

CHILDREN'S CONCEPT - WIDE SPECTRUM

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Abstract

This study includes Agim Deva's literature about children. It includes two main aspects: The concept of a child and the social topic. The notion of the child in his literature is treated in both horizontal and vertical extension. The study is based on theoretical analysis, linguistic and literature. In some features it is treated as a poem and poetry. It includes some content of fables with associative analogies in works for children and the composition has not a linear line, but rather an entangled line where few segments of the concept of a child are presented. From the variety of topics, social topic is partly presented.

Keywords: child, verse, literature, notion, figuration, parallelism, synonym, symbol, comparison, concept, fable.

Introduction

The notion of a child is attributed in every literary creativity, scientific-public and in every other activity by Agim Deva. This is noticed in some of his work, such as: A collection of children's poems, children's novels, plays/dramas for children, etc. In his studies: Albanian poetry for children, our novel for children, Anthology of world literature for children or other works, such as: Close to children, the caravan of writers for children. This is the reason why Agim Deva is identified as the author for children and Agim Deva as a name and the notion "Child" are strongly bound, the same as flesh and bone. Since it is a declarative form of defining and pointing out his work, the study will shift to the core or to the content of the literary text, which clarifies the author's position related to the concept "child" and the extension of this concept.

The notion 'child' in Agim Deva's work is concerted in three ways, *synonymously* as: girl, lass, kid, child, infant...Synonymous concept of the notion "child", Deva uses inside the poem:

The shop assistant knows what the girl wants'
She picks up a pen with a green heart
Who knows what she wants to write
Or
The little girl lives far away
3 days journey by train
That shiny waterfall
The girl will not find again¹.

The notion 'Child', *symbolically* as lamb, flower, bird, spring, sky, dove, crane, rabbit, squirrel, turkey, etc. While *associatively* the notion "child" is in: birds-nest-shelter, woods-deer, and star-sky-clouds. The creative process of literal work relies on the reader's experience. Taking into account the three dimensional aspect: the author-his work- the receiver, Deva dedicated almost all of his work to children. The receptive world of the child is limited on the basis of some basic criteria that specify literary creativity for children. Every writer who writes for children has considered this. Deva is one of them who stand for these criteria that offer this kind of literature. Age is one of these criteria. All of Deva's work is characterized in few age groups: preschool work, as: "This is me", "Loni and Lirak in the Woods", work for children aged 5-6 years old until 16-17 years old, or work for adolescence or old childhood. Agim Deva's creativity meets all other criteria laid before this literature, as pedagogical, psychological, cognitive function, hedonistic, recreational, educational and aesthetics. Deva as a person who understands and knows the life, the world, the soul and the mind of a child has understood and fulfilled all of these criteria in his literary work.

The text is fulfilled and expressed through language, which clearly expresses the artistic message, the rich lexis in symbolical, synonymous and associative way. The importance stands for both the creator and the reader or the receiver

¹ Agim Deva, Gishtë ngjyrë vjollce, pg 20, 22

of this work. Anton Berisha says: “the reader is present in the writer’s sub consciousness - he leads in a great mass the creativity and the final literary and artistic work². Entangling the personal experience, classical, modern, traditional, and selecting one of the shortest form of the literary and artistic concept: the verse, - taking/considering the child’s experience as a reader/receiver/receptor- he became a well known writer for children. The creator’s relation with the child as a receptor Deva is capable of making such balances with the child. In some cases, the creator is a grandfather, who tells fairytales ”Once upon a time”, “A little girl far away”, Three days by train”, - so he is a teacher who teaches them. These are all relative relationships, between the creator and the receptor/receiver, such as grandfather, grandmother; mother, father, brother, sister, uncle and aunt, etc. He also makes social relations as: friend, pal, mate, acquaintance, and teacher. In his poems, the author comes up as a lyrical subject. He claims, tells, and asks e.g. “ The girls are growing up”; A little girl with fishtail braid”, ”Once upon a time”, “A little girl is smiling at the window”, “Tell me pal, where does the fog stand?”, “Why don’t we change our eyes?”, Why do fish jump onto the water?”

The concept of a “Child”

Agim Deva cultivated the lyrical case, such as verse and poem. The verses are characterized by fables. They all tell an event, plots, different characters talking about children, as children, animals, parents, friends, teachers, grandparents, etc. Sometimes, the poems appear as short plays, animated in some cases. Sometimes naughty children, children who play and even as social children not socialized. They are all children, but they do adult’s work. The author is not only concerned for the children who do live, but he is also concerned for the unborn children, who are considered just as a plan, or as a hope.

How to deal with children

Your child has decided to fight with you. The poetical text is developed through graduation, step by step. This war awakens different connotations. At this kind of war the children use different non-military weapons such as ice cream, hugging, kissing, trotinettes, bicycles; the enemy that the children are fighting

² Anton Berisha, Teksti poetik, pg. 37

with is father and grandfather. If father is a teacher or grandfather is retired, then they are unarmed. So they cannot make war without guns. The main weapon is money. Through metonymy – as a figure- here the teacher’s position is declined as a person with “low wages” and the retiree as a person with “empty pockets”.³

When children see a reflection

Here we have a figurative parallelism. This parallelism originates since the author’s childhood and continues up to today with his children. It is a metaphor, once thought that his father was a world bank, now his children consider/think of him –a world bank. This figurative parallelism now-then, is reinforced with the same comparison -World Bank.⁴

Save the planet for kids

The poem “The planet loves the children, the little ones by all its heart” is a constructed poem, more as a kind of an advice, plea or suggestion. The emphasis is always put to the child whether it is “Save the planet for our children” or vice- versa: “Save the children for our planet”. At the end of the poem, the author makes a conclusion, using comparison: Let the planet be green/lively/happy as children are.

You are a child as I was once

Using verbal conversational locution, there is a parallelism, a likening: “You are a child as I was once, that two rocks did not let together”. In the first part, there is the figure of comparison- a child as I was once. The second part, that two rocks did not let together. It is alluded to naughty children, lively ones, spoiled, curious, daring ones. By using four verbs in imperative forms, the author expresses four requests or advices. Dare, when nobody else dares, swim when nobody swims, shout when nobody shouts, and discover what is not discovered. At the semantic level, these tips are antonyms that are challenged by the particle “No”. According to the author, this is the only way that only children can do with sincerity, courage, bravery and truth. Children are

³ Agim Deva, Mungon një zemër, pg. 71

⁴ Agim Deva, Shtatë mrekullitë e mia, pg.29, 40

encouraged to do actions that adults hesitate to do.⁵

I am a fearless child

It is a poem that clearly shows the child's sincerity. He admits, he is saying the truth. "I do not mix colors. I do not say that white is black, nor black is white, the same as a bear cannot be a bee". The lyrical character, in this case is the child, comparing himself with a flower which, if not watered cannot be changed.

A bird or a child

The poetical text is conceptualized as a dialogue. The imaginary dialogue is developed between a bird and a child. Child's imaginary monologue: "It so nice to be a bird, and fly from lime to elder. Everywhere you can fly, yours is the sky, and the earth is yours. You don't have nerves to be nervous, neither card to gamble. You don't know about the time-you don't care. You don't understand what they say, you neither lie, nor steal, neither hate, nor be hated". Bird's imaginary monologue: "It so nice to be a child. Somebody comes near you early in the morning and takes care of you. You have your language, you can talk, tell where it hearts. When strong winds blow, you are in the class with your teacher, with your friends and classmates. When you come back home, you have a roof over your head. Your mother sets you the table, not as the bird's case looking for food on the way. When you suffer, you can talk to your sister. Even with your toys you can talk. And when the night comes, in the darkness somebody wishes you a good night". The end of this poetical text is finished with a question: "Now I really do not know is it better to be a bird or a child? The child and the bird's life are compared through visual parallelism and likening. The bird is a personified character to which the poetic image is portrayed by the author while the child is a natural character with father, mother, sister, brother, friend, teacher, etc. Agim Deva's child is personified synonymously, associatively and symbolically, as an unborn child, preschooler, as 16 years old child or as a personified child.⁶ "How do children understand?"-*Is a poem constructed with a rhetorical question?*

⁵ Agim Deva, *Kush troket në mua*, pg 86

⁶ Agim Deva, *Fjalim nga tavolina*, pg. 41, 97

So it seems best understood
On the same ship, the sea without waves,
Childish laughter, childish rejoice
The coir of smiles-Song without words.⁷

Rightly, in her study "Children's literature", Qibrije Demiri Frangu considers Deva as an important author, without him there would not be Albanian literature for children.⁸ So, his literary creativity has the child as the main character. The provocative text "As children grow", the author proves that he is observing them how they grow up, treating them in a very familiar educational and social surrounding.

E.g. how they grow, we do not know
They live as flowers, as children they grow
But when a child sits on my lap
10 years younger I feel, at least.⁹

For children's sake, he deals with adults, too. The author advises the older ones, commanding thus: 'Save the planet for children'-'do not hide the sun, the planet loves the children – they should grow up'. He shows all his love toward children, the sincerity and purity of children, expressing that only verse can tell if it was the children's world, adults are not as sincere as they are, etc. Besides being creative, Deva was a literary scholar, lecturer, and the compiler of many textbooks. In his work, he included children of all age categories, using illustrative books for preschoolers, interweaving literary art with utilitarian, didactic and educational writings, as writings about the environment "Flower Time"; about traffic "The passport of my life", etc. Or writings for children with special need as "Zana's Hero" all kinds of writings through to younger people and adolescents, as "Clocks without hands". He created his lyrical work - the most cultivated type was poetry, by which he perpetuated the whole literary universe.

⁷ Agim Deva, Qyteti I pikëpyetjeve, pg.40

⁸ Qibrije Demiri, Letërsia për fëmijë, pg.133

⁹ Agim Deva, Mungon një zemër, pg. 12

Social themes in Deva's poetry

Social issues have an important place in Deva's writings, motivated by different factors, social problems that are still continuing. Such topic is highlighted in "Xhela with a wheel", "Xhela will grow up- another time" and "Xhela has found his star". The character of Xhela entails social drama of the time which continues today as poverty, current and indispensable phenomenon in literature, child's labor for survival, war invalids-their position in society, bureaucracy and corruption. Xhela's character and the author himself live together, as classmates, on the street, at the market, on the train, in a café, in Bllaca; the only place where they will not be together is the woods. This is the reason why the author feels sorrow. If he had the chance to turn the time back, when they were students" At least not be pleased, but be pleased for Xhela's sake". These are not the only writings about Xhela's character. This character continues to live in other books, such as "Someone is robbing my town". Using a rhetorical question, the author treats the problems in the following verses: "Who knows where Xhela is?" Here the author is concerned for the loss of Xhela in the cold.

But I know
It's freezing outside
Hungry again, him – I can find.¹⁰

After the war Xhela is poor again. He has sacrificed his body for this freedom, but this freedom hasn't given him anything more, except the inability to work, as he is a disabled person now. He feels embarrassed in front of the electric energy taxpayers.

The incessant goes down the stairs
Leni and Xhela feel ashamed
Oh, if I only had my dear Lenka
Two arms as I had once
With a trolley, at the market
I would work from sunrise to sunset.¹¹

¹⁰ Agim Deva, Mungon një zemër, pg. 12

¹¹ Agim Deva, Kush troket në mua, pg. 97

Deva incorporates Xhela's character again, in "Xhela, guess who am I"- using a rhetorical question or hide-n-seek games. The author seeks to hide the reality of the worshiped person, in order not to evoke the associations of an early childhood experience, not to anger the character.

And again: "Trolley, who wants a trolley.
Phone credits, lighters, cigars!
An adult's "game", are the children "playing"
Xhela is thinking of workshops..."

The song about Xhela was only for him once, but today it is a current typical problem. Today it is sung to Xhela(s) in plural.

It was raining heavily, the author is concerned for all these children in the street, trying to earn for their living.

"Do you think that kids in the rain,
Turn their trolleys upside down at the market
Where are all these children sheltered?
Their present childhood is torn apart."¹²

Agim Deva mocks the fact that there are so many workshops/seminars at "Grand" hotel, treating topics about children, children's rights, but all these remain words only. It angers the author, because this is the reality, that can be seen everywhere: on the roads, on the sidewalks and in the squares- children's voices are everywhere: "Come no, buy cigars, phone credits", etc. The emptiness that Agim Deva left in literature for children- is best expressed by children themselves, adding the epithet: The Captain of the Caravan of Writers for Children.

¹²Agim Deva, Gurët fluturues, pg. 142, 144

Conclusion

Agim Deva is the writer of over eighty literary creations for children. He has enriched his literary creativity by adding books for adults and other works such as monographs, anthologies, compiling textbooks, etc. The child is the main character of Agim Deva's literature. Literary text demonstrates their rise, considering their educational and social environment. Do children grow more at night or by day? In winter or in summer? Or if they are rich or poor? His range of child's observation is very wide. Agim Deva's child- as a character- is a synonym, association, a symbol, a personification, etc. as an unborn child, as a preschooler or as sixteen years old person, as an animated child and as a social *being*.

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