



The Proverbs in Ali Asllani's Poetry

KEYWORDS

Proverbs, poetry, folkloric traits

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ABSTRACT

Apart from being a distinguished member of the first Albanian government and a diplomat, Ali Asllani was a master of the word. The most conspicuous themes treated are the patriotic and erotic one. The folkloric traits constitute an important feature of his poetry, indicated by the use of proverbs. Proverbs are used in the ordinary speech, prose, political speech and poetry. By carefully considering his poetry, a considerable amount of proverbs is noticed, which gives his verses a unique character. The poet conveys general truths or the people's wit and places himself next to the reader. The proverbs are not unknown to the public at large, but it is the poet's word mastery which makes them suitable to his verses by giving them additional value. The proverbs in Ali Asllani's poetry appear in various forms, some appear unchanged to their original form, while others comply with the poems' organization requirements.

Introduction

Ali Asllani (1882-1966) was an Albanian diplomat and poet. He lived and worked in times when the country's destiny was being written and offered his great contribution by serving the country with devotion. He served as a politician, a diplomat and as Jorgo Bllaci cited by Gace in "An analysis of Ali Asllani" states it "...he stands with dignity among the masters of the Albanian Lyrics" Arif Demollari cited by Gace *ibid* draws a similarity between Naim Frashëri (one of the greatest poets of the Albanian literature) and Ali Asllani in the fact that both poets use 'similar artistic elements', 'a pure language' which can be explained by their consideration of the folklore literature. Sabri Hamiti (cited by Gace) *ibid* posits that: '...his style built upon the models of folklore literature, has made it possible that the author's verses be memorized and repeated as if they were folk creations which very often lost their authorship.' And as Gace *ibid* states, it is the evaluation of the people's tradition that raised the poet to the highest levels of the Albanian poetry.

Literature review

"A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical fixed and memorable form which is handed down from generation to generation" (Mieder 2004:3). Speake (2008), in the introductory part of her dictionary categorizes proverbs into the following three groups:

1. Proverbs which appear in the form of abstract statements expressing general truths
2. Many of the more colorful examples use specific observations from everyday experience to make a point which is general.
3. This group includes sayings from particular areas of traditional wisdom and folklore, here are included the health proverbs.

This author *ibid* provides us with a fourth group of proverbs related to husbandry, seasons and weather.

A list of the figures of speech used to interpret the proverbs is provided by Waltke (2004:39-41)

"Simile, metaphor, allegory, anthropatism, anthropomor-

phism, synecdoche, metonymy, personification, hyperbole, litotes and irony."

Material and Methods

The poems which appear in the "Poezi të zgjedhura" "Selected Poems" edited by Jorgo Bllaci, serve as a linguistic corpus for this paper. A list of the proverbs used by the poet is provided, a classification based on the type of proverbs is carried out and an analysis of the literary figures of speech which stand in the base of the proverbs is done to prove the values they add to Ali Asllani's poetry.

Results and discussions

Proverbs which appear in the form of abstract statements expressing general truths

1. - E vërteta/e drejta dërrmon hekur,
- A metaphoric structure
- Truth is mighty and will prevail

Proverbs which include sayings from particular areas of traditional wisdom and folklore.

1. - Gjuha shkon ku dhemb dhëmbi.
- A metaphoric expression
- The tongue returns to the aching tooth
- Shih me sy e plas me zemër.
- A metaphoric structure
- What the eyes see, the heart grieves over

Proverbs related to the kept promise and the man's given word.

2. - *Burrit I ka hije fjalë.*- (*burri kur jep fjalën ther dhe djalën*)
3. - A metaphoric structure.
- Among men of honour a word is a bond.
4. *Amanetin nuk e tret as dheu*
- A metaphoric structure
- A man's last will, will not be rotten down by soil.
5. *Koka e falur s'pritet*
- A cause effect structure
He, who is forgiven, will not be beheaded.

Proverbs related to religion:

6. *Gruaja fut shejtanin në shishe.*
- Hyperbole
- Even the devil himself, does not know where wom-

en sharpen their knives

7. - *Gjen shejtani shesh edhe bën përshesh*
 - Anthropotatism
 - Wherever there is a pretty spot, the devil plants a monastery or a lord.

Many of the more colorful examples use specific observations from everyday experience to make a point which is general

8. - *Në vend të vini vetulla, nxirrni sytë.*
 Contrast
 -To cut the head and protect the eyes.
 9. - *Koka bën koka pëson,*
 - a metaphor
 - Your own head, your own success or failure
 10. - *Fshati digjet, (krye)kurva nis e krihet*
 - Structure based on irony
 - The village is on fire, the whore brushes her hair.
 11. - *Bëhet plaku si fëmija.*
 - Simile
 - In old age one again becomes a child
 - *I riu, si veriu*
 - A simile
 - Like the young, like the northern wind.

Proverbs related to husbandry, seasons and weather.

12. *Aty ku bie zjarri, bëhet lule më e mirë.*
 - A cause and effect relation.
 - Where once was fire, the flower grows better.
 13. - *Dita e mirë duket që në mëngjes. (Dita që nis e vrerët do mbarojë me bubullimë.)*
 - The better the day, the better the deed.
 14. *Gusht e gunë.*
 - Elliptical structure (Serves as a life rule)
 - (In August, you might need a coat)
 15. *Me një lule s'vjen behari/me një dallandyshe s'vjen pranvera.*
 - A metaphoric structure.
 - Spring won't come from one flower.
 16. *Vishet mëni, zhvishet vasha.*
 - Antithetical structure
 - The mulberry dresses, the girl undresses.

Conclusions

In Ali Asllani's poetry, an extensive use of proverbs is noticed, which either appear in the widely known version, or are changed according to the needs of his poetry's metrics. Even though the form appears changed, they can be easily noticed by an Albanian native reader. The poet makes use of the alliteration and assonance of the proverbs to make the verse unforgettable to the reader. Through the use of proverbs, the poet seeks to convey to the reader the people's wit that was proven by life itself. The use of proverbs used in Ali Asllani's poems, shows the conspicuous artistic mastery the poet showed, in making them part of his verses, exploiting the lush figurative language to the functionality of his work. By using the proverbs the poet not only conveys significant messages to the reader, but places himself close to the reader and makes poetry readily accessible.

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