



# COMPARATIVE AND TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS OF ISMAIL KADARES AND LUAN STAROVA

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## Abstract

What brings *Broken April* closer to *The Time of the Goats* is, in my opinion, their universal dimension, their similar construction as a "character novel", the tragic nature of the character, the polyphonic composition described by the re-appearance in various ethnographic, canonical, mythical and ideological forms.

Regarding the work of Ismail Kadare, researcher Ymer Çiraku says: "His pen creates a break with the narrative styles of traditional literature, becoming more powerful, more concentrated and with an existentialist tendency. From work to work, Kadare becomes an explorer of the existential essences of the individual and the nation, on a horizontal and vertical plane, with reflections and stylistic macro and microstructurings, almost dizzying."

## Keywords

Novel, character, styles, discourse, typologies, allegories

## INTRODUCTION

Regarding Luan Starova's work, researcher Fatmir Sulejmani says: "many of Luan Starova's novels (*The Time of the Goats*, *The Road of the Eels*, *The Museum of Atheism*, *The Balkan Sacrifice*...) contain the metaphor of sacrifice that among Albanians and Balkans touches the dimensions of a syndrome. In this respect, they represent a kind of continuation of what Ismail Kadare has written and is writing in well-known novels around the world, such as *"Broken April"*, *"The Castle"*, *"The Daughter of Agamemnon"*..."<sup>2</sup>

Kadare and Starova have a subject-matter affinity in terms of the tragic nature of the character. Such an analysis came naturally, after reading the novel *Koha e dhive* by the Albanian author from Macedonia and Kadare's novel *Prillin i toyrë*. The idea of sacrifice connects the two authors and the two works. I believe that these two authors have characters who, based on similar features, deserve comparative studies.

In the novel *Koha e dhive*, Starova's most beautiful character (in my opinion) appears as a popular, beloved character type, with the symbolic name Çanga. In Kadare's novel *Prillin i tohër*, the character of Gjorgju appears, who on the other hand has an anonymity, through which the phenomenon known to the reader of Kadare's novel is generalized: *totalitarian power*. The category of evil that will then produce the sacrifice is present throughout the narrative, characterized by the amorphous state in which the characters are and by a symbolic stratification expressed through the character. The idea of the literary work that emerges precisely from these novels that "the error and madness of the regime are found more in the origins from which the dictatorship was born, than in the dictatorship itself", and this idea makes the character not take on a fluid, clearly definable form. This evil clothes the character with the communist colors of the class struggle, and sometimes reveals the (hidden) Ottoman imperial colors. Precisely because of the wide distribution of the evil characteristic of two characters and two novels, the hero is destined to end tragically.

In both novels, the struggle between man and power is presented in symbolic form, which is not depicted as a typical Balkan quixotic attempt against windmills, but as an activation of the natural right of man to defend the "life" that is being taken away from him. Not in vain, the tragic character in the novel *Koha e dhive* bears two names, which do not have the same function. Çanga and Dhiari i madh are used at specific times, during the

<sup>1</sup> Ymer The apprentice, hearing Critique BY history of literature Albanian. Kadare's work *HOW ESSENTIAL EMANCIPATION IN literature Albanian*. Albas, 2011, p. 115

<sup>2</sup> Fatmir Sulejmani, *Luan Starova's Balkan Saga – a READING hermeneutic*, Brezi9, Tetovo, p. 18-19

narrative flow. Characterizing the character through the name is a common value of the novels of both authors. In the case of the novel *Koha e dhive*, the character has: The first name (although it is part of the character's "human-like" identity), it is used only in certain intimate situations, where involvement and emotional exchange between human beings is expected and very normal. Thus, for *the father*-hero character, he is named Çanga. This symbolic name has a small function compared to the great idea and message that he conveys through the other name Dhiari big. In such cases, the characterization through naming is not based on an almost arbitrary attribute (a name that others will give it when it is born), but through the role and function it has in the development of the narrative. The big goat includes in its name several important features; first, the relationship with nature. The very name dhiar indicates the human being in the function of the goats. The transition of this name from the sphere of generalities to proper nouns, first, and the epithet big, second, place Çanga in the function of a leader, leader, protector of nature, which is very likely to be denatured in the post-communist dictatorship. Continuing the narrative scheme according to J. Greimas's actantial model, we see how the characters take on an identity, whose function is around the hero, the mother, the child-narrator, the other goats (who play the role of helpers), while the obstacles, symbolically presented through registrars, soldiers, etc. The Albanian author Luan Starova deliberately imbues the character (who in the novel corresponds to the antagonist, the obstacle) with the fluidity of the unclear, because his goal is not a specific time, but the time of dictatorships in general, wherever they occur, an important sign that gives the novel a timeless value... This time can be considered as a substrate, which is hidden under the model of the Ottoman Empire and is then activated in different forms. According to this logic, *the character of the father* is the second hero of the novel, an unusual hero in Albanian literature, not even frequent even in literatures written in another language. He is characterized by a silent calm, constant work, extraordinary encyclopedic knowledge and efforts to protect his family (but not only), through deciphering the dark codes of history. He is another leader, a spiritual leader for whom Çanga feels not only respect and admiration, but a need to consult and enlighten. Together, the two heroes function as an open system, which is completed as such only by the multiplicity of each one's traits. The father knows the past, the dictatorship that metastasizes in various forms and mutations. On the other hand, Çanga knows only life, knows the natural laws of existence, which have guided his predecessors for centuries. The two together form *a single action hero* in function of the great idea of the novel: the resistance of man to the janissary violence of the totalitarian state.

The actors or actants are generally a feature of modernist literature, these features are also evident in the novels whose characters we are analyzing. However, for research reasons, the functional analysis proposed by Greimas or Kristeva can also be applied to novels with modernist dominants. These characters are stripped of the responsibility of being well-formed, due to their conversion into action modules. *The "neutralization"* of characters in works with modernist signs is done through several ways:

- a) the resolution of their fate through narrative action (through the reenactment of fictional characters, such as Gjorgu in K. and Çanga in S.).
- b) through the clarification of their presence, their "identity" through the authorial instance
- c) through deliberate confusion of attributes.

According to the only serious Albanian researcher of Luan Starova's total work, Fatmir Sulejmani, Çanga is "the hero in whom myths are conceived"; Çanga is one of the most beautiful findings of Starova's serial novel, among the rare heroes who begins his role as a real-life character and ends as a figure of old Albanian-Balkan ballads and legends.<sup>3</sup>

In *broken April* In Kadare's novel, Gjorg Berisha is the main character, the one who is sacrificed, becomes a tragic character, and becomes a murderer under the pressure of the canon. Kadare puts the tragic character - Gjorg under the yoke of the canon. But alongside the character of Gjorg Berisha, there is also the character of Besian Vorbsi - a writer who has a beautiful wife, Diana. Through these three characters, Kadare unfolds the drama of the highlanders and Gjorg, as a tragic figure who shines like a meteorite to tragically fade away at a crossroads just as quickly, without drama, without murmuring. Gjorg is a very calm character, he makes no attempt to oppose, nor does it occur to him not to implement the Canon. Gjorg acts because it does not occur to him that he could do otherwise. Gjorg, unlike Çanga, is lonely. Gjorgu silently performs his actions involuntarily, but meticulously, he does not experience his father or his environment as a problem. (Çanga, unlike Gjorgu, has great respect for his father, and his father is even a myth).

Both novels have obvious dramaturgical deviations, especially this is investigated in the change of environment, geography of time of action of the event, there are also other ramifications, which are different from the basic inspiration. However, some of the parallel actions in *Broken April* awaken associations for the way the main character meets and falls in love at first sight with Diana, only in temptation, but that temptation becomes his misfortune, because he starts searching for her through all the streets of Rrafshi. Thus, he ends up on a major road, just like his victim a month ago. A tragic fate repeatable from victim to killer.

<sup>3</sup> Fatmir Sulejmani, *Luan Starova's Balkan Saga – a READING hermeneutic*, Brezi9, Tetovo, p. 121

The character of the friend, the institution of the friend in *Broken April* is an indicator of the hospitable character of Albanians, another rare trait that our nation can be proud of as hospitable. It is of the god and of the friend or that the blood of the father or the son can be forgiven but that of the friend, never!. Here is how it is described in the novel: *"The friend is exactly a demigod," he continued after a while, "and the fact that any ordinary person can suddenly rise to the height of the friend, does not diminish, on the contrary, greatly exalts his divinity.*

The element of blood feud is directly related to the character's tragedy, to his death. *For a moment his mind seemed to freeze at the bloody part of the canon. In fact, that was also its essence. ... The world was divided into two parts: the part that had to give or take blood and the other part, which was outside the blood feud."*

Kadare and Starova, each in their own unique way of writing the novel and shaping the character, manage to tell the reader the truth. Gjorgu and Çanga are not saints, nor martyrs, but victims of the time that gave birth to them, raised them, and crushed and ground them with its thorns. The tragedy of the character in *Broken April* lies in the environment in which he moves, threatened at every moment by death, an epic, fairytale environment, like in the most frightening ballads of all time. In this environment, he collides on all sides with people, laws, traps and treachery, with everything that seems natural and justified by the state and by God, but which in fact is constantly cruel, harsh, which does not justify his actions, does nothing to save him from death but does the opposite, demands that Gjorgu pay with his life as soon as possible and not tire himself in vain to disrupt the eternal flow of time. The couple Besian and Diana Vorpsi is another surprise of the work. After having written about the Kanun and the blood feud, after having idealized them without knowing them closely, Besian faces the truth, is shocked by the merciless clash of his intuition with this truth and understands that with an art and literature like the one he cultivates, this nation will never escape destructive evil. Meanwhile, the character of Diana, as a representative of the worldly beauty of that layer perfumed by the vanity of life, understands that her charm and that of her sisters cannot cover the ugliness of a nation that, without even realizing when and why, has entered into war with itself.

Kadare's masterful portrayal of tragic characters through their actions, believable, organic and human, effectively avoids the author's lengthy explanations, thus opening the way for the action, which becomes the revealer and developer of every trait of the characters. In this way, the narrative takes on its own rhythm, maintains the right pace, making reading the work a pleasant experience for the reader. *Tragic George* He speaks little. If he spoke more than that, he would become boring. His drama takes place inside the soul that is rapidly preparing to surrender and pass into another world. Even if he tried to talk more and longer about everything that was happening to him, he would not be able to, because his world and worldview reach that point, to silence and action commanded more by instincts than by logic, patience and hope. In this way, he prepares himself but also prepares the reader for his end and to set off... to say goodbye to Zef Kryeqyqe. Gjorgu is drawn with a poetic character. He speaks more with his soul and heart than with words. With that heart that was capable of loving and few would believe that the same heart would also be capable of killing. This is a contradiction that adds to the semantic weight of the work and highlights the cruelty of the canon from which not even a loving heart could escape. *"But that wasn't the main thing. The main thing was what was happening inside him. And what was happening there was beautiful and scary at the same time. He didn't even know what was happening there. It seemed to him that his heart had come out beyond his ribs, that it was stretched wide and wide around him and, as spread out as it was, it was easily wounded by everything, it was easily happy and saddened, it was insulted, hurt, happy, devastated by something small or big, be it a butterfly, a leaf, endless snow, or a boring rain like today's. Everything was falling right on him, whole skies were emptying and it was holding it all, and it could even hold more."*<sup>4</sup>

Commonalities: they have the same novel typology, that of character and polyphonic; both novels have film potential and easy screen adaptation possibilities; they deal with ethnographic motifs; they have a modern theoretical conception and despise the old conception of the novel; similarities in terms of portrayal of the characters; the characters are opponents of power; they are voices of revolt, they deal with myth...

## CONCLUSION

These modern features of Kadare's and Starova's work immediately bring to mind Kamen and Kafka, two of the innovative giants of modern prose. Thus, the treatment of the characters in *"April"* and *"The Time of the Goats"* also has an existentialist tendency and a deepening in their psychology. *"A concentrated coexistence of love, death and dream, we can undoubtedly find emphasized in "Broken April". This description flows through the existentialist concept, where the main characters complete themselves by coming out of the selves they have known, from the selves they have been taught, from the selves they have accepted in silence. To then enter violently inside their souls, where they have not dared to see, but who they are, who can live like that."*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *April The broken*, Ismail Kadare, acts Literary 10, Tirana 1981, p. 29

<sup>5</sup> Baci, Agim. *Life through OVERVIEW BY death*. Meditation ABOUT novel April The BROKEN THE Ismail Kadare. ONUFRI Publications, 2003, p. 56

*Broken April* and *The Time of the Goats* are two of the novels that definitively seal the fate of Kadare and Starova as the most accomplished novelists in Albanian literature.