

How to Cite:

Kashah, E., & Taçi-Saraçi, M. (2022). Fan Noli's poetry and biblical symbolism. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S3), 1783–1787. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS3.5804>

Fan Noli's poetry and biblical symbolism

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Abstract---Albanian literature, like many literatures of European nations, will start with the "scriptures" and it will develop in this framework until the present day, whose tendency towards this reference remains extraordinary. Therefore, the influence, the poetics of biblical discourse will also influence the currents of consolidation of the Albanian language, culture and especially Albanian literature. Without this paratext, Albanian Literature would have not been what it is. This only reinforces the argument that the Bible is a literary school within Albanian literature. The Albanian writing begins with a baptismal formula and the first authors of the Albanian writing are all priests. The old Albanian literature reflects the philobiblical character (philobiblical-text based on religious writings from the Bible), from the titles to the content, e.g. Meshari i Gjon Buzukut, Doktrina e krishterë e Budit, Çeta e profetëve, Pjetër Bogdani, Gjella e Shën Mërisë Virgjër, Jul Variboba. The essence of these texts is religious teaching and moral teaching and thematically their poems come from the Bible. Biblical codes and discourses are distinct in the Albanian romantic literature, which cannot be taken in isolation and without a continuous connection with the traditions mentioned above, as well as in modern literature that has developed more legitimate literary forms.

Keywords---poetry, codes, symbols, literature.

Introduction

Comparative studies of literature were intensified and became more and more a method of study after the 50s and onwards. This fact also coincides with the development of other study methods which had a basis and widespread support in linguistic studies. In the studies of Jose Cortis, we find the phenomenon

International Journal of Health Sciences ISSN 2550-6978 E-ISSN 2550-696X © 2022.

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Manuscript submitted: 18 Nov 2021, Manuscript revised: 09 Feb 2022, Accepted for publication: 27 March 2022

treated in chains of passages and retrieval of textual elements from text to text at different times. In fact, every book is nourished not only by matter, but it also motivates other books.* This problem was addressed by most of the structuralist school. The aesthete Stefan Çapaliku, on the book "Modern Aesthetics", considers that the writer can intervene in ready-made structures, borrowed from folk literature, transforming at least one element of the structure and creating a new structure. While the realistic method of Balzac or Stendhal relied heavily on sociological, biological, and political studies.

Elaboration

The Gospel has poured rich material into Albanian literature from its beginnings throughout its five-century-old path. The presence of biblical discourse in this literature has sometimes been direct and predominant, and sometimes in the form of universal motifs, figures and ideas. There have been many scholars who have studied this issue and who have been exploited in this modest study work. The first author that you can not overcome without referring to, is without doubt the author Sabri Hamiti. In his study of Albanian literature in the 7 volumes defined for it, he divides it into literary schools, among which he describes one as the philobiblic school of Albanian literature. But he does not see the biblical element isolated only in a literary period, in the old Albanian literature (philobiblic school), but present as a code or discourse. Having in mind the great literary laws, with the dominant meanings and forms, which are preserved or changeable, always within a cultural context that produces a literary text, we have managed to find and argue four literary codes and discourses in Albanian literature:

- The code of heroic discourse
- The code of folk discourse
- The code of biblical discourse
- The code of heroic discourse. (S. Hamiti, "Thematology", page 48)

The biblical discourse in Albanian literature is presented as an expressive feature (Bogdani, Çajupi, Noli, Pashku) and on the other hand it is impossible to examine the justice of Budi, Bogdani, Fishta, Variboba, Kuteli, Noli, Pashku. While in Tefik Çausi's "Dictionary of Aesthetics" the symbol is explained as follows: The symbol should not be confused with the sign, because it is not conventional and intellectual, but an appeal for a sensitive and tangible imagination, it differs from allegory, because it is not an idea under a picture, but evokes another being, resembling his own self, is not even a figure because unlike the relationship between figurative meaning, the tangible appearance of the symbol is secondary in relation to its idea. The Bible, being a work that has literary elements of folk culture, occasionally as a Jewish narrative.

Below we are taking the syncretization and resemanticization of the figures, symbols and biblical discourse realized by Fan Noli in the poems of the volume "Album". Fan Noli's poems are inspired by sympathy, with sorrows and political expectations. Important aesthetic instruments in his poetry are symbolism and musicality. The poem "Zgjidh e merr" (1924), is a poem where the unknown poet

* Cortis, Jose, *Preferences*, 1961, pg. 82-83

through the verses, gives the characteristics of the inhabitants of the provinces of Albania. It is said that it belongs to Fan Noli, but there is no document that proves it.

I quote: *“A të duhen luftëtarë
Dhe arratinë armiku të marrë
A do botës t'i vësh zjarrë
Merr nja dhjetë kosovarë”*

In addition to this poem, we have other very significant poems such as:

“Anës Lumenjve”, “Moisiu në mal”, “Marshi i Barabajt”, “Jepni për nënën”, “Himni i Flamurit”, “Krishti me kamxhik”, “Shën Pjetri në mangall”, “Thompsoni dhe kuçedra”, “Sofokliu”, “Rend or Marathonomak”, “Plak topall dhe Ashik”, etc.

It is not without purpose that we mentioned these titles, precisely to prove that Noli's poetic creative work is one of the most powerful, deepest and most shocking things in Albanian literature. His verses are described by a profound humanist philosophy and are unmasking of an old, moldy world where intrigue, behind the scenes, crime and exploitation reign, but at the same time, advanced democratic ideals explode, the optimism that everything that has passed will to be reversed. Noli's poetic creative work was summarized for the first time by our prominent writer and critic Mitrush Kuteli, in 1948 this activity was published by the "Vatra" federation in America, in the "Album" collection. Later Noli published some other poems such as "The Sultan and the Cabinet" etc. The poem "Anthem of the flag" was written with epic color and strong emotion, which is dedicated to the national flag which symbolizes the unwavering resistance of our people during 2000 years to preserve its nationality, its continuity.

- Why did Christ speak with poetic parables?
The scholar Moikom Zeqo rightly raises a series of questions. In biblical Albanian Fan Noli has kept in mind that the texts are also in verses (white and rhythmic).
- Why does the Bible respect this structure?
For example, centuries ago the Jews had divided the entire Hebrew Bible (commonly known as the Old Testament) into verses, but did not divide it into chapters. Even in this case a uniform system was missing, as with the chapters.

In his scientific study “Jeta e Jezuit”, Noli”, Noli analyzes the synoptic problem of the four gospels: Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. Noli says that 661 verses of the Gospel of Mark in Matthew have been reduced to 600, while in Luke about 350 verses that English is the universal language variant, today in the world the publication of the book "The Poet of Nazareth" in English has been intended for a wide range spread and intercommunication in the world. The first idea that comes to the mind is a panorama of symbols, always sticking to the Code / Provider / Context / Message and Recipient scheme. With a Christian, orthodox background, Noli could not escape the biblical influences. This can be seen in the pronounced autobiographical elements. Two varieties that stand out are within the same poem but also through different poems, for example:

- Christ = liberator, savior, brave of the braves, heals, enlightens, not money etc.
- Moses = Valiant with wings, talks to god, begs for mercy, etc.
- Cross = murder, hanging, mocked, ridiculed, etc.
- Proud + Wretch, you are beaten, you get up, you wake up.
- Crucifixion = On Christ, we shall kill, punishment, we shall hang
- St. Peter = Handcuffed, with Blackened face etc. So both positive and negative interrelations are created. Christ creates positive interrelation with Moses. With the whip the confrontation is created. The whip has the recommendation of a friend and stands opposite. And with St. Peter we see it evolving.

So in terms of the biblical myth, in the play "Israelite and Philistine" that he wrote in 1902, in Athens while working in a theater, in the note entitled "Afterword", the writer called it a skeleton of the play which needed to be further expanded.[†] The measure of detail and distinctiveness is also given here, as semiotics helps you to distinguish the proportions of contrapositions between textual elements.[‡] The special thing we notice is precisely the concealment of the symbol and the allegory, or the use of the latter as responsible for the meaning of the text.[§] Thus we note that Moses, Christ, the Messiah in these poems mean: The special thing we notice is precisely the concealment of the symbol and the allegory, or the use of the latter as responsible for the meaning of the text, therefore the symbolic character of the text is seen as the handicap of the author. Thus we note that Moses, Christ, the Messiah in these poems mean:

- The figure of the leader
- The figure of the missionary
- The figure of the self-sacrificing person
- The figure of the liberator
- The figure of the person being rejected by the broad mass of the people
- The figure of the humane hero

Thus, for example, even in Naim Frashëri who is a writer of the Islamic faith and who has oriental culture present at a considerable level in his creative work, elements of his literary discourse are again identified that are related to the biblical writing model, especially in poems dedicated to the figure of God (Deity, creator). Likewise, Gjergj Fishta in his spiritual poems poeticizes Christian figures and situations, creates the drama, the tragedy with a theme from the Bible but with a national inscription. Kuteli's 1947 novel "*E madhe ëshhtë gjëma e mëkatit*" is based on biblical heritage. The basic theme is life before God. Kuteli in his lecture on the great topic of the test of faith and belief, has relied entirely on the biblical discourse of the Albanian version of Kristoforidhi. On the other hand, the textual formulas of the time are elliptical biblical choices. On the next level he has a pure

[†] Fan Noli, The play 'Israilitë dhe Filistinë', 1907, pg.343

[‡] Maria Pia Pozzato, 'Semiotika e tekstit', Tirana 2001, pg.7

[§] There where the biblical allegory dominates, poetry assumes an intellectual and symbolic character and it prevents the poet to express himself in a direct way.

quotation of the biblical text, namely of the loving exaltation before beauty which is the anthological text of the Song of Songs.

Anton Pashku also with his novel "Oh" revokes the biblical discourse along with the canonical discourse. Of course it is not only these writers to whom biblical discourse in general has conditioned or influenced their work, the list of names goes long and this topic would be valuable for an exhaustive and interesting study. The latter are mostly encountered in Fan Noli's creative work as he also draws a parallel between the real situation he expresses with the biblical event. The first figure he symbolizes is Jesus Christ. Fan Noli tries to make an interpretation of his being with him. In his Autobiography, Noli states that the inspirational hero of his childhood was Jesus Christ, and that he will be identified with him later. The relations of the analogy between his deeds and the figure of Jesus on which he builds the symbol are several: he was born on Holy Night (on 06.01.1882), in his heart there was room only for Albania, he escaped from dangers like David of the Bible in the lion's den, and finally his birthplace Ibrik Tepe disappeared from the face of the earth after the great missionary Noli was born. Christ is regarded as the only prophet in the history of mankind, who proclaimed unity and equality in the world, characterizing him as the tribune of childhood and free thought. Noli defines himself as a couple of heroism / sacrifice or Skanderbeg / Christ.

Noli's life and activity is connected to his creative works more than in any other case. Rare are his texts that do not receive encouragement from the real or factual events of his life or country and for this reason we can not detach this context from the interpretation of his poems. Noli developed into a well-known stylist and orator of the Albanian language. There is no big difference between spoken texts (speeches) and written texts, whether scientific, political, or literary.

Based on the activity and an overview of Noli's works, we can conclude some ascertain some components of his texts:

- Extensive cultural training
- Folk spirit
- Autobiographical elements, especially political circumstances

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