

**The Prometheus First Person  
in the Albanian Literature  
(The Case First Person in the Albanian Literature)**



**Literature**

**Keywords:** aligned literature, Prometheus first narrative person, community, enlightenment, activist.

**Skënder Karriqi**

**University "Aleksander Xhuvani" Elbasan, Albania.**

**Abstract**

What we today call the aligned literature is closely linked in its origin with the birth of the Ancient Greek civilization, where the alignment of the writer for treating and solving the community problems were the outer and the most important part of the civil alignment within a holist society. In such conditions of alignment the poetics of the Prometheus first person would come forward. Not every Prometheus first person: when it is in relation to community, then it is as such. On the contrary when it is in relation to itself, it is an individualist person. So the first person respectively as a Prometheus first person or as individualistic marks the border between the traditional and modern. From antiquity until today, the Prometheus first person has a rich history of stylistic values which originate with Homer and, within the Greek antiquity ending with Aristophanes, to continue with Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe and Byron, etc. In the Albanian literature the Prometheus first person, appears with Jeronim de Rada since his first creation, bringing, beyond the formal grammatical meanings, the activity image which becomes the reference of national historical action, the enlightenment. Our commentary has to do exactly with this stylistic feature of the literature of the National Renaissance. In this meaning the arguments and facts from the poetry of N.Frashëri, Çajupi, and Mjeda.

**Introduction**

What we today call the aligned literature has its origins in the birth and development of the ancient Greek civilization in which the alignment of the playwright for tackling and solving the problems of community was part of his civil responsibility in the conditions of a holist society. In such alignment conditions, the first person came forth in poetry as the first Prometheus person.

Not every first person is Promethean: when it is in relation to community, then it is so. In contrast when it is in relationship with itself it is an individualization person. So the first literary person is either Promethean or Individualistic it marks in the stylistic aspect or time border between traditionalism and modernism.

From antiquity until today, the Prometheus first person has a rich history of stylistic values which originate with Homer and, within the Greek antiquity ending with Aristophanes, who with his comedy "*The Frogs*", brought back Aeschylus to Athenians, the author of the worthy dramas for the city. Thus Aristophanes is the consider literature as aligned, that the city needed in utilitarian terms, and simply as such literature, unconditioned for the needs of the city. After Aeschylus, the Prometheus first person would break through the medieval darkness with Dante Alighieri, who unified the authors first person with the Prometheus first person integrating into the subject flow of poetry as the hero who wishes for the truth and the right on man, (this sinful being), and his salvation.

In the European Renaissance circumstances the Prometheus first person would outstand as the Hamletian first person, which tragically surpasses the individualistic first person (*To be or not to be...?!*) fulfilling great aims of heavenly size, such as that of setting right this world out of joint. At the dawn of Romanticism the dual Hamletian dichotomy will be embodied in the Faustus of Goethe as a crisis of identity of the individualistic first person which is put to an end with the re-confirmation of the first person via the Prometheus first person accomplishing great works for humanity.

With Byron the Prometheus first person will be integrated in the subject flow of the work, up to that degree, that most of the time the author forgets his counterpart brother, the character being projected. This relationship of the author with the subject stylistically is reflected in the statements of the type: *thus thought Childe as he was*

walking/ through the mountains alone... thus thought the hero on his way.... I forgot Harold ended his journey<sup>1</sup>, correcting the “mistake” by putting his narration in the mark of the third person.

For romantics identity crisis will turn into a typological dichotomy of the romantic hero, for whom the individualistic narrative person is tight garment and therefore he changes it with the Prometheus first person, which fits the heroic vocation of the author, this being self projected in the character. (remember Harold, Oniegin, etc.).

And so, in the comfort of the Prometheus first person, the romantic hero encourages and invites people to their overall awakening. In fact it is the Prometheus first person blended the borders with the author that invites and encourages, by marking the last as the true hero in the history of human progress. So the idea for the author of the aligned literature comes in the image of the hero, warrior, the torch whose intellectual light and energy, released through the Prometheus first person, will lead humanity to great works.

Such will come Jeronim de Rada in Albanian literature over the 30-ies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the Arbëresh community to which he belonged, he found the tribe, who still aspired for the leader who would lead the centennial dream of returning to the land of his ancestors.

Since the poem *The Odyssey*, the author, in his first song, precedes the Prometheus first person with the metonymic image of the family: husband died in the war, the wife, running away to escape slavery, reminding to the scared little son. At the un-detailed beginning ethnically and then detailed as such, the family, in the tribe metonymy will bring the historical-literary image of the community, who is in need of a god, a leader to lead. In this case the representative meaning of the sign of the tribe will expand the maximum, to the universal level, by marking the human race, in relation to which, quite literally, it is the first person (Prometheus) as the Prometheus first person.

In the second song of this poem, the author first appears through the Prometheus first person which opposes itself to the third, the narrative person of the story. Preceded by other cases, it will be seen as a flagrant opposition in the conclusion of the second song, in which case the whole narration in the third person turns into the sign of the first person (Prometheus) exactly through the closing verses / of April remembrance brings clear / that my loves makes it golden /.<sup>2</sup> Even with the occasional, unexpected appearance, of the first person (Prometheus) it will taste as a grammatical anomaly, since it is not justified by the logic of the third person narration, however it poetically has a meaning: in itself this alternation of the person is an expression of the author's need to ensure the presence of his image integrated in subject events. In this way the image of the author's “person” comes in the Prometheus image as a relationship between the Tribe, Homeland, and Nation in the historical moment poetically imaged.

The intensification in the third song of the presence of first person as controversial alternative with accelerated pace, is the Albanian case (through Arbëreshi of Italy) of the romantic who writes his work based on the absolute reference to his experience. So romantic works, not only exceed the author, but being his internal identity, it rises against the reason of his work that must surpass the author according to some classical rules. Ultimately the battle of the narrative persons must be won by the author embodied in the Prometheus first person, even by breaking the rules of grammar and methodical reason.

In the second poem, “The exiled Krutan”, significant differences are witnessed. For the first time there we notice the dramatic discourse (theater). At this kind of discourse, as is known, his third person, as the narrative person, is reduced to the didactic level thus carrying a technical briefing “person”. In the case of the poem “The exiled Krutan”, even though the characters emerge through theatrical dialogue, the third person is not reduced.

In fact, the theatrical dialogue leaves no room for the direct and integrated expression of the author. The characters, played by actors who get the glory, help anonymity. Haven't Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Molière suffered so? Even the authorship of these last two has been seriously put in doubt..

<sup>1</sup> Byron. *Childe Harold. Tiranë*, 1973, p 30, 107, 190. (Alb.edition)

<sup>2</sup> Jeronim de Rada, vLiterary Works 1, Tiranë 1987, p 158.

Apparently, De Rada, conditioned by strong impulses of self-expression and integrated directly into the subject course of the literary work, uses the dramatic discourse according to his own way. He knows that this kind of discourse is effective for the portrayal of the vivid characters in a particular historical context that is why it must be used. This is proved by the Homeric duel dialogue such as in the *Epic of the Knights*. On the other hand, the third person as a narrative person would represent in terms of stylistic and substantive dimension the epic of the poem. How would the presence of the Prometheus first person be realized through which the author's self would be projected as the integrated image of person in the subject events?

In fact, the classic epic discourse itself provided the precedent of so-called ethical dative, whose initial motive must have been the image of the presence of the first narrative in the subject events as the person that proves them and thereby frees the narration from suspicion through the formula type: *I have been told so, for there I did not go*.

Under this precedent of the classic epic De Rada models the narration in his poem "The exiled Krutan", where in confrontation with the third narrative person, the first person as the Prometheus first person will often be seen as relation to own tribe, Homeland, Nation (*A landscape so beautiful, /once the highlander would see /he would be delighted, but not the brave man / it will remind him of his homeland*)<sup>3</sup>. For this reason, if in the poem *Odyssey* we would not find at all, the so-called ethical dative in poem "The exiled Krutan" we find it 38 times, by being in this way, together with the dramatic discourse (theatrical), that is the stylistic difference in report the poem the *Odyssey*.

In poems of *Milosao and Seraffina*, the Prometheus first person, besides that it stands out through the first narrative person, it will come in the image of the characters that carry significant autobiographical elements. Such a motivation of these poems has been noticed earlier by Gualtieri<sup>4</sup>, who, for this feature De Rada's poems, is quoted by Çabej, when he says: *As Gualtieri highlights the autobiographical character in works of De Rada. Figures of men in his poetry are poetic projection of the poet's person, feminine figures are basically women whom the poet had loved in boyhood, exalted in the poetic atmosphere*<sup>5</sup> However, and autobiographical features of poems of De Rada must have reference also to a moment of significant experience. Prof. J.Kastrati speaks about *Milosao* in an introductory passage, which does we do not see at transcribed publications. The atmosphere that was created by villagers Machi is presented at the moment, when they are seeing off the young man De Rada for higher studies in Naples. According to Kastrati, the author himself says: *Wherever I passed they wished safe journey to Naples to bring benefit the country*.<sup>6</sup>

This is an important moment in the life of De Rada because, for the first time since early youth, he experiences within his own being the first Prometheus person, ie, first person, in relation to community: he finds, within his being the hero who, by the Prometheus way, dedicated up to self-sacrifice will serve the people.

The reflection of this moment in the form of an *introductory passage* (passage) that precedes *Milosao*, takes a special importance, because, precisely this point of identification with the hero in his being would be the path by which author's biographical person would be transfigured into the heroes of the poems in this way, would be integrated into the subject events with the dimensions Prometheus the hero.

Through this passage, transferred to *Milosao* not merely the autobiographical element that has to do with the author's love for the shepherd's daughter, but also this important moment of the hero's inside experience, from whom the people (respectively the Arbereshi of the Machi village) expect.

<sup>3</sup>Jeronim de Rada. *Literary Works 1*, Tiranë 1987, p 183.

<sup>4</sup>Vittorio G Gualtieri, scholar of De Rada's work. (*Milosao, Romanzo lirico di Girolamo De Rada, traduzione e introduzione. Girolamo De Rada, poeta Albanese, 1930. Girolamo De Rada-The Apostle of Albanism, Drita, 28 February 1938.*)

<sup>5</sup>E Çabej, *Albanians between East and West*, p 99. Tiranë 2004.

<sup>6</sup>Jeronim de Rada. *Literary Works 1*, Tiranë 1987.

Prof Dr Jup Kastrati, *Studies on De Rada*. Gjonlekaj Publishing Company, New York, 2003.

In the poem this moment is reflected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> song (*Lucky he who comes to us /on the green hillock / like the Arber's flag*)<sup>7</sup> and the in the thirteenth song (*you bring them a happy army /to open up these shores for us / freedom we brought*)<sup>8</sup> The narrative person is the fitting itself in this case of the author's transformation within the literary hero. So the first narrative person in Milosao results as a Prometheus person.

Even at Serafina, the female equivalent of Milosao, the autobiographical element about the author's love for the daughter of an aristocratic family Spiri not everything is transfigured. In this character we see marking elements of the author's narrative person, such as the enlightened personality and creative poetic talent.

Through the first, the author is transfigured to the character contemplating time mirror, *field of human trouble*<sup>9</sup> and preaches for *setting the world right*<sup>10</sup>. In the second the character comes in sensitiveness of De Rada, as troubadour who sings to feats of ancient heroes of Arbereshi tribe.

In accordance with the romantic dichotomy, De Rada's Prometheus person exceeds its own individualistic identity after the crisis to realize heroically, upto self-sacrifice.

Tradition of the first person as Prometheus person, directly or indirectly, will be reflected, especially in Naim, and then in Mjeda with whom the Prometheus person, in Albanian literature will be manifested in admirable literary and artistic standards.

## References

1. Bajron; Çajld Harold. Tiranë, 1973.
2. Jeronim de Rada : *Vepra letrare I*. Tiranë 1978.
3. Vittorio Gualtieri: *Milosao, romani lirik i Jeronim de Radës..1930*.
4. Vittorio Gualtieri. *Jeronim de Rada, apostull i shqiptarizmës*. Drita: 28.02. 1938.
5. Eqrem Çabej: *Shqiptarët ndërmjet Perëndimit dhe Lindjes*. Tiranë, 2004.
6. Jup Kastrati: *Studime për De Radën*. Gjonlekaj, New York, 2003.
7. J. P. Vernant: *Origjina e mendimit grek*. Pegi. Tiranë 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Jeronim De Rada. *Literary Works 1*, Tiranë 1987, p 89

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.90

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.238

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.395