

The Modernity in “Two Plays” of the author Ragip Sylaj



Literature

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Abstract

The play “Banishment from Heaven”, originally “Dëbim nga Parajsa”. The author Ragip Sylaj comes to the reader with a new way of presentation, different in both poetic genre and that of the play he is trying to experiment with. The author is not unknown by the Albanian reader, he is represented in anthology in Albanian and foreign languages. Despite the popularity of a writer has its own magic of surprise, since the moment he appears, he brings the reader close to himself with the pleasant surprises he presents. Poetry is the most developed genre of the author, without putting behind prose, essay, literary critic and plays. Moving from a genre to another, of course has its own difficulty, bringing an “adaption” of the writer. Except adaption, there is self-finding. Self-finding is the orientation towards the kind of play, which most adapts with the esthetic propensity and the taste of the author. Sylaj, in his experiment on the play has a clear course towards modern play, but in this case the referring point is the reader. The modernity of Ragip Sylaj in the play, doesn’t stay only in the creative way of presenting the plays as anti-play, the hero as antihero, but also in the text organizing. His “Two plays” can be read as a literary material, but also as purely dramatic texts, but in the last mentioned, the comfort turns into a headache for every director who wants to put these plays on scene. The “headache” comes because of the fact that the director needs to have a literary material so as to convert it in a theatre show needing directing and acting skills. The modernity in Ragip Sylaj’s plays is noticed in the absurd “plateau” in which heroes-anti-heroes and drama-anti-drama proceeds. Although this is the basis, the author has managed to keep the basis out of religion. He has managed to make the biblical plot serve the dramatic subject, where the religion is turned in absurd and existentialism. The history of world literature knows many cases of the writers’ orientation towards biblical subjects, creating such literary works which have withstood time. Literary History-writing is “born” during European Renaissance, with writers like Leggier, Boccaccio, later on with Dostoyevsky, Bodler, Camus, Proust etc. Each of them has artistically used the biblical subject, bringing us literary materials with creative patterns, symbols, hereafter (hell, heaven, purgatory). F. Kafka in “The Trial” brings us the trial for the Big Sin in an artistic way. The Bible is also called “The book of books”.

For the influence of the Bible in the western literature, the American Northrop Frye has said: “*In our (western) culture, the holy book is the Bible, which maybe is the most systematically built holy book in the world. No book influences in literature, without having literary qualities in itself, whereas the Bible is a literary material, since it is studied by the literary criticism.*” In the Albanian literature the biblical subject is firstly used by Albanian clergy to awake the beautiful Albanian language. “Formula e Pagëzimit” – The baptismal formula of Paul Angelus (Pal Engjëlli) is the first step towards the biblical subjects in the Albanian literature. This goes further on with other clergy or non-clergy creators, who found in the Bible other subjects which best fits different moments of Albanian society. F. Noli in his play “Izraelitë e Filistinë” has used a biblical subject. Namik Resulli in his literary work “Albanian Writers” tries to give the reasons for the orientation of the Albanian literature, especially the northern one, towards the western literature by taking the best parts of it. *Three are the main characteristics of the northern literature outputs, that distinct it from the other Albanian literature outputs before the League of Prizren.*

- *The subject is totally biblical, because it was written to keep alive and strengthen the catholic religion in the northerners.*
- *The Latin and Italian impact is excessive because the authors were closely related with the western church and because they had studied abroad in Italia.*
- *Because of the above reasons, the alphabet used by them was the Latin-Italian one.*

Definitely, this north product is the most important from all of those on the first part of Albanian literature. This taking in consideration the quantity and the quality in the same time. Those old north writers are not just the first ones to begin a cultural revolution and to create the latin alphabet but also are the first ones who think and work for their birthplace. If the aesthetic values and the aim of Albanian union would be emphasized enough, this creation would perfectly connect with all what happened after the League of Prizren. [Resuli, 2007, 13] This literature revolution was interrupted in the postwar period but today it has appeared again into the surface. Mentioning here a real fact such as the book: “Two Dramas” from Ragip Sylaj. In the preamble of this book he refers to Amoz Oz, a famous writer who says that: I think that family is the most mysterious, exotic,

interesting, paradoxical and the strangest institution in the world. “Sylaj has socialized the Bible putting the human being in it’s center.” Edhe pse mbreteria e qiellit eshte Brenda nesh / Although the kingdom of heaven is inside us / Andaj thuaj vetem memento, memento, memento / So just say.... / Per djallin e dashurise sate te engjellte / For the demon of your angelic love. [Sylaj, 2012, 6]

The dramas entry, a prologue with poetic structure doesn’t damage the poem structure, but guides the reader toward the content of the drama .The tragic-comedy determination describes perfectly the content which indirectly presents the absurd and the human being existence .It also faces the heaven world with the actuality .But the characters are symbols of the human origin. Adam and Eva appear as scriptural people but deep down they are just as real as all the others. All the efforts trying to find out their origin are totally human behavior. To classify a modern drama there are some criterias. Starting from the structure, dialogue, characters, the way of subject conception, the unit of time, the place etc. According to the both last elements (time and place) I would analyze the first part . It is divided in 4 groups which represent the seasons. Similar to Vivaldi’s symphony. In his book Sylaj has tried to bring to the readers those things that excist in the subconscious of a human, 4 moments that put the stamp of a Big Sin. All this indeed means those moments that take place in a human life. The author use to compare different periods of life with symbolic synonyms such as: The spring of love, the summer of thirst, the autum of hunger and the winter of solitude .In every part is quite emphasized the dialogue between both characters Adam and Eva who keep the symbol within themselves.

Eva – Do something instead of doing nothing.

Adam – Why, that’s the value of my existence? Of my daily work?

Eva – Look, think something for me meanwhile you lose time and tire yourself working for the other girls.

Adam – You’re crazy, where are those other girls in Eden? [Sylaj 2012, 13 -140]

The dialogue which represent the origin of our drama “The expulsion from paradise” creates the idea of attraction and jealousy between two people who are the beginners of humanity. But they will keep in their consciousness all the consequences that complain human beings till now days. This course has been treated in science, literature and religion aspects, giving their opinions according to the different points of view. Pjeter Budi in his writing “Doktrina e Kershtene” (Christian doctrine) gives the expulsion reasons of the very first creatures of humanity.

O unlucky man

Forgotten in the worst

Keen on great things

The retake of this issue from the author is seen in the socio-philosophical. The author has been using the technique of retrospective, but in fact the case which is treated is quite actual now days. Human society is confronted and keeps confronting with many problems, which we notice through Eva and Adam’s dialogue.

This dialogue, part of “The spring of love” seems that it creates the contrast, the real humanity–comedy, right in the most beautiful season which the author is referred as a season of love, when the best products of this season are expected, the real paradox begins, wonder as if Heaven has been just a lie, a non reality-reality, or to better say a paradise-hell, where emanates humanity.

The time unit, even why located in 4 seasons of the year, it really crosses these borders. Four seasons are only as a symbol. The location borders of the event development are in the whole human life’s history, in general, whereas in a specified sight, these borders last as a human life, with the birth (The Spring of Love) until death

(The solitude's winter). The time's unit concivement, is in the borders of an existentialism reality, which emanates since the beginning of human's life.

Area unit. The events happen in Heaven, where later are placed in human's reality. But it seems that nothing changes, nor in the first part (both parts of the play are in unity with each-other) just like in the second part, titled "The deportation of Paradise" and "Life death". In the first part events happen in Heaven, but its that nothing reminds this wonderful place, full of fights, jealousy, love-no love. The dialogue between two characters gives you the idea that is developed after they're deported out of Heaven.

Adam-Why, don't you see how tight is here, in Eden.

Eva- No, Adam, you're talking as if you were drunk. Eden is in the past now.

Referring again Budi's part, in "Doktrina e Kershtene" (Christian doctrine) we have a full presentation of the deportation of Eva and Adam from Heaven, and the persecution of God towards them for the sin they had done.

Some of his Parts

The difference, between narrative prose and drama in text it the absence of a mediator Or a narrator (Storytellers). But this rule is broken by the author. In the second part we have the presence of the narrator, or different of the Storytellers. His presence we have only in the second part of the drama. But which is his function in the second part of the drama? The two parts of the drama seem like they're parted of each-other, but in fact they're a unique unit, beside the different characters and environments where events take place. The second part opens with the storytellers' words: "Once upon a time there were Life and Death... "This moment of the beginning of the recital by the storytellers is a cliché formule of beginning folk narrations. Model received from the author too. This formula used by the story tellers, prepares the reader for the flow of the events. The same model of entering clichés use, we see even at Kuteli ,but the difference between two authors remains in the fact that they have circulated two different genres, with different functions. The storytellers part at Sylaj's drama is in the same place with Korifeu of that ancient drama, making difference with Kuteli's storytellers ,which from beginning up to the end, keeps narrating/confessing the event. So it is clear, that the storytellers 'part at both two authors is conditioned even by the literature genres in which they get their functions. Ragip Sylaj is well known as prose circulator, but also the opus of his literary creativity informs us about his knowledge in the verbal creativity of people and that gave the opportunity to the incorporation of the everyday life expressions without losing their value. This is a natural incorporation in order to motivate the comic situations. But another function of the Narrator is "humanity" of the Korfie as a model from the ancient drama. When we express a "presume" we're not considering imitation, but a conceptual choice of the author who didn't remain a "slave" of the ancient drama model. I think the narrator in the Ragip Sylaj's drama has other functions like the one of the WISE MAN and the Albanian rhapsody. This is well-shown in the third part titled "some things in life, must be forgotten", where the narrator refers to the balad of the immurement, concretely the Konstandin's legend. In this part is in function the development of dramatic tension. Knowing the narrator's function in Sylaj's drama, we notice that in the selected parts, in which the narrator is the beginner of them, is in accordance with the development of the events itself and appears the drama's philosophical aspect.

-The first part (the despised, despises you) --- Here we have the existentialist philosophical thoughts of the war between life and death.

-The second part (pain is rewarded) --- The eternal conflict between good and evil, love and hate.

-The third part(Something in life, must be forgotten) --- The confession of Konstandin's legend in order to find one of the human character values, WORD GIVEN.

- The fourth part (my knees are trembling)--- The battle of humanity with themselves. The angel against devil. The sublime love for the perfect goods against the evil.
- The sixth part (can't be returned even in myself) --- Greed is like ice. Sometimes it appears in our soul.

The drama structure is built in 10 parts. A number chosen randomly by the author but that automatically makes you think about the perfect harmony and Dante Alighieri, which uses the multiplication of number 10, which is 100. But in our case, the drama organization according to this divide rule seems to find the right place. Not only about the fact that the first part starts with 2 characters, Adam and Eve as the origin of humanity created according to the imagination of the Creator, but also because the base of this drama is made exactly by the family problems, the divine creature. The Ragip Sylaj's drama "Debimi nga parajsa" (The banishment from heaven) is classified as social and philosophical, but what distinguishes this drama from the other dramas is the unusual subject, different from traditional social drama. Its characters are anti-heroes and drama is anti-drama for its point of view and its conception. Social life, it's described in the angle of an Albanian family problems. The two parts of it are in unity with each other and creates a picture where the time notion is broken, timeless, the problem of the family is treated in the origin of it, but out of the biblical character schemes, socializing the subject, like a comprehensive subject, not for Albanian families only but as a problem of the historical human society, a notion in which the space notion doesn't have a reference point but is interlaced with the theme of the emigration. It's used as an actual line in which Albanians faced are still facing.

Allegory of Frustration from Freedom in "Vetekryqezimi" (Crucifying Himself) Drama of Ragip Sylaj **Author**

Don't search for the death with your life mistakes / And don't ruin yourself with your own actions / Because God didn't create death / And is not glad with the living being death. (The Bible)

The author Ragip Sylaj starts his second drama "Vetekryqezimi" (Crucifying himself) with this saying from The Bible.

The play the writer Ragip Sylaj in his composition "2 Drama" published in 2012, acts in an acting line, biblical line, which is more direct in the first drama "Debimi nga parajsa" (Banishment from Heaven). In the second drama "Vetekryqezimi" (Crucifying himself) the author tries to keep it, but he's more interested in the actual social life of the newest state in Europe, Kosovo. The year 1999 is the beginning and the end of a century injustice for the people of Kosovo, but in the same time is the beginning of a hard work. Building a new state. Freedom was the century dream, like white lighted fairy. The social treatment in biblical aspect of social problem, in Kosovo's literature after the war, seems to an untouched land. Not because the biblical subject is not treated in Albanian literature but the interlacing of modern and biblical in social problems treatment it's a model that gave the author the opportunity to disclose allegorically one of the day problems. What should Albanians do with the freedom, after these century suffering?! Or differently said "are determined to suffer the weight of freedom because they don't know what to do with it"

"Vetekryqezimi" (crucifying himself) drama seems to be an integral part of first drama "Debimi nga Parajsa" (Banishment from Heaven). Seen in the context of continuing lines, fearless we can say that drama "Debim nga parajsa" (Banishment from Heaven) is the cause of the suffer and drama "Vetekryqezimi" (Crucifying himself) is the consequence. Both dramas operate in the same flush, the biblical one, but what makes the difference is to whom is addressed. In the first drama everything is about family and the family is the one that carries the huge human sin of the two first parents of humanity. In the second drama the focus expands. Now we have an Albanian society of the newest state of Europe which is trying to organize the big family, the society. The events took place in after the war. The whole plot refers to Bardhyl, or rather his shadow. Although Bardhyl is not present, his shadow moves all the events of the second drama, like the first one, the author tries to divine

and uses a numerology. In the drama. There are 7 characters. The author remains loyal to divine and uses the divine numerology . In the second drama, unlike the first one, the author tries to operate through the physical analysis of the main character, Bardhyl, but in the same time the other characters psychology.

Instead of Prologue

In mid July of that after independence summer, Bardhyl wallowed between two monsters ,sadness and sorrow. Something to make him stronger had been missing, something to make him happy had been missing ,something to make him smile had been missing. As much as the others had felt sorry for him, he had felt for himself and the situation he was. He had claimed to lighten the darkness of those doubts. A greedy passion to know himself better had increased into him year by year. **[Sylaj. R. Self-crucifixion. 2012:107]**

Nothing happens occasionally. Maybe something is defined at humanity's faith. Even human life itself , since it's beginnings has been organized by a path where no one could diverge. Ragip Sylaj's drama " Self-crucifixion" is the same way.

"Instead of the prologue" at the entrance of the drama "Self-crucifixion", everything begins with the existentialism yeast/cause , with the questions as old as humanity.

He had felt sorry every time he had met people who didn't have confidence. Many times he had asked himself: what do these human beings miss to connect stronger with life? These creatures are born that way or become later ? What heals fear?... Is the Deity's lightning enough to fill the emptiness of existence ,or there should be new researches even beyond life? **[Sylaj. R. Self-crucifixion. 2012:108]**

As in the entrance seems that the author begins with the presence of existentialism at humans plane ,everything oversets in other reports ,going over this concept for that plane, his target is directed at national plane, a nation's existentialism , which never got to find peace at history's billows/waves. Nations that after long efforts of suffer take under command their faith, feel the absence of a social identity. " Freedom is the essence of soul and mind; where freedom is missing, the mind and soul dry as the plant without water." **[Sami Frasheri]**

-Bardhyl's shadow: "I have lived in difficult times, said." I'm tired of getting accused. I've always been threatened. As if I could have clogged the sunlight. They have had the face of death, the face of hate. They had came with knives, with short and long weapons and have terrorized me continuously. They wanted to rise the cruelty in me. Then they arouse the devil. They are here to arouse evil in me, when I could grow goodness. **[Sylaj, R. Self-crucifixion 2012: 109-110]**

Humans come in life to live its pros and cons. To live the life with the others because that's the only way they feel themselves human beings. People only in difficult moments realize that society makes the life easier or harder to live. Maestro: while people where coming to convey Bardhyl's body to the last door, the doctor said: "do you see master, life doesn't belong to one person but the others too." **[Sylaj, R. Vetekryqezimi. Self-crucifixion 2012:123]**

The newest state of Europe just had started to enjoy the sweet felt of freedom, to become real their century dream. Everything seems to be moving in the right direction, but in real it isn't like that. Everything new has its own disappointments, variation, with the situation that maybe it wont give you the chance to go back and do the everything better. In this unlikely situation, human disappointments goes till the edge. So it was the fate of Bardhyl, who was disappointed from freedom, he died in a tragic way.

What is the freedom, which is the philosophic concept, which is the view of philosophers, writers, different thinkers about freedom in different epochs of human society development?

“Freedom, according to historic materialism, is recognition of historical necessity (objective laws of development of society) and practical activity which is done in accordance with this necessity. [Dictionary of philosophy, Tirane 1974: 193]

Freedom concept is as old as humanity itself, since the beginning of human society. Eva and Adam are the first representatives of human genesis, and God gave them full freedom in the Eden garden, but with one condition, to not taste the forbidden apple fruit. But the concept of freedom has progressed in parallel with human society progress, and along this progress has changed even the concept of freedom. The concept of freedom had existed since 200 years ago, in the antiquity, where freedom was considered as individual freedom in free participation in the exercise of his rights in decision making (ie. the organization of the Greek antiquity and Roman Empire), but we don't have respect for individual freedom. The antiquity philosopher Aristotel according to freedom thought and human equality wrote: “with natural shall mean that whenever it has the same value and law power and that it doesn't depend on acceptance or rejection of people”. According to the ancient Greek word “Eleutheria” that refers to the meaning of deification of nature, by adjusting with nature rates and doesn't permit other rates out of nature rates, where person's freedom was only inside of social organization of time, or as it was said “polisit”. With the progress of philosophic thought, in antiquity times, and with the progress of antiquity society, started to crystallize the concept of freedom according the laws of nature and freedom according to written or unwritten laws of community “polisit”. So, sophists make the difference between “physis” and “nomos”. Furthermore we have the opinion of Socrat, Platon, Aristotel. According to Aristotel the concept of freedom had to do with “life which someone wants”. In Roman Empire concept of freedom made the difference of social strata between free citizens and slaves.

The concept of freedom in midlife was related to the new form of religion, Christian. According to Christian religion, freedom stands between sin and forgiveness, and possibility of human between good and evil, that in Christian religion this choice had to do with hereafter world, hell and paradise. In modern world concept of freedom becomes wider by respecting the human rights and freedoms. A free person may express himself, may chose according his personal interests, not affected by government forces.

While freedom concept has been always treated in positive sense, in Sylaj's drama, freedom is considered as a disappointment.

Bardhyl's shadow- I narrowed sharply. Tight, because my skin falls, because my world falls, my cosmos falls, my freedom falls. Its been a while since I have smiled, singed, it's been a while that I've been watching the world with dark colors. It's been a while that the pain of my soul wakes me up from that sleep with nightmares. The fear for life, for my future has become my clothes! I've forgotten to live,.. Life happens without me. The tree of life is blooming sadness flowers. The tree of life is connecting and is grilling the bitter and desperate fruits”. [Sylaj, R. Vetekryqezimi. Self-crucifixion 2012:137]

Bardhyl (Bardhyl's shadow is the reference point in narrating the play as a creation and that of the drama as a disappointment from freedom. Naming the parts of the drama are similar to the stairs when the last stair is the end of of the sad fate of Bardhyl, the unlucky fate disappointed from freedom.”The time of the fate”beginning of the play, and “the lovers of freedom”. The time of the unlucky fate of Bardhyl had put him deep into the darkness of sadness, closed within himself, being confused and in dilemma “Is that I am not understanding the language of the others or the others are not understanding mine?” The last part “The lovers of freedom” we see Bardhyl as the eternal lover of freedom, of that freedom that although disappointed his love for freedom, he holds it in the other world too.

Love and Freedom as Esthetic Categories in the Play “The Self Calvary” of Ragip Sylaj

Ragip Sylaj in the play of ‘self calvary’ although not in a direct way, love as a character and freedom as a concept uses them as esthetic concepts. Both of them are characterized as a part of the esthetic category of beauty. Love is a divine, a feeling, freedom however, is such a feeling too. Freedom in the, not only in the concept of the nation and people’s nation but in the divine concept of the free spirit. The concept of beauty as an esthetic category. This effort continuous up to now, in the modern times. The concept of beauty includes different fields, not only the use of its form as a word beautiful, but the definition of beauty is both something material and spiritual too. Let’s take only the concept of the freedom of a nation includes life, the continuity of the coming generations, the development of tradition, art, culture, and that of the nation. The beauty and love is in symbiosis with each other. Love is seen as a beautiful feeling, as a divine and human too. Exactly in this symbiosis the foreign literature has treated love. Petrarka, one of the disciples of the world’s literature, in his work Laura has beautifully appreciated love, one of the most beautiful human feelings.

When among women you passed, something you meant,
And I went there with shining eyes,
I find no one to be more nice,
A person who grows my love and makes me mad.

XV

- Sometimes I think,
- I whisper something,
- “how is it possible to live so far,
- Her soul should be near mine,
- The cupid is burnt: don’t you know it?
- Such a privilege only lovers do have, to be free like wind, not terrestrial. [Petrarka, F.Laura.1995:17,18]

The symbiosis of love and freedom at Petrarka, esthetically are shown beautifully, both as human feelings and as divineness too. However in this play we see the presence of Freedom and Love in the play of Sylaj, their acceptance in this play is only in the esthetic aspect but aiming the objective of the author himself. The awaited freedom for 100 years disappoints the main character, Bardhyl. It looks this way at first sight. But part of this disappointment are the other characters of the play, as in itself stands at the edge of the tragedy. Since the beginning of the play we meet the “shadow” character, who compensates his physical absence within the consciousness of the other characters. The most visible presence of Bardhyl’s shadow is found in the consciousness of Love. Both characters substitute each other, freedom needs love and vice versa love needs freedom, needs space. The lack of one of these seems to create emptiness in the consciousness of the others as well as in the consciousness of the other members of community. In this play co-live and co-work divineness and terrestrial. The missionary is the divineness. Love, Freedom and the shadow of Bardhyl are doubled to be both terrestrial and divineness. In this binary it is being unfolded the social psychology of characters who are disappointed and from this disappointment they discover that something is going wrong with their society. Freedom and love in this play are not treated as something individual, but as part of the society. The esthetics of beauty through Love and Freedom is discovered by Bardhyl, a state which shows not only what Bardhyl experiences but it is what Bardhyl, but what what people experience in their everyday life. It is being questioned, Who really killed Bardhyl? Actually this question has been left in the hands of this character who is the narrator from the beginning to the ending of this play.

Instead of the Prologue

However the smoky shadow that covered his face could clearly been seen and that it made his heart suffer. It was difficult to be known whether he had hurt himself or the others hurt him on purpose or accidentally. It was such a pity the way he had become as if the rays of love had never knocked on his heart. However there were people who thought that it was love that had debilitated him. Love might be the cause of his feeling sullen and withdrawn.” [Sylaj 2012, 107, 108]. The poem of Love and Freedom as esthetic concepts from the author serve as motors which make two forces move, the forces which have co-worked and continue to work together. Freedom is shown as a beautiful woman, overwhelming beautiful. The level of presenting beauty is absolute. The absolutism in the beauty of freedom is not used only in the emotional aspect but as a long time desire of man who is in search of freedom which in this play is presented as a physical beauty (the beautiful woman), but as a heavenly beauty too(The director “Had he showed his love to freedom?”)

Love is the main force that makes people move forward, the only one which strongly opposes hate, the pest.

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