

Social Phenomena in Migjeni's Novels

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Abstract

Migjeni belongs to those Albanian writers, who experienced at his expense, the social phenomena of the time, which he literalized in his literary work, and where the academic Shaban Sinani rightly describes Migjeni as the writer of a new literary phenomenon, as the writer of civic literature (Sinani, 2019). As the scholar Moikom Zeqo wrote that art needs transformations of feelings, nerves, Migjeni acted in the same way (Zeqo, 2011).

So, basically, we can say that Migjeni wrote the history of human life. Not only the critics, but every ordinary reader remembers the characters built by the Migjenian pen, as much as the feeling towards these characters who experience under their skin the social phenomena, that touch in the depths of the soul. The social phenomena in his novels, such as: pain, selling the body to save the sick child, or the search for lost identity, intertwines his work end to end. The characters of Migjeni's novels are covered by the failures and disappointments of everyday life, they fight with themselves and with each other from beginning to end, where in many cases we see them with no way out. Even critics of Migjen's work are of the opinion that it is the time that gave birth to him. He is the offspring of the demands of the time, of a series of factors and objective demands, which found their subjective reflection in Migjeni's literary work. (Gurakuqi, 1977) Suffice to recall some of the titles of his novels, such as: "The beauty that kills", "The legend of corn", "Idols without heads", "May God give you", "Cherries", "Do you want coal, sir?", "Little Luli", "Cubi's kiss", "The student at home", "Let the gates open", "The story of one of them", "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread", etc.

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Introduction

Migjeni is radically detached from the hitherto favorite topics of history, myths and legends about the life of Albanians. He is the most systematic destroyer of the myths and idols of earth and heaven. He brought down the throne of the muses in the earthly world of dormant consciences, in the neighborhood of the poor, the prostitutes, and so on (Vata, 2013).

We often say that writers are a product of the environment they belong to, the same happens with the case in question, as the writer himself was born and raised in an environment with deep socio-cultural problems.

The artist, as a living and above all sensitive being, is spiritually nourished by the psychic atmosphere that surrounds him. Upper Albania, or as it is known, its North, had in its bosom the

writer who made a turn in Albanian literature, looking at reality as it was, without ornaments and idols, breaking the traditional rules of making literature.

The modernity of Migjeni prose lies not only in terms of content form, but especially in the form of artistic expression that gives these problems an unparalleled artistic form in Albanian literature (Suta, 2004).

Migjeni had grown up and was educated in an environment with deep social and cultural problems, he himself was a teacher in Vraça of Puka, from working in this place, and Migjeni also got sick of tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis is often imagined as a disease of poverty and suffering, of thin clothes, of torn bodies, of unheated rooms, of poor hygiene, of inadequate nutrition (Sontag, 1999).

So in the focus of Migjeni's artistic word was man, or better to say, it was the Impossible Superman towards the world.

The Sphinx Enigma: What is it that first stands on four legs, then on two, and then on three? (Fromm, 1998), which is the center of every work: "MAN".

We find the man in Migjeni as morally and spiritually broken, he gives man in several forms and shapes such as:

– A beggar who is unbalanced between masochistic-sadistic terms. Migjeni was a victim of his own inclination and the social condition in which he lived.

The beggar must be heard. He leaves that door, enters the second, the third, the fourth, and so on, all the doors of that street. This path today is the field of his action. Tomorrow is another way. The areas of action of our citizen are different. And one field differs from another, as heaven differs from hell, with all the picturesque and heartbreaking variations. The beggar, who knocks from door to door, somewhere they give him something, somewhere the lady of the house says to him: "I don't have any – and the beggars then is soft and goes away in remembering that door to return some other day". But the beggar does not tolerate it the saying; does not want to hear it. He knows exactly what does "May God gives you" means; he begins to despise the one who conveys those two words. He has never separated the two words. Everywhere he heard the word "God" he unintentionally added "May give you" and a perception that he did not understand and despised was created in his brain. He was sure that "May God give you" meant ridicule (Migjeni, 2002).

– A Prostitute who suffers between eroticism and psychic violence, which Robert Elsie describes her work as a 'career', sick seduction. This form is found in the novel entitled: "The story of one of them", when the author would say that:

The students were confused, with unarticulated words in their mouths, looking at each other, blushing and leaving to return. Then Luke laughed heartily and took them by the hand in her room. Sometimes she quarreled with them, because one of them kissed her naked arm, grabbed her or

stroked his face, just as only a man who has been married in front of a priest or imam has the right to grab his wife (Migjeni, 2002).

– Wren who embodies the great dilemma of suicide (consciousness and unconsciousness).

Once the wren stood on a rod, tired of looking at pig hairs, tired of flying from rod to rod. Out of boredom and anger he closed his eyes. Fell into melancholy grief. The man with the melancholy temperament is intelligent. And intelligence in the most open sense of the word brought a better peace only to the few (Migjeni, 2002).

The hawk and the dove - where the Kafkaesque metamorphosis breathes and rises, or even the hermaphrodite acquisition neither male nor female as the work of the snail, the lizard, the earthworm, which conceives with itself;

For a short time the State X turned the page. The art inspired and worked on after the recipes of Paris, turned the state into an art museum. It was the triumph of the recipe! Or the triumph of intentional art! And the goal was taken slowly but surely. When the State changed the page, the shapes and souls of the citizens began to change. The soul, once a dove, was made into a hawk, now it has become a dove again (Migjeni, 2002).

- Son.... Devil bird - the deep root of man with shocked psychology.

In the paradise of our city, when they want to praise someone young, they attach different attributes to them, as it happens everywhere else; among those most typical attributes are: son and devil bird. That apprentice of the bazaar, who is fortunate enough to be petted like that, means that he is something. Not that he will become a millionaire, but that he is able to do the apprenticeship work in the best way and with the full consent of the master (Migjeni, 2002).

It can not be ruled out that in the imagination of the time the Albanian kingdom was a kingdom of habits and that the monarch himself was a mountaineer from the northern area, the castle of the secular canon (Kadare, 2009), of the canon of the northern mountains.

... Literature has been seen as historically dangerous: it encourages questioning of authority and social agreements (Kaller, 2001).

Migjeni emancipated Albanian literature in its mentality, in its thematic orientation and radical displacement of views from life, city, and highlanders. The escape from the myth of the mountain, from the highlander, from the occult mythological height, was the most distinctive sign of the escape from the archaic psychology of the province for which he was accused, and of the acquisition of imaginations by the European peoples.

Migjeni had some objective reasons to feel pessimistic, driven by reasonable hope for the future; the state of health is the first, the society that surrounded it, the stifling reality is another cause and not the last in a row ... and all these created a repression in itself. Abandoned the revolutionary-transformational projects of the time, was distant from the practical actions of groups with character

and socio-economic-political program, returns to Nietzsche; he created the cult of pain, there was a lack of hope and we have his decadent deconstruction in the face of a society without value systems.

Migjeni also drew attention to repressed eros, to women, to human beauty as high values and questioned for survival. In terms of womanhood and love in Migjeni we find more parallels with Baudelaire's poetry. The Poem of misery, one of the most realized of Migjeni's creativity, is a vast picture of a stinging reality. One after another they pass by: the wretched, the children, the beggars, the drunkards, the women who sell themselves, the women who curse their children, the sick babies. Misery is the cause of all social moral upheavals (Kryeziu, 2011).

The protagonists of Migjeni's work are: father, mother, sister, brother, husband, prostitute, etc., so at the center of his novels are the people of everyday life, but with great problems.

Novel: "The Student at home" is part of the cycle of novels written by Migjeni. Where the character Nushi, a medical student in one of the most developed cities in Europe, receives the news from his father, that within a short time his sister Ageja, will get married and he should be at the ceremony to accompany her as a bride.

In one of the cities of Central Europe, Nushi is reading the letter he had just received from the letter distributor. Even in the hands of the distributor he was aware that the letter was from home. Yes, white square-shaped envelope, low house, with a small courtyard with lots of flowers. Then Nushi envisioned his father, after he had written the letter, while entering that house, at dusk, and bringing the night with him (Migjeni, 2002).

Although Nushi was born and raised in Northern Albania, but fate wanted him to go to school in one of the metropolises of the European world, he had learned from this country that freedom and man were synonymous, but in his mind was rooted the fact that, his father's word was law, not discussed, but only enforced.

But the letter he received now gave him a deadline. "Your sister will get married in a month, so you, like her brother, must come." It was a father's order. Nushi was kind to him at first, he was happy, but when he thought about it for a while, he got cold; it was in his nature that everything should be taken by mind, not heart (Migjeni, 2002).

When Nushi returned to his homeland he found their situation in extreme misery, where nothing had changed, except the sisters, who were elongated in stature.

"Could this be the yard I left three years ago" Nushi thought. "So small, I guess it was not" - and looked around, to see whether something was built to take the place of the yard, but nothing new. The same trees: vine, fig, plum; the same flowers. From there the roses a little further the honeysuckle. And when he entered the house, the rooms became very small. The furniture was among them, as untouched by a human hand. Everything was in its place as before, as if it was destined to rot in those places. But everything, everything somewhat diminished. Nushi barely found the cause of this optical illusion. The cause was the large houses and open squares of the city where he had been. Yes, for Nushi everything had shrunk, only the brothers and sisters had grown up, they were bigger than he himself imagined when he remembered them abroad. He noticed that a tooth had

fallen out of his mother's mouth, and his father had gained wrinkles on his forehead and grizzles on his mustache (Migjeni, 2002).

Nushi learns that they want to marry his sister against her will. But Nushi's sister, after marrying against her will, falls in love with her husband's servant, who was forbidden and this fact created a situation for murder, as the honor of the two families is seriously violated.

Nushi came out from his sister with a smile. And, surprisingly, he was happy. He himself marveled at this joy and serenity he felt. So now, an hour ago, something had to happen. Yes, Nushi thought to himself. Yes, as there, among our primitive mountains. The rifle had to be fired. To put in obedience everyone, big and small! Honor had to be cleared. Let someone die and society rejoice (Migjeni, 2002).

At the center of this novel are three characters with different mentalities and cultures from each other, and where they often clash with each other. First is Nushi's and Ages' father, who was of the opinion that his word was law and neither could oppose it. Second is Nushi, an individual who comes from the west and European culture had become his way of behaving. Third was the girl, Agija who had the duty to keep her mouth shut, having no right to her life. Agija was nothing more than a commodity or booty that was sold and bought according to economic need and interest.

In fact, the "writer's protest", the biggest one is the very act of presenting and writing the literature of the current situations of his time and his environment. This is sometimes more than literature; it is a human searching courage (Hamiti, 2003).

In the novel "Let the gates open", which is also one of the most realized novels of Migjeni, we are given vivid and complete pictures, which reflect the phenomena of the time, through a black and white reality, where women were covered by religious clothes, otherwise called the veil.

There is silence in the house, as if someone was in the agony of death. Yes, there is agony, but no misery. As in this house, hundreds of other houses have something like death agony. A centuries-old past is dying, so felt and so lived. The cornerstone of the millennial castle is being removed and the hearts of the people are being poisoned by its collapse. (Some, on the contrary, rejoice as if we had killed a monster animal that lived and poisoned life in the house). Newspapers, reforms, the discovery of women were the storms that tormented the clumsy brains of people who were not accustomed to thinking about those things. Family heads, who dealt only with the simplest worries of the family, only of the house, now at once think of something in common, of a collective problem. To reveal the women! - They did not think that this would be done to them alive (Migjeni, 2002).

Luke's character in the novel "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread", which describes the fate of a girl, who is forced due to difficult economic conditions to sell her body. Making a living leads this character to practice the oldest and most illegal profession in the world, which was in complete contradiction with the moral values of Albanians.

But, her father brought neither bread nor anything else, neither last night or tonight. He sits next to the hearth and thinks of a grimace that has made his face look sick. Think. Eh, if only all these thoughts were done first! I wanted to ask Lili if she had eaten anything, but he did not dare. He was

afraid not to listen to what he did not want to know. If Lily had nothing to eat, I better not know and lie to myself that she ate. He was stealingly looking at his wife; in the light of the candle he looked very pale, with deepened eyes all around. He knew what that meant (Migjeni, 2002).

Whereas in Luke's character, Migjeni managed to create the typical prostitute of the poor northern city, which despite its beauty did not require more than three leks.

But as we said, Luke was more humanitarian than those who needed to be like that. Some youngster, who did not earn the money himself, she accepted him with three leks, of course when she could afford. Around the name Luke, especially around her body, a kind of aureole (nimbus) was created as around the heads of the devils. So much so that some felt sorry to call her a whore, and tried to soften the meaning of the word by calling her a prostitute, a public woman, a troubled woman — with names they had found reading books, especially the ones who never uttered a dirty word. They regretted calling Luke a whore. He himself never called her like that, but even when someone said it, his ear ached as if someone were scratching the plate with the tip of a fork. The word whore was for him a rude dissonance in the harmonious melody that Luke promised. Calling Luke a whore seemed to him the same as calling the priest a woman because he wore that kind of attire. He even spread the word prostitute among friends. The youth sentimentality for Luke went even deeper; they often quarreled with each other just for her sake (Migjeni, 2002).

Migjeni, through this female character in Albanian literature, managed to demystify the illusion of 'happy life' in the highlands, and even more, this was just the story of one of those, who were not few in this environment, where these deep social, moral and spiritual problems lived.

In the novel "A little poetry", Migjeni addresses the topic of forbidden love. Lil's character falls in love with his cousin Lilushe where in fact this was a mutual love, but the young people did not dare to take one more step and suppress their love, showing it indirectly to each other. These two young men were as close and far apart as each other, close because of their love and far away because of kinship ties.

This was a forbidden love and seeing it as such, Lili's character protests:

The slaves of the habits, of the customs of the laws inherited for centuries, the slaves of gossip where they can understand that even a cousin can be loved (Migjeni, 2002).

The cycle of Migjeni's novels can be considered a success of the author, because through the treatment of themes and the rich fund of linguistic and artistic expression, he has managed to literalize the social phenomena of the time and not only.

Some Conclusions

The characters of Migjeni's novels perceive the world around them as an experience of seeing and living, without being able to influence or act in the environment that surrounds them, these characters go so far as to submit to them in the most extreme and miserable forms to this grim and not at all social reality.

Migjeni looked at life inside because he was born, lived, acted and created within reality. He did not look at life from a point of view to reach artistic conclusions, but was within its skin, therefore, with his work he is defined as the representative of the harsh Albanian reality of the 30s.

The social phenomena in Migjeni's novels are the purest expressive testimony of the author, who, although at a very young age (for the fact that he died before the age of 27), brought through artistic expression all the social phenomena of a culture, of a nation, of a people as ancient as history itself, but drowned under the paw of invaders and social wounds.

Migjeni was a novelty for Albanian literature, as not only did he escape the traditional forms, but he was also a novelty in the renewal of the means of expression, through high artistic expression and the aesthetic thematization of the new literary subject.

Migjeni is the first writer to return Albanian literature to its natural environment, from traditional literature to modern literature. This return comes in the line of overturning traditional rules, demystifying topics that were previously untouched myths. Migjeni turned the course of Albanian literature; he stripped literature of its superfluous, romantic and mythological excesses.

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