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Ismail Kadare's views on Albanian epic culture and folklore in the literary work "Autobiography of the people in verse"

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Abstract. It is about one of the literary works discussed numerous times and in many literary dimensions, both national and international, that looks into the efforts, phenomena, history, and naturalness of the Albanian popular culture in front of the great European cultures, particularly those of Balkan countries. The great writer Kadare, who had entered through the great gates in the most important national and historical events and had penetrated very deeply into the social life and the psychology of his people, indeed, would not happen to be by chance and unexpectedly in the rich field of Albanian folk creativity. In the process of research, popular creativity remains a life-force and inspiration passed down from one generation to another. As he puts it "When you browse folk poetry, you experience a sense of eternity, reality, space. You want to live, to love, to have children, to be a mother, to be a father, to be a son-in-law, to go to war, to return from her, even to die as in a song". Culture, poetry and popular prose in Albanian literature are emphasized in these writings, in particular, in those that have a national character, and thereby even communicate freely and strongly with artistic literature like nowhere else.

Keywords. Ismail Kadare, Folk poetry, folk epics, folk culture, analysis

I. Introduction

This study article intertwines the history and destiny of the Albanian people presented artistically and in several dimensional and literary planes, having as a starting point oral literature as a faithful teacher of life, without which artistic literature would be poor and not always inspiring, especially for the peoples of the Balkans that fate has inadvertently made one with the war and the desire for eternal peace, although not always this fate was also part of the Albanian people that misfortune and the struggle for freedom has unjustly lost a large part of this productivity if we can call it oral creativity, focusing on legends and myths that we may encounter similar but never similar to the surrounding peoples, such as the Greeks, Serbs or Bulgarians. Albanians, being strongly connected with the culture, customs and its centuries-old tradition, with great jealousy have preserved and continue to preserve even today this treasure without authors, but strongly preserved and untouched in essence from generation to generation, as a message for those who have fled and for those who will come after us in this world.

Therefore, no one like Ismail Kadare, although with a scientific and argumentative approach, has dealt with this work as noble as it is dignified. He treats this overview of this field

even today with the same mastery as in dozens of study and artistic books published all over the world, studied and published in many languages. Kadare elaborates according to his point of view the philosophy of art, emotion, message and spiritual construction through the imaginary figure that they find ready from the popular offspring or even reconstruct it and its message for artistic needs. This method of study was initially seen as a cultural part, but Kadare did not seem to be satisfied with the latter, so he followed the other historical and temporal line by analyzing in detail the characteristics of popular literature in particular legends and myths in front of oral literature of neighboring countries. as we have seen and acted during the drafting of this article.

1.1 Literature review

According to Dados (2016:123) Aesthetics or literary criticism ?, where the presence of criticism, aesthetics and scientific philosophy of Kadare's essay stands out. Kadare in the Autobiography of the People in verses and other critical notes (1971: 220). In Kastrati's studies, criticism and analysis have been studied in a special way, as well as the interpretation of Çabej's works, popular and artistic literature in the cultural and historical plane (2013: 39). Kadare (2016: 157). If we make a typology of this essay we can say that, although devoted to the nature of art, position, language, poetic word, music, folklore, architecture, the common bed is the philosophical conception of the essence of beauty (2016: 29) For the Latin element in the Albanian language: Tradition and literature (Authors and works (1977: 63). In the world of the Arbëresh of Italy (1987: 14). Some considerations on the origin and development of Albanian literature (1940: 10) Kadare, Travel notes in long line (1971: 117)

Throughout the literature, Kadare's name occupies a place of honor, both for the problems he posed in his numerous discussions, and for the views and attitudes he always pursued, devoting himself in many fields of study, as well as in the field of gold. a voice that resonates even today throughout the world of letters.

Epic culture emphasized in all oral creativity, gives the latter the right to present more loudly, and in chronic form the origin of the development of epic creativity as one of the forms of communication and dialogue between generations, simply as a form and part of culture which takes from the past, and gives to the present evidence of the values of a world as near as far away. The peculiarity of Kadare's studies on oral literature is evidence that he was trying to support the national and Balkan character of Albanian oral literature and especially epic poetry. Even this feature of studies of this literary format even Çabej (Eqrem Çabej), another accomplished scholar of studies in this field comes to the conclusion that: "folk poetry everywhere emerges as an organic part of life (spiritual) and, being not related to the tradition of writing, it more easily traverses the path of change by adapting to the time of new events in the life of these peoples. (Çabej on oral literature, in "Jeta e re" 4/1990: 711)

2. Method

During compilation of this paper, several methods have been used, initially the method of studying the text, the form and construction of the structure, the content, the analysis and the message given by the popular culture not only in the written field. The cultural methodology implies its historical development in front of other Balkan cultures, such as Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian, arguments that are often emphasized in the work, that the Albanian popular culture, although developed within this triangle, has nevertheless preserved the form of its original, this was also Kadare's intention to present this study as such without exaggerating the history or epic culture of folklore.

As such, they have traces of time, which in the genre of essays have been more sensitive than in genuine literary creativity.

2.1. The achievements of this study are that: Kadare always sees popular literature in front of artistic literature as a crown of connections that, even artistic literature would not have the value it has now, without its basis from oral literature, which are culturally dependent on one another.

Ismail Kadare, known and affirmed even outside the Albanian domain everywhere in the world of letters, in the eighties would leave the public speechless, through a contemplation and a completely different testimony as an author, and with a wide range of curious observations, dealing with some of Albanian popular culture's problems. The prodigious writer, who had entered through the big gates in the most important national historical events and had penetrated very deeply into the social life and psychology of his people, now through his sharp mind, and with a mastery of motives, of types of the psychological side of popular creativity, and thanks to his very insightful judgments, would deal with a range of complex issues of oral creativity. "The psychoanalytic approach may also aim at interpreting the literary character / character as a being living within the writer's fantasy, with a complex of its own. But also, in the way the character is decomposed by the critic, a creature, unconsciously, expresses the inner, instinctive connection between the performer and the figure / character himself. (2016 :13)ff

Indeed, Kadare cannot be found accidentally and unexpectedly in the field of rich Albanian folk creativity; good connoisseurs of his work could even anticipate his studies and judgments on various aspects of popular creativity, because in some of his most accomplished and best artistic works he deals with creative elaboration in a very specific form, and in a very special way, of even important pan-Albanian motifs and figures of oral creativity (We primarily refer to such works as "Who brought Doruntine back?", "Broken April", "The File on H", as well as others). In the process of research, folk creativity is not part of the kind of experimental poetry that aims at surprising the reader or listener, or gobble the existing relations and forms through descriptions, but instead, here the spectacular inner angle is expressed, duly reflected through the sincerity and love of the proud pain of a temporal reality, and as a single testimony to the circumstances in which it was created."The links between literature and history, which in fact, detached from each other, correspond to two separate methodologies, the critical-literary one and the historical methodology, express a very specific relationship, which would be similar to what is suggested by "text" and "subtext, according" Dado (2011:38). Therefore, the interest for culture and literature, and for its past remains a priority of all theoretical literary studies, of any genre, one as a biographical help to preserve intact the origin of its development, both as a text and as a subtext. "The autobiography of the people in verse, for example, seeks to reveal the roots and structure of legends and folk poetry, which have so drawn Kadare into his prose, but is by no means sufficient as a study of Albanian oral literature "according to Elsie (1995 : 33)

2.1. Folk creativity is not part of the kind of experimental poetry that has the first task to surprise the reader

This poetic phenomenon, passed down from one generation to another, has indeed constantly enthused many scholars, both Albanian and foreign, driven also by special respect, and boundless love they received from folk's genius, from its spirit, or perhaps to bring it out to light by rescuing it from the dust of oblivion, while others would have done all this work to use the spirit of this creativity and to put it at the base or to have it serve as a model to cultivate written artistic poetry." What connects art and science is the cognitive function, but this aspect

has not concluded the specific character of the closeness and the essential differences between them. The most interesting problem is the issue of differences at a time when in postmodern culture the boundaries of the creative type are open and rigid rules are no longer accepted ."(1980:14)

"When you browse folk poetry, you experience a sense of eternity, reality, space. You want to live, to love, to have children, to be a mother, to be a father, to be a son-in-law, to go to war, to return from it, or even to die as if in a song". – would stipulate Kadare in his work "The Autobiography of the People in Verse"(p. 7). There is no doubt that such values of oral creativity, and especially of poetry, will at best stand out exactly because of the creator, which is the author himself. And here our author points out to the great educational and formative role that creativity exercises among generations, and not only to its artistic function... Then Kadare would continue by saying: "For many centuries folk poetry has been for the Albanian man a chronicle of his life, history, knowledge, morality, wisdom, archive, national memory, a message conveyed from generation to generation... This poem is not afraid of anything and does not withdraw in front of anything", (p. 7) " Our literature is the best expression of the soul, aesthetic expression and ethnic Albanian expression "(p.157)

It can be noticed that in his wholly affirmative attitudes, and in the embodiment of folk poetry with life of the Albanian in all its aspects, Kadare seems to express his conviction, but at the same time prepares the reader to be swayed as well, that a poem so closely connected with life, with ideals, with the past and the present of a people, and, above all, with such a deep inspiration, - can be nothing else but an original poetry, created and not alienated from others...

And not only that. Thanks to these findings, which have been conveyed more through the language of a writer rather than a scientist, Kadare appears to create the preconditions for the lands where such creations were born and the people who created them through their genius, to declare them the hearths and one of the most ancient creators of civilization and life and of artistic creativity: "It is well known that the land on which we live is one of the first squares of this world, on which the human foot has stepped through the rhythm of a folk dance"... with one foot in ancient Albania, oral and legendary, still under Homeric trembling, and with the other foot in the most prominent and refined modernity, Kadare is at the crossroads of both worlds, and from this extraordinary circumstance his work creates chords. powerful and hit, according to Kuçku (2000: 307)

Of the four major ingles of European oral culture: the Balkan, Iberian, Apennine, and Scandinavian peninsulas, it is difficult for any of them, in terms of their greatness of folklore, to stand up to the comparison to the Balkans - he goes on to say - and within the Balkans it is difficult to find another ground that could claim an advantage over the Greek folk land. Many world scientific authorities have long acknowledged this and we should be aware that we are part of one of the oldest epic areas of humanity, thus being authors and co-authors of some of the most precious artistic treasures that have been created in this planet" (p.15)

3. Results and discussions

Having good knowledge of the approaches of some pseudoscientists regarding the origin of folk poetry, and in particular of folk ethics in the Greek-Slavic-Albanian triangle, Kadare goes on to write: "Our people, being one of the oldest, if not the oldest of the peninsula, has its indisputable share in the common inter-Balkan treasury, hence in the world treasury. But more than once they have wanted to take away its authorship, just like the cultures of small nation's people in general."(In the journal "Revue Contemporaine" – as quoted by Kadare (in verse p.17)

Even surprisingly enough, an author named Ibrovac M. (Miodrag Ibrovac), made a remark to the then French scholar Prosper Mérimée, who, when discerned the popular poetry of the Balkans enter the European literary salons of the last century, and eventually being represented merely by the Greek and Serbian poetry, rightly posed the question: "How is it possible that a people between the Greeks and Serbs has remained rigidly foreign to the poetic movement of its neighbouring peoples?". It was precisely the alleged Ibrovac, who, a century later, and according to incorrigible logic... – as Kadare would put it forth – without forgetting the bitter intervention of Mérimée about them, wrote: "Mérimée was disappointed from his hopes. We know today that that was not something to pay attention to, and that the popular muse of Albanians is a little and less rich sister, compared to that of her neighbours".

They knew well that except in Albania, nowhere else in the Balkan countries (not even in Greece!) can be found singerse and rhapsodes of Homer's poems, who are able to sing epic songs with over 1000 verses!?! This tells us in a way that " the Albanian -Illyrian" area was a folkloric field that had nurtured the great Greek literature and art "atubiografia e popullit ne vargje; (1980:128)

3.1 And further on, various pseudoscientists (primarily from the former Yugoslavia), would fight and try by all means to prove that purportedly, the Albanian muse was not original, but only a faint copy of real muses, that must necessarily be those of their neighbouring peoples. Vis-à-vis such efforts, Ismail Kadare would then write: "It is no coincidence that his book 'Serbia and the Great Powers', which is by and far an exclamation for the eradication of Albania and Albanians from the face of the earth, and that without them "The Balkan Peninsula would become more beautiful", its author - Vladan Đorđević, starts his work with the legend of the Shkoder castle, which he claims to be the heritage of his people." Reiterating the authorship and co-authorship of our people in the creation of the Balkan treasury, Kadare would extract from the "depths of time" - as he puts it - the legend of the burying within the walls of the castle (Shkoder Castle, i.e. "Rozafa"), which together with the legend of the besa (given word) ("Constantin and Doruntine"), both have helped world literature to produce poems, dramas and novels in many languages, based on this particular subject" (p.11)

As has been emphasized once again above, with a view to prove an undeniable truth about the authorship or even the co-authorship with neighbouring peoples - this in the first place being without a doubt, related to the Greek people with whom the Albanian people have been in neighbourhood for at least the last two millennia, and is mentioned by Kadare, who does not base it on the statements of various scholars, who have dealt with such issues, but may be nevertheless subjective or hold unsupported positions, but bases it on the materials, motives and our own popular creations. Cultural studies, among others, give importance to the study of literature, focusing on research that coincides with the horizon of comparison, according to Lopopolo (2019:138)

4. Legend and myth according to Kadare

Precisely in this continuance (let us recall on this occasion the study of many issues of Albanian itself, starting from the inside, i.e. from the linguistic material of Albanian, whether it is documented in writings or collected from the dialectal treasury – something that Eqrem Çabej carried out with great success), so in this sequel, Kadare would start from the ballads. Indeed, there can be no stronger motive to push the dead, Constantine, to rise from the grave, especially if this motive is driven by such a strong and frightening curse of the mother, than is the recollection of the besa. And, it is the curse, but it is also besa, that, according to Kadare, cannot

be borrowed, because they are so closely associated with all the life and customs inherited for centuries among Albanians, that they serve as a testament to the originality of such creations. As Kadare puts it "The tomb of Constantine is constantly wet with water and mud, because he does not keep his promise. When the mother, left as a cuckoo, goes to the cemetery on the day of the dead and curses her son with the words:

"Constantine, may woe come upon you,
Where did you leave the besa you gave me?
Your besa is under the earth..."

Indeed, this is the major tragedy for an Albanian. It is such a tragedy, in front of which the boundaries of death are pushed back. Neither earth nor the grave can shield you from such a curse."

Relying on "The legend of besa (given word)", which is a powerful and indisputable proof of the authorship of such popular creations, Kadare would discover that the Slavic version of this legend can only be a faint copy and quite a weak one, associated even with very poor language and figures, compared to the epic Albanian creation. Even the motive of the raising of the dead from the grave, in the Slavic version, is extremely implausible and does not even have the breadth that characterizes the epic folk creations. "Large-scale research and explanations belong to the autobiography, that" imperial space "which is not only found in verses, but also in the thousands of unwritten pentagrams of folk songs" according to Tole (2011: 51)

"If we consider the Slavic version," Kadare points out¹ "the rising of the brother from the grave is not caused by the mother's curse for breaking besa, but by an intervention of God." The Slavic version, is permeated by routine Christian motives (God, angels), which are missing in the Albanian version, where the major force is only besa". Indeed, even in the Greek version of this legend we do not find that breadth of pain and desolation that death causes, as stipulated in the Albanian ballad.

In order to substantiate the Albanian origin of the legendary folk poetry, Kadare emphasizes a few instants that may not to be ignored. According to him, they are:

First, Marin Barleti (five centuries ago), testified that he had read this legend;

Second, is the geographical spread of the legend; this legend extends and includes "two castles and three bridges" - in Albania (Rozafat castle in Shkodra and Tura castle in Divjaka), in Kosova (the Hidden Bridge), in Greece (in the Albanian populated areas of Arta) and in Chameria;

Third, the motive of besa, that is encountered in this ballad (breach of besa by the older brothers and the keeping of it by the youngest brother, etc.);

Fourth, it is again related to the motive of besa, which is also related to the motive of sacrifice. Here Kadare also relies on the very faint meaning of the Slavic verse: "Kralj Vukashin vjeru pogazio", because the word "vjera" is also related to faith or religion, and not so much with besa, which means a promise.

Finally, Kadare reveals that "the (Albanian) ballad is all built as a solid, vibrant and dreadful whole, which is so amazingly expressed in the verses:

Just like I tremble at the wall
Should this bridge also quiver...
which are found only in the Greek and Albanian version.

Let us conclude this brief overview of Kadare's views on the source of Albanian epic folklore in connection and comparison with sister variants of other Balkan peoples, primarily as opposed to the views of some scholars of former Yugoslavia, with these two-three very interesting remarks concerning folk poetry and song in general among Albanians:

"It is difficult to find another place where folk poetry is so embedded into everyday life and where the doors of its millennial treasures are open to contemporary life, and vice versa contemporary life has a direct communication with such ancient treasures. Being a living organism, it naturally enters into all the mechanisms of life, it turns, in a way, into an organizing institution not only of the popular psyche, but also of reality. Thus, in our country it was the most natural thing to add a new poem or song to the event that was invented a few hours ago, in addition to poems and songs about the centuries-old events, and thus the eternal, the century-old paradigm would quite easily come to an understanding to live next door with the modern-day muse.

This open communication with all natural mechanisms remains the key point of studies in all places. "It is difficult to find another place where folk poetry is so embedded into everyday life and where the gates of its millennial treasures are open to contemporary life and vice versa, contemporary life has an unswerving communication with ancient treasures." In its complexity, Kadare's essay has wide dimensions, as a look not only at the problems (historical and current) of the Albanian society, but also equally penetrating appears in another plan: from the external approach the essayist approaches himself, the mystery of internal, which no creator and researcher manages to know and understand." (2016:16)

Conclusions

No one like Kadare would deeply highlight the problem and highlight the cultural tradition of popular writing and its culture in the traditional sense of mythical to fairy tale writing, that perhaps unintentionally or quite accidentally; this way of writing is also done part of the writing culture in a considerable number of studies of this creativity.

Folk creativity and epic culture were the inspiration for the study in the "Autobiography of the people in verse", where among other things but an artistic inspiration, from this wide field of literature that not infrequently time and successive wars may have changed its form, but never the content, because the epic culture of popular writing continues to live still intact. The very fact that this form of creativity will have inspired one of the greatest writers that Albanian literature has today, let it be understood that Kadare is nothing but a prose writer or novelist dedicated to highlighting the entire Albanian culture through narrative descriptions. of its historical events, but also a great scholar of cultural phenomena, poetic of oral literature, and its epic inherited as a value as historical as well as an inseparable and inspiring part for artistic writings everywhere "It is difficult to there is another place where folk poetry is so introduced into everyday life and where the doors of its millennial treasures are open to contemporary life, and conversely, contemporary life has a direct communication with the ancient treasures. Being a living organism, it naturally enters into all the mechanisms of life, turns in a way into an organizing institution not only of the popular psyche, but also of reality. Thus, in our country it was the most natural thing that in addition to poems and songs about secular events, to add one afternoon a new poem or song about the event that happened a few hours ago, and so the eternal, secular, very well agreed to neighbour with the contemporary "(Ismail Kadare, *Autobiography of the people in verse*, 1980 :32:33.)

Relying on early editions of the tales of the Balkan peoples (Hahn, Greek-Albanian tales), he emphasizes an opinion of one of the authors who dealt with this issue, according to

whom, in these tales of different peoples (Serbs, Albanians, Greeks) he had investigated some ruptures and cuts, which are not typical for other creations, and he explains this by numerous influences that these creations may have suffered later, therefore now they appear to us with such differences. It is a well-known fact that fairy tales are notable for changes that occur not only in the naming of characters, but also often change the purpose and a beloved character at a time, can become hated at another stage of development of a people.

Anyone who has read, even a part of studies or even works of art for Albanian literature and culture or for ethno-cultural problems, will have noticed two qualities that distinguish Ismail Kadare² very much and that are: First, a astonishing erudition with a deep breadth of discussion of problems, always looking at them in a broad plan and comparing them with the attitudes and ideas of other scholars, to reach the most convincing conclusions and, secondly, the attitude His unwavering commitment that the Albanian language and literature, both popular and artistic, have been very closely linked to the historical destinies of the Albanian people. Certainly in closing, although this is one of the most controversial issues even today in literature and literary criticism, nevertheless popular literature and its spirit continues to be everywhere in all literary forms, but now only a motive or inspiration for new creations artistic.

In Albanian everyday life, it was not at all rare to meet on the street, in a cafe or on a rainy plateau, a man "with songs", that is, a man for whom a song had been composed for. This did not necessarily mean that people would easily write a song for you. The song, as the elders would say, often begged shrewdness. Thus, there were people with songs since they were born, but there were others too, who despite having excelled in something, for their own reasons people would spare them a song not only during their lifetime, but also following their death, when the worth of a song was a little lower. But there were also events, even wars, without songs, just as there were such events accompanied by their songs". (1980:32)

It should be emphasized without error, of course, that what was said about the tradition of preserving the great events of the history of the people in Albanian oral creativity, testify to facts and customs inherited fanatically and preserved over the centuries, which clearly speak of the characteristics that Albanians had and continue to have them even today in their spiritual and material world. Precisely understanding this right, or perhaps it should be said so according to the scholar Morgan that: in the historical environment of the Albanians, continuity became possible only through music, language, epic and preservation of tradition (1990: 83).

The narrative follows the memory of finding time, which seems not lost even today, and thanks to it the work represents perfection as much as the oral creativity itself, therefore cultural studies give importance to literature through which the human soul is highlighted.

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