

## Psycho-mental Enigmas and Symbols of Unconsciousness in Koliqi's Characters



### Literature

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### Abstract

The post-independence period was characterized by an increased interest of the Albanian artists in our cultural heritage, in all areas; for contemporary resources and phenomena and also treasures created in centuries. The most representative authors of this period, Koliqi, Kuteli, Lasgush, tried to organically integrate the contemporary European civilization with the Albanian contradictory reality. Ernest Koliqi is one of the prominent Albanian authors who synthesize successfully the traditional with the modern, whose narration appears as an original expression of the neo-Latin tradition narrative prose.

In his play "Roots move," Koliqi makes the question: "Where are the Albanians going to?"

This is the moment when Koliqi descends from the prophecy plan to the necessity plan to declare that, for the Albanians standing at a crossroad, of primary mission is to not lose touch with the ancient roots. This way, the poetry of roots – a guiding idea in all of Koliqi's literary work, finds in this drama his major assignment and excuse.<sup>72</sup>

*"So, you still don't feel your roots moving... The roots? Roots, yes. To make a future for a people, an opportune one, there must be employed a new spirit, of course, in accordance with new spiritual needs, the subject matter, even if it's shattered by the past. By denying ancestral heritage, an entire generation's roots got rooted up. How can a nation renew itself, the God-given gift, and made different from other nations, but not without the lifeblood from old roots?"*<sup>73</sup>

The play, as a matter of fact comes as a result of an exorcist exercise, which the author tries to free himself of personal nightmares from, of dreams full of nightmares, the shock of being away from the homeland: the thrill that's turned into a real neurosis for him. In Koliqi's writings, the birthplace is assimilated with the Freudian symbol of the Life-giving Mother: it is full of vitality, strength and wisdom, the one who keeps strong the heritage ties with the Life-giving Mother; on the contrary, he who deviates from the heritage plan abandons basic virtues of honor, manhood and humanity to come back as a man of no subsoil, as we see Gasper Tragaçi in "The flag tradesman."<sup>74</sup>

*"Of course, it would've been of great satisfaction for me, if a new sun were to shine over these old lands, rejuvenating a new life of pure Albanian nature, as it's once moved over them. Yes, roots move... Yes, that I feel... I smell the jasmynes, coming from shenashin."*<sup>75</sup>

New values in Koliqi's story are found in a type of story that he calls Psychospective, in which the Freudian psychoanalysis dimension is distinguished. He finds these elements by searching through the traditional and the innovatory.

<sup>72</sup> Ardian Marashi, "Koliqian Poles," Ibid. Pg. 34.

<sup>73</sup> Ernest Koliqi, "Roots Move," Camaj-Pipa, Shkodra 1997, Pg. 43-44.

<sup>74</sup> Ardian Marashi, "Koliqian Poles," Ibid. Pg. 35.

<sup>75</sup> Ernest Koliqi, "Roots Move," Ibid. Pg. 45-46.

We can also say that, from the mountains and large geographic units, as massive natural scenes, where the archaic-dramatic life of Albanian highlanders was historically carried on, the literary Koliqi, with his intuition, accuracy and subtlety of a powerful writer, brings his vision down to the darkest corners of human unconsciousness, searching in there for subdued or reorganized numerous elements of constituent psychological and mental character, inherited, piled up and simultaneously operative. Of his typical stories, there is: *“The plum tree beyond the wall.”*

*“This is the story of Lec Gurrmolla, on his first summer break going to Shkodra after ten years spent around schools, elsewhere abroad.”*<sup>76</sup>

The story is about the psychological state of mind of Lec Gurrmolla, where the main subject of research is the interpretation of the character’s behavior and the drive to these behaviors.

*“When the scorching heat was about over, while the others were still asleep, he came down to the garden and then to the backyard. It was not his first time, after coming back to Shkodra, to his uncles’, but never had he had a chance to see all the hideaways filled with hidden sweet memories of the distant childhood.”*<sup>77</sup>

By a story structuring, we’ll see the creation of a model that basically, incorporates a psychological duality.

It can be said that Holland talks about writings like this, such as the Koliqi one, by saying that, what this text reads is a story about keeping secrets, especially sexual secrets.<sup>78</sup>

*“He knew not, nor did he want at that moment, to see clearly through his own complicated feelings. Letting him delighted through their waves. Just wanting to climb that wall and get those yellow plums. Maybe, cause of the old desire, reawakening after the ten years of sleep. Maybe, it’s just a new fantasy coming out of the blazing heat. But, all of this isn’t bothering him at all. There is something stronger than hunger making him climbs that wall.”*<sup>79</sup>

Reviewing exactly this quote, we can list some of the reasons that make Lec go into this garden he had missed for about ten years while studying abroad, which are:

1. The plum tree in his uncle's garden.
2. The plum tree in a stranger’s garden.
3. Contemplating beyond the walls.
4. Going over the wall.
5. Identifying the Eros with the plum.
6. Confronting the old lady.
7. Wanting to try the plums.
8. Tries and tastes plum jam.

There is a rebellion against the ego from the beginning of the novel. As if the environment was stimulating the uncontrolled sexual excitement.

<sup>76</sup> Koliqi, the novel: *“The flag tradesman,”* the story: *“The plum tree beyond the wall,”* Ibid. Pg. 115.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. Pg. 115.

<sup>78</sup> Floresha Dado, *“The theory of the literary work,”* Albas, Tirana 2006, Pg. 215.

<sup>79</sup> Ernest Koliqi, *“The flag tradesman,”* the story: *“The plum tree beyond the wall,”* Nikaj, Tirana 1935, Pg. 117.

*“It’s enough for him to just enjoy it, looking at somebody else’s plum tree beyond the wall, for it to slip through his eyes into the soul, where old feelings and omitted delights are awoken.”*<sup>80</sup>

The idea of the artwork is the same as what psychoanalysis considered being a dream goal, a secret pleasure or an infantile forbidden desire, confined in one’s sub-conscience. The sub-conscience is a dynamic subsystem, containing instinctive drives associated with reflections, especially childish desires.<sup>81</sup>

If rated by importance, there are listed also the reasons to instinctive drives of the main character in Koliqi’s novel *“The plum tree beyond the wall”*:

**A1** – *“When the scorching heat was about over, while the others were still asleep, he came down to the garden and then to the backyard.”*<sup>82</sup>

**A2** – *“But, Lec’s eyes, as if lured by a divine power wanted a plum from beyond the wall. Lec’s eyes greeting it in adoration.”*<sup>83</sup>

**A3** – *“He felt the strange need of getting those small fruits, as yellow as wax. He knew not, nor did he want at that moment, to see clearly through his own complicated feelings. But, just letting him delighted into their waves.”*<sup>84</sup>

**A4** – *“Loving, with hunger for fruit, he raised his hand to reach for the yellow fruits and, just as he was picking them with his fingers, a flutter of delight slipped through his body as if touching the gentle flesh of a creature.”*<sup>85</sup>

**A5** – *“He bowed his head and asked for the jam. Once again he felt a taste of vanished summers, distant seasons that, especially after twilight, leave us with our souls full of troubled bliss, of their wonderful appearance.”*<sup>86</sup>

The culminating point of this story is where the character is reluctant in controlling his libido pulsations, by making a balance of him.

Here, we see reflected the expression of Holland, who portrayed the literary texts as secret places, coded systems that are playacting as disguise.<sup>87</sup>

*“Foolish! I’m not little like thereat!*

*Stuff could be done then...*

*Now, it’s a shame for me to be seen...*<sup>88</sup>

In a more detailed appearance of the psychological duality, created by his being, we have: Lec Gurrëmolla: Essie-Ego where we have:

<sup>80</sup> Ernest Koliqi, *“The flag tradesman,”* the story: *“The plum tree beyond the wall,”* Ibid. Pg. 116.

<sup>81</sup> Floresha Dado, *“The theory of the literary work,”* Cited work, Pg. 210-211.

<sup>82</sup> Ernest Koliqi, *“The flag tradesman,”* the story: *“The plum tree beyond the wall,”* Ibid. Pg. 115.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Pg. 116.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Pg. 116-117.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. Pg. 117.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. Pg. 121.

<sup>87</sup> Floresha Dado, *“The theory of literary work,”* cited work, Pg. 214

<sup>88</sup> Ernest Koliqi, *“The flag tradesman,”* the story: *“The plum tree beyond the wall,”* cited work, Pg. 117.

1. Awakening of old desires.
2. Worshiping the plum.
3. Recalling a fantasy.
4. Going over the wall.
5. Old feelings and forgotten tastes.
6. Not much of an impression being in somebody else's garden.
7. Captured by a childish greed for the fruit.
8. Reawakening after 10 years.

Referring to the schematic incision of the hypothalamus, we find his Essie and Ego, a further interpretation of character detail. For us, the individual is a psychic, unknown and unconscious Essie, on the surface of which is placed the ego developed as a core, based on the system of consciousness. The ego is not emphatically divided from Essie; it is melted down along with it.

Main drivers of psychic structure are defined as Essie, Ego, and Superego. The base layer, the most ancient and most extensive one is Essie, the kingdom of the unconscious, of primary instincts. Essie is free of forms and principles that make up the conscious social individual. It is affected neither by time, nor the contradictions. It knows no values, neither good nor bad and no moral ones. It's not intended at self-guard: doesn't fight for anything else but fulfill its own instinctive needs, in accordance with the pleasure instinct.

Under the influence of the outside world, a part of the Essie with stimuli receptive organs and their protection develops gradually, until it becomes an Ego,<sup>89</sup> starting at:

1. Studying abroad and getting to know different cultures.
2. He is of an age when everything is subject to judgment.
3. Being at a stranger's place requires explanation.
4. The feeling of not overacting.
5. Away from conflicts, it's not graceful for the nephew to act wrongfully when at uncles' because it causes disputes with neighbors (going over a wall into a stranger's garden).

Checking the developing stages of the story, there are several phases showing up:

1. Complicated feelings awoken in him.
2. An old desire reawakening after ten years of sleep.
3. A new fantasy coming out in the blazing sun.

All of these lead to what psychoanalysis calls the consequence of suppressing these instincts. And, this consequence in this case is the realization or being aware of the instincts.

What are the factors that motivate the origination of the consequence?

1. The environment, the highlander code and moral circumstances (The restriction).
2. The garden and the plum tree full of fruits, direct impulses to influence the psychological reality of Lec Gurrmolla, mentioned in the obscurity of the past. It is the spacious breathing garden full of trees, with moving insects; it is that plum tree full of ripe plums of wax color that have a great symbolic value.

<sup>89</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, London 1956.

Interpretation of Freudian symbols is entirely applied in the language, as if it were a strict and fixed code.<sup>90</sup>

Koliqi as an author is fully aware of the symbols chosen. Due to the Albanian circumstances, he had to be very careful in using Freudian symbols; thing that benefited his work, because it was enriched with modern expression elements, without imposing on it a grotesque modernization. It is a Koliqi characteristic to use Freudian symbols in an artistically functional manner, at any rate. Typical to this, is the novelette *“The plum tree beyond the wall”* where, entities like *“garden,” “vale,” “ravine”* are used symbolically instead of the female sexual functions.”<sup>91</sup>

B. This story includes a considerable number of symbols that can be divided into:

#### VI.4. SYMBOLS: First hand / second hand

Garden, Well’s neck

Wall, Vale

Plum tree, Lemon crate

Jam, peach, apple, pear, apricot

There are a number of adjectives observed, like: Bosnian plums, gipsy plums, bordake, pointy plums, new voice, watchful eyes. These symbols, except the denotative domain, also cover the connotative one, where the latter one is derived in context and based on the point of view, these two domains are marked as: S1 & S2 (firsthand symbols and secondhand symbols). But, from here the question arises naturally on how are these symbols and what do they represent?

Silence in the sun.

**Garden S2** Full of apricots, peaches, apples, quinces, plums.

Spacious, open (as in area).

For the modern prose writer, objects in themselves are unimportant and so they are nonfunctional from epiphany, or spiritualization.

The crossing of Adam, when the man sinned for the first time.

**Garden S2** A thriving and prosperous place, where people live happily.

The female sexual symbol.

Regarding the first value that the garden gets on the connotative domain, there is an explanation:

	Adam	Lec
<b>Garden Eve</b>		Old woman

<sup>90</sup> Floresha Dado, *“The theory of the literary work,”* Cited work, Pg. 210.

<sup>91</sup> Ardian Marashi, *“Koliqian Poles,”* Ibid. Pg. 36.

The first couple makes a sin (Eve) of picking the forbidden apple. But, what's the sin of Lec and his young bride once?!

The presence of reticence is observed in the story and in order to extract the essence of the phrase of actions, we emphasize exactly this reticence...*no, that's no theft...*

*"On the contrary, someone sleeping in that garden had stolen the old-time cravings of the soul. All summer long you'd steal half of my plums. Then, you'd go into my garden... - The...- you won't believe how happy I was when I saw you jump into the garden. Apples thrown this way, I know. I've said nothing. I let you come my way. When I spoke to you, I wanted to scare you, like then..."*<sup>92</sup>

Psychoanalysis reads the past, so that the present is understood, it starts with the consequences tracing them back to their origins.<sup>93</sup>

Just like the first of men, Eve that made the sin, but without evil and goodness, driven by the curiosity of tasting the forbidden apple, it was the same with Lec, ten years ago when his being was reigned by joy, cheer, dreams, he lost his most expensive thing, his virginity.

*"Then, you'd go into my garden"* – that means the sexual organ.

*"When I spoke to you, I wanted to scare you like then."*

*To scare you* – blood scare, treated by Freud, which is caused by defloration.

The Sin: loss of virginity, premarital sexual relationship. A thriving place where people live happy. The garden is flourishing, full of trees and shades, enabling our couple to be together somewhere in the hideaways of this garden.

The verb *"live"* has the meaning of being together a little, moments to be remembered constantly and build many moments of everyday life.

Even the wall makes it into firsthand symbols and secondhand symbols.

Not so high.

Falling whitewash.

**Wall S1** Beaten by rain and sun.

Color determinant.

Covered in moss.

Moral codes established by the society.

Impassable wall.

**Wall S2** Wall in the heart.

Wall in the mind.

<sup>92</sup> Ernest Koliqi, *"The flag tradesman,"* The story: *"The plum tree beyond the wall,"* Ibid. Pg. 120.

<sup>93</sup> Floresha Dado, *"The Theory of the Literary Work,"* Cited work, Pg. 216.

10 years of wall (like time stopped).

Wall in the heart, there were amorous feelings being fed in Lec's heart for someone who lived in that garden, but the customary, moral codes prohibited him from this, thing that compresses his sub-conscience. "*He felt the strange need to ask for the small fruit, as yellow as wax, of the plum tree beyond the wall.*"<sup>94</sup>

Wall in mind; since he planted the seed of love in his heart, he cultivated it in his mind, but studying abroad, the learning process, the feeling of being presented as an intellectual stop his ego at the wall by Essie where the excitement is hiding.

"*It was not his first time, after coming back to Shkodra, to his uncles', but never had he had a chance to see all the hideaways with hidden sweet memories of the distant childhood. It's been ten years, even more, to have not seen that wall.*"<sup>95</sup>

In Roland Crane's "*Language of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry,*" are expressed the first initiatives of theorizing symbolic criticism. It is the consciousness of a second, deep, vast and symbolic language, from which the work of art is created.

Once the existence of the work of art in oneself is admitted, says Bart, it becomes impossible not to accept to the utmost extent, the phases of a symbolic reading, which acceptance understands the acceptance of plurality, verticality of meanings, and the polysemy.<sup>96</sup>

Whereas, according to Jean Paul Weber, in symbolism of the work, it is stated that the symbol speaks about an event or situation of personal or semi-personal traits of the author. Based on the phenomenological point of view, the topic that structures a work with a variety of images can be represented as an object, as a scene, as a cluster of reminiscences.

A symbol is composed of events, gestures, indeterminable acts, related to; inter alia, the myth and the rite, as well.

Even the plum is presented as firsthand symbol and secondhand symbol:

	Tall in height.
	Blossoming white flowers.
<b>Plum S1</b>	With ripe fruits.
	Bosnian and bodoric.
	Jam.
	It's like a plum – the Body.
<b>Plum S2</b>	Face like a plum flower.

<sup>94</sup> Ernest Koliqi, "*The Flag Tradesman,*" The story: "*The plum tree beyond the wall,*" Ibid. Pg. 116-117.

<sup>95</sup> Ernest Koliqi, "*The Flag Tradesman,*" The story: "*The plum tree beyond the wall,*" Ibid. Pg. 115-117.

<sup>96</sup> Stefan Capaliku, "*The Interpreted Literature,*" Arbri, Tirana 1998, Pg. 51.

The chest like a Bosnian plum.

Fruits such as: peaches, apples, pears, plums, well's neck, vale, are symbols that portray the female body in erotica.

*"The well's gap, brought from Venice long ago, with the vale alongside, shining bright at the end."*<sup>97</sup>

Lec made an epiphany, projecting his young bride, who, whenever looking at the plum tree, stature, fruits, flowers would remind him of her body, chest, her face.... But, why exactly jam, not plums?!

If we refer to psychoanalysis, jam is boiled out of plums, the boiling process reminds you of the mortification process, just like plum grains press one another while boiling in the kettle, and emotions are mortified, as well.

"It's made of your plums. He bowed his head and asked for the jam" – Lec feels.

*"A taste of vanished summers, distant seasons."* All of this is a symbol of a performed sexual act.

At the beginning, the only main character is Lec Gurrmolla, which in the final pages echoes a threatening voice, being of an old woman with vibrant looks and a river colored headdress, speaking from the window with a laugh. Even the character of the old woman is placed on two domains, S1 and S2 respectively:

Threatening voice.

With vibrant eyes and a scarf of river color.

**Old woman S1** The old woman on window dressed in white.

Spiritually dressed in white like the musical tune.

Feelings preserved since long ago (aging).

**Old woman S2** Long expectation (Where are you, you got me aging?!)

Experience from life, old man.

Juxtaposing of Lec with the old woman leads us to the conclusion of psychoanalysis, where it is said: the man was considered as a transformation of a being designed between the Eros (love) and Thanatos (death).

### LEC

Eros	Thanatos
Love	Death
A young bride once	Old woman
Plums on a tree bough	Jam

<sup>97</sup> Ernest Koliqi, *"The Flag Tradesman,"* The story: *"The plum tree beyond the wall,"* Ibid. Pg. 119.

The psychical reality of Lec Gurrmolla proves that his sexual instincts have not faded away, on the contrary. Here we see the *I* to show up, and directly join with the instinct drives. This fact is also found in the olden bride.

*“The old woman, following his every move, was spiritually joining him.”*

Regarding the so-called secondhand symbols, there are: ravine, vale, typical sexual, female organs.

*Apples, peaches, plums, lemons: erotic symbols (chest).*

*“Vines hanging on their boles, with shadows alongside, leaves sprayed with bluestone and holding in the grapes, not yet ripe and still to savor, fruit trees lined up in between, apricots, peaches, pears, apples, quinces, plums.”<sup>98</sup>*

One of the moves of the discourse used in this story is time deformations. All refractions inserted in the story development order, against the order in which events take place in the story are called anachronisms, according to the narratology theory.

The time alternation of the occurrence of events and the moment of narration is made possible with the combination of two grammatical tenses, the imperfect one and the perfect simple of the indicative mood.

This alternation of time that creates a further escalation in the writing has an internal cause of situation parallelism which not only reveals the past of the character, but also the essence of the nature that he embodies.

Counting the grammatical verbs, there are: the imperfect, as in: boiling, coming, wanting. Past simple, as in: came down, came in, wrapped.

There is also the semantic time:

1. Before 10 years (Lec was a child).
2. After 10 years (He was a grown up, educated).

The author introduces us to a second time events, after 10 years, a definite present ‘*one July day.*’ The relationships between the chronological and artistic times are built up by subordinating some events to the ellipse. *“This happened to him after 10 years.”*

These time (tense) malformations are of an elliptic form.

*“Along with the desire, there was awoken and burning from inside the memory of such a fantasy that shook his soul many years before.”*

The interposition between the synchronic and the diachronic gives the story a special explicit meaning, so that a moment in the life of a character is stressed out.

*“The grassy bedding lay there ahead, a fancywork of sunrays and spines, fairytale wonders unfolding under the feet of a missing princess.”<sup>99</sup>*

The garden of buzzing insects and butterflies which compared to the psychical situation of the character symbolizes the chaotic movement of libido pulsations.

<sup>98</sup> Ernest Koliqi, *“The Flag Tradesman,”* The story: *“The plum tree beyond the wall,”* Ibid. Pg. 115.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. Pg. 118.

*“The garden in that hot afternoon is silent in the sun. Its silence was simmering inside with endless sounds, just tuneless and undertone. Flying insects and butterflies; droning are bees, humblebees. It felt like an intense breathing of plants, a deep vegetal drift spreading out through that silence of gold.”<sup>100</sup>*

The same thing happens in the description of the stranger’s garden, in which garden there are stairs of the old house, well kept stairs. Climbing them (stairs), the strength, energy it takes to climb one to another is a reminder of the process of awakening of those pulsations and being aware of it (gradually).

*“Entered a garden, all under a shadow, full of freshness, where he felt the unexpected sense of freshness. He climbed the stairs of an old house, well kept one. Upstairs in a smile, the window old lady waited for him, dressed in brandavek and a white apron in front.”<sup>101</sup>*

The narrator, narrating his story and that of his character puts himself in their acting the role and becomes an intermediary between the author and the reader. Besides the dialogue and monologue used by the author, the technique of narration by the narrator enables messages to be transmitted.

#### *Transmitter–Message–Recipient*

*Author–Reader*

*Narrator*

*Standard reader*

*Implicit reader*

The message conveyed by the author is:

1. The duality of being aware of one’s sexual instincts or pulsations is a universal issue. On the human psyche weighs on a moral burden that distinguishes the mankind from other beings.
2. The culture and the customary law, in particular does not oblige the human social existence only, but also its biological existence.

The role of the psychoanalytic criticism is to reveal, during illustration, text structuring, and the role of desire, what connects the psychoanalyst with the rhetoric and the narration, namely the desire plays a role in the process of writing and reading.

The road followed by Koliqi to approach modernity as a language is somewhat special. Self-proclaimed as a “*moderate modernist*,” the turn towards the invention of special objects and language with which this invention is expressed, he does it by the poetic prose.<sup>102</sup>

Koliqi, a traditional poet, as much as a modernist one, is a master in preserving racial virtues and traditional transitioning into the Freudian pole of breaking the taboos.<sup>103</sup>

As a conclusion, this study viewed through the psychoanalysis and the opportunity it gives in interpretation, it can be said that the transitioning of Koliqi from the tradition of the mountain shadow, from ancestral roots into the Freudianism symbolism, is done naturally and in a soft manner, without revolting as we

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. Pg. 115.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. Pg. 119-120

<sup>102</sup> Dhurata Shehri, “*Personalities of Modernity*,” The International Seminar on the Albanian Language, Literature and Culture, UP, FF, 24/2, Prishtina 2005, Pg. 215.

<sup>103</sup> Ardian Marashi, “*Koliqian Poles*,” Ibid. Pg. 36-37.

shall see in Migjeni, managing to get into the darkest corners of human consciousness and the characters of his work, themselves.

He gives complete freedom to the sublimated love of the plum old lady, but in no way he would approve an adulterous type love of the old lady, while he talks about “her long life spent nobly in the spirit of our most beautiful customs.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ernest Koliqi, “*The Flag Tradesman*,” The story: “*The plum tree beyond the wall*,” Ibid. Pg. 121.