
ALBANIAN LANGUAGE DRAMA IN ALBANIA AND KOSOVO 1960-1970

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Abstract: After the Second World War, almost all of the Balkan countries, as well as those of eastern Europe, became socialist countries with communist order, which, regarding to the development of cultural life and artistic creativity, have had very rigorous defined framework, known as Socialist Realism. Under these circumstances, artists had to position themselves in support of the new socialist culture and aesthetic education of the masses, otherwise, as in the all- totalitarian regime, they were declared enemies and they were persecuted.

Neither drama as the literary genre, could not escape the established principles for creative methods that imposed to the art the ideological features. However, there were also occasions when artists managed to write artistic creations that stayed away from political influence. The objective of this study is to analyze and compare drama published during the 60s and 70s in Albania and in Kosovo. Despite similar political systems, there were differences in the views and artistic creativity of Albanian and Kosovar authors. Albanian and Kosovar history of literacy had evolved from the same roots and is treated as one, but from 1945 in both countries literacy had developed in different paths. The development of drama in Albania at certain period had more unfavorable circumstances, as such it presents a paradox situation, because drama written in Albanian outside of Albania was more progressive than the one inside. In dramaturgy, in Albania, the ideology of Socialist Realism and glorification of system was unavoidable. On the contrary in Kosovar drama, distinction can be sensed in the avant-garde approach based on thematic, compositional and ideological aspect. Also differences were visible in characters and written style. Despite the different ways of dramaturgy development, the use of subjects from Albanian mythology, folklore, symbolism, tradition and historical figures, unifies the development of the Albanian drama in general. Gradually with the demand of authors, consciousness began to arise that the humanistic ideals, of different societies should also be integrated into the artistic reality. The drama by the end of 60s and beginning of 70s, starts to take connotations of intellectual creations, with democratic tradition, the spirit and the ethos of the people.

To outline the dissimilarities are studied dramas from several key authors: Kolë Jakova, Loni Papa, Fadil Paçrami, Anton Pashku, Ymer Shkreli, Rexhep Qosja etc.

Keywords: drama, socialist realism, Albania, Kosovo.

After the Second World War, almost all of the Balkan countries, as well as those of Eastern Europe, turned into socialist countries with communist order. As such, a set of defined frameworks were introduced regarding the development of cultural life and artistic creativity, this era is known as Socialist Realism. Under these circumstances, artists had to position themselves in support of the new socialist culture and aesthetic education of the masses, otherwise, as in the all- totalitarian regimes, they were declared enemies and persecuted. Drama, as a literary genre, was no exception to the effect of the established principles in the creative methods that imposed more ideological features to art.

However, in spite of the predominantly ideological limitations, in general, Albanian dramaturgy follows the steps of developments and rhythms of the time. Modern dramaturgy begins to appear with its variations of all levels. The conventional structure of the drama begins to change, the authors begin to disregard predetermined laws as the five acts, the theory of unity of Aristotle begins to be overlooked, so it is no longer given importance to the unity of time, action and place. The themes relate more to the human than to the generalized social ones, but above all the essential change is preventing saturation of the character itself. The character is now more concerned with its own being, with its emancipation, and with the life itself. Modern drama also begins to change scenes and scenography, they are now more minimalist even in the case of writing for another time period, the scene is not overloaded with landscapes and different elements that cover the entire proscenium. The costumes are based on characters' roles, they do not have the pomposity of classicism. Modern drama reduces the characters and uses just as much as they need to elaborate the idea and introduce it to the audience. In ancient drama, the tragedy of the protagonist is closely related to the fate or the tragic fate of the protagonist, while in modern drama, the human itself is guilty of his fate. The classic story plot is built up with many characters, but only one of them being the main one, whereas in modern drama all the characters are of equal importance. Ultimately, one of the biggest changes to be noticed is the significant reduction of death scenes. While in the ancient tragedy dramas death scenes are abundant, in modern dramas they are almost in-existent and these scenes are situated at a distance. Catharsis and its experience still

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remains an important element in antiquity, classicism, and after in modern drama, however, in the latter one opposing voices towards this effect started to be louder.

As the happenings followed one by one, to ensure quality and sustainability of artistic expansion, the state of Albania was investing massively for setting up professional art institutions. The first High School of Art, the choreography, the acting and the figurative art were set up. The unification of them brought the opening of the Higher Institute of Arts. In the same period the Opera and Ballet Theater and the Ensemble of Songs and Folk Dance were inaugurated, accompanied by the creation of an incredible number of amateur artistic groups, which brought a super-productions, so it was immensely difficult to split quality from quantity.

In 1959, as an attempt to encourage and evaluate talents, two rewards ("Artist of the People" and "Meritorious Artist") were created and given by government to the artists. The 1st Congress of Artists, was held in 1957, which sanctioned the formation of the League of Writers and Artists, involving, theoretically, the best creative forces in all artistic genres. Their work was funded by the state, then addressed to the working class and the masses, so those creators of art considered themselves as government assistants in mass education.

Despite similar political systems, there were differences in the views and artistic creativity of Albanian and Kosovar authors. Albanian and Kosovar history of literacy evolved from the same roots and are treated as one, but from 1945 in both countries literacy had developed in different paths. The development of drama in Albania at a certain period had more unfavorable circumstances, as such, it presents a paradoxical situation, because the drama written in Albanian outside of Albania was more progressive than the one inside the country.

The presence of Socialist Realism ideology combined with glorification of political system was inevitable in all features of published drama in Albania (except those with historical themes).

On the contrary in Kosovar drama, distinction can be noticed in the avant-garde approach based on thematic, compositional and ideological aspect. Also differences were visible in characters and written style. And the only reason for that was different development in Yugoslavia than in most other socialist countries.

At that time all countries with socialist orientation joined East Camp. The rules and principles were very strict. Every form of art, painting, literacy or music had to be realist in form and socialist in content. The only exception was Tito's Yugoslavia, which, after leaving the East Camp, also abandoned Socialist Realism. In 1952, Miroslav Krleža⁵⁷, (1893-1981), one of the most important Yugoslav intellectuals who, in his speech at the 3rd Congress of the Yugoslav Writers' League in Ljubljana, ended the dogmatic style of Socialist Realism in Yugoslavia. That moment was crucial for further development of all forms of art. Even if in the few dramas in Kosovo, one could sense the elements of realism, still the country was open to western influences.

By the end of 60s the modern and avant-garde drama was present in Kosovar theaters. Gradually with the demand of authors, consciousness began to arise that the humanistic ideals, of different societies should also be integrated into the artistic reality. By the end of 60s and beginning of 70s, the drama starts to take connotations of intellectual creations, with democratic tradition, the spirit and the ethos of the people.

Sabri Hamiti, a well-known kosovar literacy theorist sees modern drama as phenomena and as a tool to overcome tradition: "Modernism highlights the features of contemporary phenomena that overcome tradition and bring innovations. In general, in art and literature, modernity uses new artistic tools, seeks new artistic forms and knit new structures."⁵⁸

Exactly that was happening in Kosovar drama, during the decade from 1960 – 70, new artistic tools and forms were used to build the structure of drama. Authors start to recognize new surroundings, they started to search for new themes, based on intellectual and psychological phenomena from inner forces.

Azem Shkreli with drama "Fosilet"⁵⁹ created characters with the model of Albert Camus or Ionesco. He gave priority to human soul instead of outside factors, modern drama became concentrated to inner persona. The characters in drama started to evolve, they were trapped in their own world where nothing matters except their own being. The story plot is not so important anymore. The world is not "real" without human dilemma for existence. The theme of drama through a gradation addresses the action and psychic state of the individual and the group in the most difficult times when his physical and spiritual being is violated. This drama has achieved a high degree of artistic and aesthetic reflections.

⁵⁷ Miroslav Krleža, Republika, God. VIII, Knj. II, Zagreb, 1952, br. 10-11, pg. 205

⁵⁸ Sabri Hamiti, "Letërsia moderne shqipe", Tiranë, 2013, pg. 3

⁵⁹ Azem Shkreli, "Fosilet", Rilindja, Prishtinë, 1968

Another Kosovar author of modern dramatist, Anton Pashku, was the first play writer to add into his plays elements of absurd "Sinkopa"(1968)⁶⁰, "Syncope" as a synonym of weakness, blurred awareness, loneliness, monotony and various psychic states of man in which spiritual emptiness prevails and the inability to cope with the many challenges and trials, in stead of emancipation and progressive "man", it's state of "apathy", an individual and collective trauma.⁶¹ The ideology of communism still had some traces inside creations, just not so strict compared to other socialist countries.

Rexhep Qosja one of the most productive authors in Kosovo writes: "By utilizing the experience of modern European drama of existentialism, mythic and general symbolism, the pre-national and national extinctions, transforming into artistic realities of concrete circumstances in accordance with the dynamics of the present life, in which rational and irrational power emerged, melting out the observation in emotion, and emotional tensions, to the extent of the situations within which the ideas and ambitions materialized within the rhythms of life, although numerically modest, legitimized the prominent creators of drama that deepened their thought, through the projections that courageously brought about quality turns and visions in the form of symbolic and paradigmatic synthesis of existence "⁶²

In the decade from 1960 – 70s dramatists in Albania were struggling with principles of socialist realism. The first years of the decade were more liberal and dramatist were more than productive. Suddenly in 1969 – 73 new rules for artists applied, new principles were created making socialist realism principles even more excruciating. Is obviously some positive changes as ,the structure was taking form of modern drama, elements such as ellipse, presenting two scenes on one stage, going back and forward in the time, new shapes of writing took place, but still were few obstacles in the way of success. What remained intact were two basic elements of drama: the story plot and the characters. New "improved" reforms and new regime created the socialist realism myths by creating characters always from rural parts of the country to whom a "new" life was presented. Working class was the main concern of the system. The plots were more or less the same : Raising awareness for new social order, the young communists man always described as tall, handsome, clever and open minded, the women spreading emancipation in rural surroundings, becoming first women teachers, engineers, and scientists. The working uniforms were always part of costumes.

"Toka jonë" from Kolë Jakova , one of the typical socialist realism drama in Albania , "Cuca e Maleve" -Loni Papa, "Fisheku në pajë" "Familja e peshkatarit" etc.

The characteristic for this drama also was using of symbols. In "Toka jonë" it was the land, in "Cuca e Maleve" analphabetism, as the emancipation of women. The "Cuca e Maleve" drama has its own construction, the author does not remain faithful to the classic composition, but divides it by digression and retrospective. The drama's action has two parallel lines that happens in two different times and places.

"Fisheku në pajë", "Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini" old "book of rules", because new customs of living were created, "Familja e Peshkatarit" it's "communism is prosperity". Literacy was creating the social realism myths.

However, by the end of 60s, there were also occasions when artists managed to write artistic creations that stayed away from political influence as much as they could, or, they simply created plot stories with more urban surroundings and characters. Such examples include "Shtëpia në Bulevard "from Fadil Paçrami, and "Shtëpia në rrugicë" from Teodor Laço. These dramas were written containing many versatile elements that could be interpreted in many ways , and that was the real skill of a good drama writer. Also one of the best satiric comedies was written during that period "Karnevalet e Korçës" by Spiro Çomora. So, the drama in Albania just started to find its way and to finally take of, then on 1973 another principle regarding art, hit the artists, the small number that try to create art got even smaller. This period lasted until 1990, when finally artists could start to breathe freely.

John Gasner, in his book "The Directions of the Modern Theater and Drama", is quoted as saying: "When the Expressionists begin to change dramaturgy and theatrical staging (this period is known to have started with Strindberg and his dramas) has become possible that the nature of the drama and the theater is remodeled in, infinitely many forms. At every stage of this remodeling, are mentioned the theatrical concepts of realistic dramaturgy."⁶³ It is true that every artistic creation has realistic elements as we live in a certain habitat that is part of

⁶⁰ Pashku, Anton, Drama moderne,"Sinkopa",Pakti,2012

⁶¹ Islami, Nebi, Historia dhe poetika e dramës shqiptare:(1886 – 1996) , V 2, ARTC, Prishtinë, 2003, fq.8

⁶² Rexhep Qosja , Prej Tipologjisë deri te periodizmi , Rilindja , Prishtinë, 1979,f.290-295

⁶³ Raul Radice, "Povijest dramskog teatra", ,chapt. "Theater from 1950 till today". Nakladni zavod, MH, Zagreb., 1972. F. 449 – 551.

our everyday life but when the ideology of some regime is incorporated as text and subtext that is not art anymore that turns into dictatorship.

Despite the different ways of drama development, the use of subjects from Albanian mythology, folklore, symbolism, tradition and historical figures, unifies the development of the Albanian language drama in general. One of the authors that started using myths and history to reactivate them in modern drama was Rexhep Qosja. By bringing these two elements in literacy beside other things, it influenced in obliteration of socialist realism drama structure and retrieval of real artistic values that were denied from the code of thematic style. "Even though myth is altered to some extent, it nevertheless keeps the peculiarities that remain mysterious, magical, relaxed, and alive in the human conscience as a driving force to which positive or negative energy is constantly released."⁶⁴

There have been major historical and cultural changes in the world, different movements that have influenced the creation of people, culture and language. With the shift of these periods and social-political changes, literature and language have undergone certain transitions too. As in the whole world, Albania and Albanian language speaking territories experienced those changes to. Artistic works created during the period of socialist realism often give rise to various controversies, but what matters is that those works exist and should be treated as works of art based solely on their values.

CONCLUSION

National literature of any period is full of metaphors that enrich the language treasury and thus gives increase to the creation of new meanings and new expressions by raising the aesthetic literary aspect of the art. The fact that the development of drama is as a literary form and genre, which articulates the manner, different historical movements, cultural developments as well as social circumstances. Naturally it happened differently in all the cultural spaces of Albanian speaking language population. All the differences in these living areas have led to different levels of drama creation. And thanks to that it had influenced the overall enrichment of national dramaturgy.

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