

The Albanian Historical Novel's Hundred Years Journey

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Abstract

Historic novel, besides its achievements, problems and the many debates on its typological assesment, represents the most studied type by critics worldwide. Along with European novel, the Historic Albanian novel is written on novel awereness, but the later, due to political causes, conserved this romantic spirit longer. Therefore it's present nowadays not just for political issues, but because of existential ones. Besides other characteristics this type of novel reveals, it's on our interest to bring to evidence the features it gained by some writers of the second half of the 20th century like: SabriGodo, Jusuf Buxhovi, Bilal Xhaferri, Ismail Kadare, Dhimiter Shuteriqi, Skender Drini, Mira Meksi, Ben Blushi etc. It's obvious that in the modern hist.novel of the second half of the 20th century, critical awereness towards history is seen as realistic one. In the Balkans today's novel represents the strengthening of the national conscience, whilst the European one represents the national crisis, the resistance to cosmopolitan issues as well as the concern on various types of ideology. The hist. Alb. novel of the beginning of the 21st century changes from being narrative to authentic fiction; therefore it enriches the Albanian novel through direct reference on historic truth. Kadare's novel, which develops a new attitude towards history; its parody on historical function as an opposition to censorship, makes out the most innovative example in this context. The typological mixture is a presentation of the inner development of our literature indicating structural changes due to actual social and cultural Albanian structure after the 90's. V.Shkollovski states that novels can be best modified compared to other janres.

In the development of universal literary, the historical novel represent, the most canonized genre and critically studied, characterized in its way of development from the achievements as well as from the crises, the ups and downs, and also the many debates, with regard of its typological definition.

In analogy with the European novel, in its beginnings, the Albanian historical novel, was written with romantic consciousness, but to the last one, this romantic spirit was saved for a long time, for political reasons and it is present even today, not simply for political but also existential reasons.

Besides other features that Albanian historical novel has appeared, with a hundread years of history in the Albanian literature, with a lot of interest in the argument of this paper is the identification of features that this novel won from some later authors of the twenty-th century and early twentyone-st century such as: Sabri Godo, Jusuf Buxhovi, Bilal Xhaferri, Ismail Kadare, Dhimiter Shuteriqi, Skender Drini, Mira Meksi, Ben Blushi etc.

The genre of the novel, as a dynamic form, pragmatic and functionally opened, represents an explanatory instrument of a representative and reflective universe, social, individual, and also complex taken from the changes of its perspective. In the ability of its involvement and in the compositional structure of the "universe of telling" and as a necessary subject of discussion and specific viewpoints, the historical novel has followed its dialect of development, in different contexts, building values and transforming the forms, the construction and the message.

In this context, observing the panorama of the entire novel, in the end of the 20th and the beginning of 21st century, also for the historical genre, we see that its modernity is realized by the function of some existing elements and not by an overall change of forms. (Krasniqi 1985:18)

So, among the elements that testify the modernity of the historical novel in this period, are:

- The modernization of the novel, through the long extent of history in it, or the definition of the historical periods, as antiquity or Middle Ages.
- The presence of formal and thematic operators of modernity, such as: subjectivity, fragmentation, irony, self-reflection, which act as filters of speech, expressing form, modern particularity.
- Interaction, within the genre, of different models of speech, which communicate among them.
- Being closer to the present, the novel, as a genre, possesses the ability of fitting thematically and formally, regarding on reality and history, so whenever he commits the cognitive process, he rewrites modernity.

Based on this evidence, we must affirm that in Albanian historical novel, the changes have started during the second half of the 20th century, as a result of the emphasis in the critical consciousness to history, as a realistic

consciousness, or a use of history as a weapon, as a creative opportunity, of how to deal with the "taboo" problems (at that time) of the totalitarian state, in particular, to reveal, through it specific experiences.

The most innovator example, in this direction, constitutes in Kadare's work, which shows a new attitude towards the parody of history with an allegoric function as a counteractive procedure against censure.

Based on this goal, the writer Ismail Kadare in the novel "Keshjtjella", is non randomly directed to the historical topic treatment, which has given him the possibility of realizing the meanings with interest, through a parallel allegorical-symbolic alignment between Skanderbeg's historical period and Albania's modern history. (Qosja 1973:176)

By writing this novel Ismail Kadare hasn't just wanted to create a literary-historical fresco but also to give expression to the symbolic language of history through the treatment of historical details.

From his novel, the reader understands the Balkans as a transitional bridge between East and West, as a meeting area of the major forces of interests, considered very often as a "castle", which they have had to conquer before they continued the path of their destructive invasions. The interaction of stories and discourses, through a comprehensive confession, expresses the modernity in this novel, and lets the possibility of interpretation and actual resonance open to the readers of all times.

A new dimension to the Albanian historical prose marked also the novel "Krastakraus" by Bilal Xhaferri, which was written almost at the same time as the novel "Keshjtjella", but, unlike the last one, it saw the light of publication only in 1993. Although he inherited traits of romantic-historical model, by placing in the center the historical theme of the past, Xhaferri created a present edifice by excluding the idealizing style. The characterization and psychological motivation of characters, putting at the ordinary fighters at the center, as well as a number of other innovations, have made the novel "Krastakraus" a qualitative novel and a pattern of the historical synthesis.

The fictional reconstruction of history is the essential feature that brings together in time and space any work that is classified as a modern historical prose.

In the novel "Syte e Simonides", written by Dhimitër Shuteriqi, we can find the adaption of topics and formality, in the terms of reality and subjectivity: the subjective game with the historical truths and the subjective reading (sometimes) of the history serves to the relativism of the dogmatic concept, the reader has for the history as well as the interaction of the universal essence of his historical-cultural being, with that nowadays.

The subject of this deed is based on a historically documented truth, however the author rebuilt it with specific literally tools, the image, the illusion, the symbol creating emotions and deep experiences of the past, to the reader, which are connected with the historical existence of our present.

One of the most innovative features of the Shuteriqi novel is the way the prose writer create the reports fact/fiction, real/imaginary, the borders which are usually movable at the novel, for different readers.

With regard to the importance marked in a literal work, reports like that, Manxoni says:

"It is not possible to imagine a novel, which elements of fiction are significantly marked by the author, so that the reader can clearly distinguish the truth and the fiction, since this would break the compositional unity, indispensable in any literary network." (Manxoni 1997:71)

From the structural aspect, the roman "Syte e Simonides" represents a kind of discourse and distinctively textual since the moment it enters into communication with other works.

The way of functioning of this work, is that of a romanesque text which is based on a certain fragmenting itself, in terms of functional distraction of linear narrative and once discourse.

- The shift from the concept of an omnipresent narrator and an inside narrator, who are following the multiple perspectives, the language experiments, which in this work intend rhetoric instead of semantics and adding the number of the delineators for the person being delineated, as the domination of the subjective world through "symbolic language" all these are traits that speaks for modern poetry of this novel.
- The pluralistic concept of time, which has been realized with the extension of a past which is narrated at the present, where the future, already fulfilled for the reader, but not for the active participants of the events, intervenes with the presence, impacting to the factual flow of the events, builds a complex narration.

This is the feature that Deleuze believes it presents the essence of modern historic works.

Specifically, the saying :

"The thought thinks its history (the past) but with the purpose of liberation from what it thinks (the present) and to make possible "to think differently" (the future)," finds an original, artistic form of application in this roman. (Deleuze 1990:120)

The intertextuality (there's no text without an intertext! The first postulate of postmodernism). Although an earlier literary presence, intertextuality starts being accepted and interpreted theoretically only from poststructural researchers like Julia Kristeva, but without losing its relevance as in modern and postmodern texts. As active communication of at least two texts, literally or non-literally, intertextual or intertextoresia, in this novel take the look of the present of multiple texts, that often comes in the form of so-called "quotation".

The intertextual reports between narrations of many voices with chronicles or part of diaries written from the own characters, intertwined with the Middle Ages, as a historic age, which call other ages, the manuscript as conventional literary, church icons as real presented and suggested.

All these come from intertexts, intertwined texts, that converse with other textual layers, by continuously recontextualizing it meaning. In this way the text takes the appearance of a multiplied lens or a kalidescope, where exactly multiplied derives from the same center, therefore the figures, all together, talk and build a single security image that is accepted spontaneously from the reader. Although closer to the classical model of intertextuality, the novel offers polyphony as a builder of the truth.

These are the exact features and their constructive elements that realize the modernity of the novel, through an only kind narration, now innovative, of the prose with historical theme.

In the beginning of the 21st historic novel, which is represented with a high esthetic level can be classified the work of Mira Mexi "Frosina e Janines" that combined historic materials with philosophical problems and ethic of the universal character, as well as with the inscribed in depth characters.

Another author who has enriched the fund of Albanian historical novel of this period is also Uran Butka with his work "Miti I Haxhi Qamilit", a work that kept alive the national spirit of the Renaissance and where voice is given to the critical spirit of the history speculation. The researcher Adem Jakllari believes that in today's Albanian literature can also be talked about another typology which is the historical crossed novel. The complete sign of this type can be found in the novel "Te jetosh ne ishull" by Ben Blushi. (Jakllari 2009:140)

Taking the theme of an almost dark period of history of Albania, the story of this novel is stretched to nearly four centuries, and has brought in focus known characters and multiple event dates, which show a great erudition by the author, and a special manner in the recognition up in detail not only the era, but also the religious norms and practices that have the source from the Holy Books. The most dominant line in the novel, which has sparked numerous debates, is that of the long and confused Ismism of Albanians, after the Turkish invasion. Through a narrative and an interesting style the author passes the way the Albanian society shaped religious coexistence to survive assimilation and the storms of that time.

Passing from the narrative objective style to a genuine fiction makes the historical novel very interesting. The novel "Shtate faje dhe nje dashuri" from Rexhep Qosja, written after 1990 has a great value because it enriches the Albanian typological novel with direct references from the historical truth. Crucifixion of the events in this novel is followed by the crucifixion of texts and discussions. The typological interaction is an expression of the internal development of our literature, an indicator of structural transitions, a phenomenon that came after 1990 when the Albanian social and cultural structure suffered a big break. About the transforming ability that carries the genre of the novel, V.Shkollovski writes:

"The canon of the novel as a literary type is probably more capable than any other type of literature, to be modified."

So, in the early of the 21st century the Albanian historical novel is enriched with elements of modernity which are represented today, everywhere in the global literature from the many histories model, with well know elements such as: the dialog of the voices and the structures of the irony, transforming the narrator in a compiler of the dialectic controversy between documents and fiction, between official history and the reconstruction of the historical reality, that can only be produced through fiction. (Krysinski 2003:22)

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