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FIGURA E KALIT TË TROJËS NË POEZINË SHQIPE

ФИГУРАТА НА ТРОЈАНСКИОТ КОЊ ВО АЛБАНСКАТА ПОЕЗИЈА

THE FIGURE OF THE TROJAN HORSE IN ALBANIAN POETRY

“The act of language is the act of fiction.”
Gerard Genette

Abstract

Myth is a writing that reflects in contemporary literature, a modulation of reflection—meaning. For Schelling, mythology is the basic prefiguration of configuration. It is a permanent matter, from which, astonishingly, various forms are recreated. The interaction between myth and literature is that myth is the prefiguration of expressive literary themes, modeling receptors—the configuration of mythical figures. The category of chaos means escaping from the present time, the author’s departure from factuality to fiction. Implication: the shaping of a shaped myth. Prefiguration: the mythical figures Prometheus—Trojan Horse, configuration: the literary figures Prometheus—Monster.

Myth is not polysemy; the symbol is polysemic. The symbol can (but not necessarily) be mythological. “*The Trojan Horse*” is a mythical symbol with a polysemic function, a figurative synthesis of the past and the present, an association of its kind, as an aesthetic function of beauty. The notion of association is a construction of poetic imagery for “The Trojan Horse,” which comes in modern times (in the present time). Here there exists an implicit association, which demands a symbolic interpretation, as in Tennyson’s “Odysseus” poem of the same title, since the figure of “*The Trojan Horse*” is

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a participant (e.g., in Homer's *Iliad*). The figure of "The Trojan Horse" is a symbolic figure, particularly polysemic, a living synthesis, or as Gi Michel calls it, a "dynamic center," a place where material and spiritual, concrete and abstract, myth and permanence intersect. Decoding the mythical symbol "*The Trojan Horse*" refers to the imperative phrase "**do not trust the horse**," while the discursive parable connects two times: the time of the Trojan War and modern times. The parable is a construction of symbolic imagery, which, according to the definition, leads to the idea of "don't trust the horse." The polysemy of the mythical symbol "The Trojan Horse" includes:

- Existence at risk, as in various phases of different civilizations and cultures, collective existence is endangered;
- Deception, betrayal, wrongdoing (the Trojans were killed in their sleep, so they had no opportunity to defend themselves).

Also, Ali Podrimja wrote a poem with the same title, "The Trojan Horse," which he divided into five parts:

1. *It is among the people;*
2. *And you never forgot it;*
3. *After the disturbance, its traces are erased;*
4. *You remain younger than you were;*
5. *Return to Homer's verse.*

Since the symbol is a polysemic sign, when we decode the symbol of the **Trojan Horse**, the following references emerge: betrayal, cunning, deception, trickery, etc.

Keywords: Poetry, Structure, Figure, Intertextuality, The Trojan Horse etc.

Introduction

The interpretation of figures functions as the "discovery" of ideas, emotions, or artistic images in various literary forms, such as, for example, in our study—in storytelling and poetry. We interpret literary figures to emphasize the deeper meanings of the literary text. Without their semantic and hermeneutic interpretation, the poetic and aesthetic values of a literary work would be diminished and insufficiently revealed.

In a systematic way, we aim to read the complex distinction between sign and figure, as well as the distinction between figure and symbol—and not just that, but we will also define the meaning of the symbol and the paradigmatic references carried by the sign-symbol through the process of interpretation. We are aware that figures like parables or symbols must be interpreted and, in a way, pragmatized—figures transformed into transformative pragmas through reading and the reader.

Myth and Parable

The classical definition of myth: myth is a simple narrative, an expression of the creation of the world, people, gods, of natural and social realities. Cause: the essence of the genesis of the world and its beginnings, a narrative of creation. Ancient man proposed the mythical scheme: marking chaos—transformation into cosmos, through the questions why and how. The existential mode—the author, with the tendency to answer the posed questions, is based on the ancient myth, the fabulative form—prefiguration transformed into configuration. In essence, myth is a writing that reflects in contemporary literature, a modulation of reflection—meaning. For Schelling, mythology is the basic prefiguration of configuration.

“It is a perpetual matter, from which astonishingly different forms are recreated.” (Schelling; 81)

The interaction between myth - literature shows that myth is the prefiguration of expressive literary themes, modeling receptors—configuration of mythical figures. The category of chaos signifies the escape from the present time, the author’s departure from reality to fiction. Implication: shaping the formed myth. Prefiguration: the mythical figures Prometheus—Trojan Horse; configuration: the literary figures Prometheus—Monster.

The artistic linguistic text is a sign / a semantic whole. Roland Barthes defines the interaction of myth today as: a semiotic system of the second degree / a metalanguage of language. “The sign in language, the signifier in myth, the conversion of myth from meaning to form.” (Barthes: 1975: 15) Analogical definition: the signifier is a metonymic projection in relation to the whole / microcosm in macrocosm. The sign-text creates relations:

- Similar, an analogy with the referents it marks, and
- Contact of parts, wholes.

The relations constitute associations similar between the world of the text and the referent. The sign–referent relation is a logical relation of part to whole. The world of the text (hetero-/homodiegetic narrative schemes, spatio-temporal coordinates) is not a synecdochic projection—part of the whole, but a metonymic projection—a whole of the whole, a belonging to the whole, a non-coherent structure of the world, an immanent structure of existence, a textual projection materialized in interpretation. “The fact that literature assumes a will for sustained communication compels us to project it as a message towards some ‘undefined purpose’.” (Durand: 1987: 27)

In the metalanguage of criticism, metonymy turns into metaphor. The comprehensibility of discursive metaphor depends on metonymic continuity. Text–metaphor is an aesthetic tendency, through the physical (word) it touches the metaphysical (idea, emotion); it is an operation that develops in thought and not in words. The texts *Monster* and *Prometheus* are defined as

text–metaphor through the principle of similarity/analogy. We recognize the dialectic of crisis, the chaotic existence of modern man, a recognition from another aspect of contact. The phenomenon of narrative is a phenomenon: the transformation of narrative with semantic implications. Semantic transformations are realized through: analogy (metaphor, personification), contact, contiguity (metonymy, paronomasia), part of the whole (synecdoche), the opposite (irony, satire, antithesis), contradiction (oxymoron, paradox, grotesque), etc.

The text as a sign is polysemic. For example, Prometheus / The Monster, apart from being text-metaphor, are also text-allegory. Distinction: on the macrostructural level of the text, allegory cannot be identified with metaphor, or treated as an extended metaphor. The ambiguity of allegory, besides the principle of analogy-similarity, also carries the principle of allusion. The literary text is a paradigmatic sign: text-metaphor, text-allegory. The explicit semantic value of allegory is given in the text, while the implicit semantic value of allegory is provided by the semantic potential of the text.

“In the structure of the text, allegory brings time as a basic constituent, revealing time through re-actualization as a constitutive act of understanding. Airplanes fly over Prometheus’ head. Kadare’s Totalitarian Horse is an allusion to the Trojan Horse. “The horse I created had its legs in myth, its head in modernity.” (Kadare; 1993)

The aesthetic narrative of the novel *The Monster* is a parable of mythical and contemporary times: the abduction of Lena by Genti, the abduction of Helen (beauty) by Paris; the wooden horse, the garbage truck, are allegories of the totalitarian system. The text-allegory is also a projection of the process of symbolization. Distinction: the symbol, in terms of structure, is a synecdoche; it is not ambiguous speech. The symbol is a synthesis of subject and object, a transfer of the attributes of the subject to the object. Allegory is a linguistic sign that constructs the physical reality functionally. The symbol is a conjunction of image–material, while allegory is a disjunction of image–material. The text-sign contains both allegory and symbol, two distinct expressive entities.

“Kadare’s myth... is a type of literary myth that has abandoned fact to transform it into a symbol.” (Qapriqi; 55)

The core of the myth is the archetype or the language of the symbol: it implies a tendency, with symbolic figures—Prometheus and the Trojan Horse—being archetypes/collective subconsciousness—betrayal and resistance. “The mythical symbols of Kadare are collective consciousness that begins with self-awareness. A human being is not complete until being and consciousness are in proportion.” (Rexhepi, 2008: 70)

The mythical figure transformed into a model of recreation—a palimpsest—changes the being of the reader; it is an initiation—a transition from one state to another of the reader’s consciousness.

For Kadare, myth is not static matter but dynamic; it is a moving matter, changing over time through the interpreter via the process of demythification. It is a decoded code for physical reality. Kadare uses the process of demythification because he understands that being and history are objects of knowledge—they change. The comparative history of religion and philosophy defines myth as a verbal structure that conserves being and meaning (Schlegel and Nietzsche, Eliade and Krappe); the expression or manifestation of being in a narrative—myth—is defined as the interpreter's translation of being. The classical definition of hermeneutics denotes the interpretation and explains the meaning of being.

For Heidegger, the phenomenology of existence (Da-sein) is a denotative hermeneutics of the word through which interpretation is realized. The question arises, simultaneously mythical (substantial) and hermeneutical: the question of creation, the decoding of the essential code of the being of the world. Demythification enables Kadare to interpret and explain the truth hidden within historical time, capturing the intensity of the initial experience—an analogy to mythical intensity. In fact, Kadare's demythification is also explanation, an interpretation of codes, a consistent hermeneutics that decodes the myth.

Myth and Symbol

To achieve the distinction between *sign and symbol*, it is essential to examine some views from various theorists who provide ideas about the interpretation of the symbol. In the study “*Symbol*,” the founder of semiological-informative aesthetics, the renowned Italian theorist Umberto Eco, uses the phrase “artistic symbol.” We presume Eco employs this term to differentiate the symbol of art, for example, from the symbol of algebra that expresses an exact meaning. Abstraction produces the sign; art, conversely, avoids the sign and alludes to the symbol, implying that the symbol is more than the sign: it leads to “the other side of meaning,” depends on interpretation, and is enriched with affectivity and dynamism.

The philosophy of “the myth of eternal return,” encountered in the philosophical concepts of the controversial philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, aligns with the psychological concept of Carl G. Jung—the archetypes. For Jung, archetypes are prototypes of symbolic wholes, deeply rooted in the unconscious, which form its structure. According to Jung, “archetypes are defined as a universal and genetic, psychic structure, a kind of collective consciousness.” (Rječnik simbola, 1927: 59) In reality, I agree with Eco's view, who encapsulates Jung's psychological concept of the symbol through the lexemes “archetypal and sacred.” Eco evaluates that the existence of the symbol for Jung implies analogy, precisely semiotics, which involves ontology and metaphysics. Without ontology and metaphysics of the sacred and divine, we would not have symbolism, nor endless interpretations.

There are organic links between the symbol and the myth, viewing it as a type of desacralization of language itself in its everyday usage. It is understood that only in the language of poetry, as a source of magic, does the word preserve its mystical expressive power. The connection with myth or the relationship with myth characterizes nearly all epochs and literary movements, as well as the era of symbolism. According to some scholars, the revival of interest in myth in the second half of the 19th century is tied to the era of symbolism, where the image of archetypes of the world is evidenced through myth. In other words, myth, although representing the oldest form of human narrative, does not fall under the domain of temporal chronology but suggests the existence of another world that is continually renewed. Hence, it is logical for scholars to support their arguments that art at the end of the 19th century moves towards intuition and mysticism by treating myth as a reference point, but also as a “structure”—not only as a formal structure of the artistic work but also as a spiritual structure of the cultural world itself.” (Gjurgjan, 1992: 57–79).

Albanian poetry created in the 1970s would convey its message through symbolist and metaphorical language, which is seen as the most powerful tool of modern poetry. Albanian poets, considering the broad repertoire of symbols, would use mythical symbols in their poetry, among others, whether from Greek mythology or national-historical mythology.

The symbol is itself the correspondence of the material and the spiritual. According to Erich Fromm, “the language of symbols is perhaps the only universal language of mankind that remains the same and unchanged.” On one hand, we deal with the desacralization of language in everyday usage, while on the other hand, it is believed that only in the language of poetry does the word retain the strength of its mythical source. Thus, myth loses its autonomy because symbolism does not exist spontaneously but transforms into a kind of intellectualized indirect statement, with the awareness to illuminate the subconscious of the author’s “self.” One of the mythical symbols used in Albanian poetry is the “*Trojan Horse*.” Like the sign, the symbol also has its reference and referent, but the symbol differs from the sign because it is a polysemic sign. In the renowned study by Ogden/Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, the distinction between sign and symbol is made. Paradigm is crucial for such a distinction.

We read poetry through words, or alternatively, through the reception of words, we perceive the lyrical figure of a given poem. The reception of words in Ismail Kadare’s poem *The Trojan Horse* leads us to the semiological direction of “far-near,” while the respective myth, the Trojan Horse, is brought into modern times. The preliminary construction of words forms the imagery (the photograph) of the verses, which characterizes the symbolist style.

*From the stillness of the night...
Do you hear us from afar...
From the depths of distant moments
Toward our modern cities
A strange horse approaches
The Trojan Horse.*

In these verses, Kadare's distinctive language is clearly evident, which speaks and transitions from "**imagery toward idea.**" The imagery in poetry gives us the symbol of the Trojan Horse. The lexeme aligns with the ordinary intertextual layer of the mythical symbol. "It often emerges that the tendency of the symbol in symbolist literature is to present multivalence (polivalence), which brings it closer to the structure of myth." Myth is not polysemy; the symbol is polysemic. The symbol can (but not necessarily) be mythological. "The Trojan Horse" is a mythical symbol with a polysemic function, a figurative synthesis of the past and the present, a unique association, as an aesthetic function of beauty. The notion of association is a construction of poetic imagery for the "Trojan Horse," which appears in modern times (in the present time). Here, an implicit association exists, requiring symbolic interpretation, as in Tennyson's poem titled *Ulysses*, since the figure of the "Trojan Horse" participates (e.g., in Homer's *Iliad*). The figure of the "Trojan Horse" is a symbolic figure, particularly polysemic, a living synthesis, or according to Gi Misho, a "dynamic center," a place where the material and the spiritual, the concrete and the abstract, myth and permanence intersect.

Decoding the mythical symbol "Trojan Horse" references the imperative phrase "do not trust the horse," while the discursive parable connects two times: the time of the Trojan War and modern times. The parable is a construction of symbolic imagery, which by definition leads to the idea "**do not trust the horse.**" The polysemy of the mythical symbol "Trojan Horse" includes: The risk to existence, as collective existence is endangered at different stages of civilizations and cultures; Deception, betrayal, wrongdoing (the Trojans were killed in their sleep, unable to defend themselves). Ali Podrimja also wrote a short poem with the same title, *The Trojan Horse*, divided into five parts:

1. *It is among the people;*
2. *And you never forgot it;*
3. *After the commotion, its traces are erased;*
4. *You remain younger than you were;*
5. *Return to Homer's verse.*

From this short poem, the symbols of the **Trojan Horse and the shell** emerge. Since the symbol is a polysemic sign, when we decode the symbol of the **Trojan Horse**, the following references arise: betrayal, cunning, deception, trickery, etc.; whereas from the **shell** symbol, references such as

preservation and the fanatic safeguarding of things emerge. In the first part of the poem, we see that the verses reveal:

*“It is among the people
from the north,
from the east from the south,
from the west
it enters and exits,
exits and enters in a shell
of curse it is among the people.”*

The poem begins with the verse “***It is among the people***,” indicating that the Trojan Horse—betrayal, cunning, deception, trickery, etc.—continues to remain prevalent among people. In the subsequent poetic verses, it appears that the poet engages in wordplay, enumerating the four corners of the world: “from the north, from the east / from the south, from the west.” Through these words, we understand that the aforementioned negative acts are widespread across the four corners of the world, among people.

Further, the poet seems to continue this wordplay: “*it enters and exits, exits and enters / in a shell of curse*.” In these verses, the poet conveys a message to the reader that these negative actions—betrayal, cunning, deception, trickery, etc.—are preserved even in modern times, safeguarded with fanaticism. It is no coincidence that the poet repeats the first verse of the poem again at the end: “It is among the people.” Thus, in the verses of the final part of the poem, the poet expresses revolt: “return to Homer’s verse / go back to where you came from.” In essence, the poet suggests:

“These negative acts should remain a part of history and no longer be relevant in the new era, specifically in modern times.”

Through the following verses, the poet’s message becomes clear: “Your time is not now; return / release people from yourself.” (Selimi, 2022: 54).

Conclusion

As emphasized in the study, Ismail Kadare and Ali Podrimja, in their extraordinary writings, possess a distinct and unique ideo-aesthetic and poetic power regarding the “return of myth,” specifically the myth of the Trojan Horse from Homer’s Iliad. In their marked poetics, they achieve this through discourse figures—parable and symbol—which are configured through mythical prefiguration, taking the form of configuration as mythical parables or mythical symbols.

Such ideo-figurative and ideo-poetic concepts signify the aesthetic value of these writers (Kadare in prose and Podrimja in poetry), enriching and further developing modern Albanian poetics.

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