

The Influence of Myth on Albanian Literature

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Abstract: There is a very close connection between mythology and literature. Indeed, mythology has been one of the fundamental spiritual pillars of man and of collectivity. Aiming at penetrating of the unknown and man's constant attempt to explain and penetrate these phenomena, myths are yet to become an inseparable part of people's lives. Gradually, over time, they will become an inseparable part of literature as well. Indeed, many scholars claim that all literature comes from myth and returns to myth, emphasizing its role in literature. About the relation, myth – Albanian literature we will present a panoramic view in this paper, in order to highlight the reception and recontextualisation of myth by Albanian authors. Among others, authors such as: Ernest Koliqi, Fan Noli, Mitrush Kuteli, Ismajl Kadare, Rexhep Qosja, etc. used the material taken from the myths to fit a local culture and mentality.

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When it comes to the great influence that myths have had on literature, we have in mind the world literature, but also the Albanian literature. Therefore, we can freely address the presence of this mythological subject in Albanian literary creativity, to highlight the great importance that mythology has had in this literature from its beginnings until today.

Albanian authors used the material taken from myths to fit a local culture and mentality, such as the case of Ernest Koliqi, Fan Noli, Mitrush Kuteli, Ismajl Kadare, Rexhep Qosjes, and other names, from the beginnings of Albanian literature until today.

Whereas, Sabri Hamiti observes that Albanian culture, literature, is a culture of opposition, always preserving the Western mythological and literary foundations,

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but also the seal of its authenticity. Therefore, he discusses the relation of literature to myth as a narrative universality, as well as the places from which storytelling originates to be structured into literary forms. He says *“the problematic of the topic as a cultural resource; whether it is based on ancient myths or on the vital universality of man. Hamit observes the dominance of these themes and classifies them as follows: Folk: Sacrifice, Besa (vow), Revenge, Historical Renaissance: Illyrians, Skanderbeg, Ali Pasha, League of Prizren Literary: The Holy Bridge, Ago Ymeri, Constantine and Doruntina Current: Everyday Life, Permanent Exile: Albanian Language, Renaissance, Hero, Anthem.”* (Isufaj, 2003, p. 34)

The relationship of Albanian literature with myth dates back to its beginnings. Like the literature of other countries, our literature, in its infancy, remains closely linked to mythology and folklore. These mythological and folkloric creations have served as models, themes, and sources of various subjects and motives.

When we talk about Old Albanian Literature, we consider the great place occupied by themes borrowed from religious mythologies, the Bible and the Qur'an, sacred stories of Christianity and Islam, as well as Albanian legend and tradition.

By combining religious myths with artistic reality, their writings are at times mythological, and at times stripped of religious profanity and utilitarian function, making these writings or figures more terrestrial, as in the case of the oil of St. Mary's presented by P. Budi, whose cry sounds like that of an ordinary mother, expressing pain for the loss of her child.

These are the cases when a mythical figure takes on the meaning of poetic symbols, thus presenting the tragic colors of ordinary life. Also the very painful verses, which give the Virgin Mary's cry to the work of J. Variboba, are completely stripped of mysticism: *“Bir si të vranë/mua ku më lanë/ (son when they killed you/ where they left me....Bir si të qëlluan/bir si të mbaruan (Son when they shot you/ son how they got rid of you.... O bir ç'dhembje/më merr mua me vete (Son what a great pain/ takes me away). Express in a very original tone the sorrows of the many mothers who mourned for the lost boys.*

So, in the literature of this period, religiously written writings were widely used. It is not only about translations of services and catechisms, but also of works such as the "Meshari" ("The book of wafer") of Gj. Buzuku, "Doctrine and Covenants" and "The Mirror of the Confession" by P. Budi, Bogdani's "Prophets League", etc., which attempt to create genuine works of art through religious myths. In addition, the

original poems of Budi, Bogdan, Variboba, Keta, etc., as well as the creations of Bejtian authors: Nezim Frakulla, Hasan Zyko Kamberi, Muhamet Kyçyku, etc.

Even in the writings of humanists, where besides historical truth, we find elements of religious mythology and folklore. We find such elements in "Rrethimi i Shkodrës" (The Siege of Shkodra) and "Historia e Skënderbeut" (The History of Skanderbeg), where in addition to historical truths, miraculous events are presented as acceptable, the action of divine forces is accepted, it is believed in religious feelings and prejudices, thus mixing and the truth with legends, myths and traditions. For instance, when Barleti testifies to the origin of the Albanians, he links it to the legends and myths that carry us up to Hercules' peregrination; When he claims that the dream that Skanderbeg's mother had dreamed of being pregnant was of a mythological dimension, because, according to this dream, she connected a dragon so large that it covered almost all of Epirus...

On the other hand, Bejgites brought a broad theme to their writing, echoing some of the social problems of the time. Through progressive ideas, revolts against poverty, inequality, and other wounds of contemporary society are highlighted, through satirical verses such as "Money", "Trahani" (Traditional food- Trahani), "Gjerdeku" (Necklace of the girl), etc. of Hasan Zyko Kamberi. Moreover, at the same time, they exalted erotic lyricism, such as "Bandilli i djegur" (Burnt Bandit) by S.Naibit.

This literature found support mainly in classical Greco-Roman models, in those of Arabic-Persian literature, imitated by Hasan Zyko Kamberi, Nezim Frakulla, etc., as well as in Albanian folklore, to establish links with the Albanian environment.

When giving a panoramic view of the Albanian literature of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. XX, we notice the presence and dominance of the romantic spirit with many creations. More, along with romantic breaths, who are the authors of more than period gave tire writings, they can also create tire country myths, so they are as a result of the isolation of this historical figure (such as Skanderbeg), geographic space (such as Tomorri Mountain) or the living creatures (such as the eagle), the look was subsequently appeared as a myth.

Using the figure and name of the national hero, Skanderbeg, the authors gradually turned it into a symbol, a myth. In addition, thus, their creative visions were close to those of the European Romantics, who also turned into myths the powerful personalities of their time.

In general, our authors of romanticism were inclined towards folkloric models in an attempt to show the authenticity of national life. Addressing the folklore, De Rada and G. Dara, in their writings, exploited the great wealth of Albanian mythology. Such an example is P. Vasa's novel "Bardha e Temalit" (Bardha of Temal) (Vasa, 1999, p. 31), in which the environment is not only a backdrop for events but also a means of creating the romantic atmosphere of the work¹

In an attempt to create the romantic ideal, the authors used the function and power of dreams as a mythical model. De Rada, Mr. Serembe, G. Dara, P. Vasa, etc. gave considerable space to dreams, thus bringing their type of romantic thought, with features of mythological poetic thought. Thus, their heroes find themselves between reality and dreams.

These authors at the same time utilized poetic figuration of mythological origin that had been preserved and refined within Arbëresh folk, such as Dragon, night shadows, witch figures, warning signs and dreams. However, elements of religious mythology are also not absent, with names such as: Christ, Saint Mary, the church, the cross, etc., supporting their attempt to oppose the Turkish invaders by presenting themselves as Christians. The presence of personification, where fairies, shadows, idols, etc., should not be overlooked, behave and act as humans, but also the presence of curses, congratulations, prayers, prayers, and crying².

However, when we talk about authors involved in Albanian literature between the two world wars, we tend to give a broader insight into the presence of myths in their creations. As the author of a large number of works, Fishta simultaneously becomes the bearer of a variety of discourses and commentaries. Combining mission with art, it embodies in them the entire cultural, geographical and spiritual corps of Albanians.

Through glorification and sarcasm, the artistically play appears in Fishta's work. Because are hit in the sorrows and wounds of the inhabitant of his country, and hymnist of others, intended to be a model passed down through the generations. From text to text, myth is strongly combined with the real world, with geography and mentality, to gain artistic eternity

"Lahuta of Malcis" (The lute of Malcia) highlights various national myths, among the most prominent in the mountaineer myth. Also the myth of the mountains, based

¹ "Her smile was divine. People's words are powerless to express what she is inspires ... She is a mystery ..."

² In "Kenga e Sprasme Bales" LaLes's daughter begs the bird to go and warn Nick about the danger posed by the Turkish soldiers.

on the canonical code. The myth of blood and honor, which is the legality of the lives of the inhabitants of these mountains, and at the same time the most precious figure of those lands, the Albanian woman, symbolizing honesty and loyalty, turns into a myth by this author.

Nor does Koliqi neglect the canon and laws of Albanian life, sometimes by myths, and sometimes by reversing them, when the subjects of his works encounter and confront them, as a mixture of cultures. Meanwhile, Narcissus myth brings it as an Albanian variant of this mythical figure.

On the other hand, we find Fan Noli between myth and de-myths, which at times treats biblical myths, at times constructs a personal myth as an autobiographical reminder, and at other times takes an existing myth, that of Beethoven, to turn it over and over. to demobilize to the extent that he manages to create a new myth, that of Beethoven human.

Ethem Haxhiademi is the author of seven tragedies, the subjects of which he took from antiquity and the Albanian Middle Ages, from ancient as well as Biblical mythology, giving them the spirit and clothing of the era in which he lived. Thus, he elaborates on attractive subjects and fierce conflicts, through tragic characters with virtues or vice, following the principles of classicism. Ethem Haxhiademi is the author of seven tragedies, the subjects of which he took from ancient and medieval Albania, ancient mythology, and the Bible, giving them the spirit and clothing of the era in which he lived. Understanding Haxhiadem's dramatic text emerges from relationships with other texts not just Albanian, but beyond, utilizing various literary markers, codes, and traditions that lead us to intertextuality. Therefore, the process of reading it is about moving through texts belonging to the literary system. In creating his seven tragedies, E. Haxhiademi respected the fundamental thematic inclination of classical playwrights. His whole effort was in the constitution of a form of writing, very little cultivated in Albanian literature, dramatic.

Meanwhile, Migjeni, feeling and perceiving the individual's ' absences', tends to perpetuate them in art. Breaking existing myths and bringing new myths will become the object of his writings. Migjen, by building his hero, actually builds the myth of hypocrisy of modern civilization. This is especially evident when reading the author's writings. The presence of demystifying and allegorical values becomes dominant in his writing. Focusing on the confusion of sentiments, the various confrontations of extremes, such as the village-town confrontation, the little man - the big man ..., confronting economic extremes, etc., the author actually demystifies.

However, when he creates myths, he tends to turn the old myth into a new myth. Because, Migjeni the mythic subject taken from antiquity, subjected it to the living matter. As a confessor, Kuteli was distinguished as no other author, with the seal of originality and creative individuality. Relying more on the tradition of our popular prose, the author did not follow any other pattern of narrative but merely brought this existing pattern to a new form.

At almost every level of storytelling, Kuteli's writings come close to trading the storytelling people, you want to structure me, the characters, the functionality, the detail, etc. Usually, the main weight is left to the storyteller, but without breaking the link with the reader and the hero, says researcher Jorgaqi. It is also characterized by digressions, having a part of the narratives, so that you can gather as a way to carry out the talk.¹ Various scholars saw Kuteli's extraordinary connections to folk creativity.

Nasho Jorgaqi says: “*without leaving aside the tradition of Albanian literature, a worshiper of Naim and Noli, but also a deep connoisseur of foreign literature, Kuteli consciously relied primarily on the models and artistic experience of the people and gave his physiognomy.*” (Jorgaqi, 2007, p. 52)

Referring mainly to the storytelling model of construction, Kuteli offers a strange reality, where different worlds coexist, where people are kidnapped by the fairies, they celebrate pagan holiday's makers, appear to people and scare the sick, people search for treasures. hidden in frightening caves, where non-worldly beings appear, the dead partake of the feast, the living visit the world of the dead, marry amongst them, and give birth to children, etc.

In addition, this reality comes from Kuteli's pen as a result of his attraction to Albanian mythology. In the world of myth, we have no adaptation to the familiar experience. Myth is an imitation of actions near or within the possible limits of desire. (Fraj, Anatomia e Kritikës, 1990, p. 188) Moreover, this mythical presence comes naturally, without strain and imposition. More like the writer's necessity. “To say that the writer needs myth is a sign of the need he feels for joining society, to find its place in it” (Wellek & Warren, 1994, p. 181) expresses R.Wellek and A.Warren.

Even in later authors, such as Kadare, Qosja, Pashku, Camaj, etc., we find the presence of myths as part of their writings. “*The aesthetic archaism, de myth, and*

¹ The author mainly follows the pattern of stories that follow the hero's life or event from beginning to the end.

multi-layered mythical symbolism are all exemplified in Camaj's work. The Camaj myth is an exploration of a millennial culture, it supports history, emerges as a unification of the past and the future, acquires the mentality of a 'pure Albanian'” (Isufaj, 2003, p. 36), claims scholar V. Isufaj. Present as a discourse, the Easter myth takes on both sacred and symbolic tones, with the mythology being revealed in national colors.

Whereas, Trebeshina is inclined to destroy the myth and create an anti-myth through the degradation of the myth, satirical, stinging, nihilistic tones.

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