *Studime letrare, Libri 21*. Botime të veçanta XLIX, Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë. Prishtinë: Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës.

Haxhiademi, Etëhem (2000). *Vepra 1 & 2/ Act 1 & 2*. Prishtinë: Faik Konica.

Homeri (2006). *Iliada*. Prishtinë: Buzuku.

Homeri (2006). *Odiseja*. Prishtinë: Buzuku.

Krasniqi, Nysret (2003). *Rrëfimi dhe shkrimi ("Lahuta e Malcis" e Gjergj Fishtës)/ Narration and writing ("Lahuta e Malcis" by Gjergj Fishta)*. Prishtinë: AIKD.

Krasniqi, Nysret (2010). *Episteme letrare/ Literary epistems*. Prishtinë: 99-AIKD.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (2005). *Myth and Meaning*. London Taylor & Francis e-Library.

Mark Tirta, *Mitologjia ndër shqiptarë/ Mythology among Albanians*. Akademia e Shkencave, Tiranë, 2004.

Meletinsky, Yeleazar (2000). *The Poetics of Myth*. New York: Routledge.

Pozzato, Maria Pia (2017). *Semiotika e tekstit/Semiotics of the text* (përkthyer nga Dhurata Shehri) Albas, Tiranë.

Rrahmani, Kujtim (2002). *Intertekstualiteti dhe Oraliteti/Intertextuality and Orality*. Prishtinë: AIKD.

Shala, Kujtim (2016). *Epistemologjia e dytë/The second epistemology*. Prishtinë: Buzuku.

Wellek, Rene & Warren, Austin (1994). *Teoria e letërsisë/Theory of literature*. Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Enciklopedike.

Xhagolli, Agron (2013). *Folklori shqiptar në bashkëkohësi/Albanian folklore in contemporary times*. Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Tiranë: Instituti i Antropologjisë Kulturore dhe Studimit të Artit.