

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2019.20.4.8>**ИСТОРИЯ СЕНТИМЕНТАЛЬНОЙ ПРОЗЫ В АЛБАНСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ**

Обзор

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**Аннотация**

Тема «История сентиментальной прозы в албанской литературе» (сентиментализм как литературный, культурный и исторический феномен) ставит перед собой вопрос изучения ценности прозы сентиментальной ориентации, принимая во внимание историю этой прозы, авторов и их значимые работы, а также стилистические тенденции. Тема была выбрана так как в истории албанской литературы, она, безусловно, играет важную роль и, за некоторыми исключениями, данным произведениям не уделяется достаточного внимания со стороны ученых. В частности, будут приняты во внимание албанские сентиментальные прозаики и их работы.

Исследование является глубоким, его цель состоит в том, чтобы стимулировать изучение наиболее запоминающихся фрагментов сентименталистской игры в литературе, в которых сопоставляются моменты, образы и время. Все это мы попытаемся выполнить благодаря помощи литературы и научных работ, относящихся к этому периоду, используя сравнительный (исследовательский), исторический и эмпирический метод в качестве методологии научных исследований.

**Ключевые слова:** албанская проза, исследование, сентиментальность, подход, инновация, тренд, индивидуальности, период, поколение, литературные направления.

**HISTORY OF SENTIMENTAL PROSE IN ALBANIAN LITERATURE**

Review

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**Abstract**

The topic "The history of sentimental prose in Albanian literature" (Sentimentalism as a literary, cultural and historical phenomenon), comes as a proposal for the topic in question with the aim of putting on focus the values of the prose with stylistic sentimental orientation, taking in consideration the history of this prose, the approximation appearance of authors and representative works as well as stylistic tendencies. It was chosen the sentimental Albanian prose because in the History of Albanian Literature it certainly plays an important role and with few exceptions, it has not had enough attention from scholars. Specifically, to be taken in consideration there will be the Albanian sentimental prose writers, together with their works which will be examined in a general way.

The research is profound, but the aim is to stimulate the desire to investigate, interpret, and capture the most eminent characteristic segments of sentimentalist play in literature which manage to settle through the works, moments, different characters of life, and time. And all of this, we will try to accomplish thanks to the help of literature, research and considerable materials referring to this period, using comparative (research), historical, and empirical method as a scientific research methodology.

**Keywords:** Albanian prose, research, sentimentality, approach, innovation, trend, individualities, period, generation, literary directions.

**Introduction**

We will make every effort, to accomplish all of this, due to the help of literature, research, and the considerable materials that refer to this period. It is also intended to record, analyze, and interpret the sentimental Albanian prose in particular and in addition to it, the sentimental European prose in general.

This monographic paper is an initial attempt to enlighten on Albanian sentimental prose, more precisely, on the types of this prose, on the typology of the characters of the novels, which we will try to explore and highlight.

**Methods**

We will use the comparative (research), historical-literary method as a research methodology. Our scientific-research activity will be guided by a research plan and followed by several methods. According to the opinion of Tzvetan Todorov that "All methods are good as long as they remain a tool and do not become an aim itself" [5, P. 79], we are going to use different methods in order to accomplish a very important monographic study, such as our PhD study thesis is.

— Methods related to text theories (structuralism and various theories for the research of literary typologies);

— (Comparative) research method; (methodology of scientific research, to get acquainted with the study tradition related to the presented issue.

We will also plan on: Resources, Literature Review, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Interpretation of Results and Expressing the Meaning of Our Research.

**Results**

We are hoping that through this paper, we will somehow help to the fulfillment of the sentimental prosaic field, by clarifying the issues which the traditional study does not seem to have treated with the right attention or with the necessary

research for a breakdown of sentimental prose. We believe that our interest will be welcomed by the academic and institutional leaders and we will begin work on achieving our research goal, from which the above results are expected.

### **Sentimentality as a literary, cultural and historical phenomenon**

#### History of sentimental prose in Albanian literature

In the history of Albanian literature, respectively in the period 1912-1939, the proclamation of national independence became the impetus for the beginning of a new era in the development of this literature, with significant changes that would bring important features as well. In these years, when national sentiment was still booming, when the new phase of Albanian literature was also driven by the rich Renaissance traditions, the reader's curiosity to know the history of the country, the people who had done something for their country, did not just extinguish poetry, but now they wanted to know something more through prose, confessing either to the events of that time or to some important character.

We remember that until the early 20s, there were still authors who continued their creativity even after the Renaissance, where the most developed genre of poetry remains that of the patriotic theme. So the Albanian literature of 1912-1920 stayed closer to the Renaissance romantic one, because "immediately after the declaration of independence of Albania, there was a need to preserve state integrity, because the external reactionary forces, also helped by the internal reactionary ones, aimed the fractioning of Albanian territories" [3, P. 6].

Further on, at the beginning of this century, social or political-social motives are also widely spread. Narrative prose had already found voice in the years 1904-1905, through well-known authors such as Mihal Grameno whose novels, marked the beginning of a new literary genre, Ndoc Nikaj writing novels too, and other authors. Until the years 20, it was enriched more and more with new motifs and styles. The genre of prose after 1912 was expressed in novel. Other authors such as Milto S. Gurra, Postol Foqion, and Philip Papajani joined this genre.

It is clearly seen during this period that the majority of the published novels were of historical character. They all are attracted by past stories as a continuity of a created tradition and different historical processes which treat the historical past. The one of such a kind we can name the novel of Ndoc Nikajt "*Surrounded Shkodra*" dating 1913 and F.Noli work "*History of Skënderbe*" in 1921 [1, P. 467].

Generally, at this stage, the written works, although adhering to the thematic structure of historical novels, based on the eternal motive of love, the Albanian literature of those years, conveyed the constant effort with a strong will, in the midst of good and evil, trying to make the good triumph over negative phenomena. At this time, other rhythms began to emerge. In European literature these rhythms preceded Romanticism, such as in English literature. These were the rhythms of sentimentalist literature, which in Albanian literature were manifested in prose. There were precisely the political, economic, and social conditions that influenced the appearance of sentimentality in Albanian literature, which in Albania was somehow belated compared to other countries' literature. A well-known literary theory personality, Milivoj Solar, would carefully analyze literature and social life. According to him, the work is a reflection of social reality in historical context. "Each literary work belongs to its time, and due to this, it expresses a specific form of social life, conditioned by history" [2, P. 17]. Being the artistic-transposing, artistic transmitter of life and society, sentimentalist literature took sides, thus becoming an important aspect of Albanian literature between the two wars.

Talking about Albanian prose, the one in its first phase of existence, we naturally ask: "What kind of prose was being created? Let's mention Mihal Grameno who was among the first to touch it with his three novels "*The Chimney*" (printed as a sub paper in the newspaper "*Light*", 1904-5), "*The kiss*" (1909), and "*Baptismal tomb*" (1909) [1, P. 449]. It is in these novels that the story of Albanian sentimental prose begins, the literary phenomenon of sentimentality, which means, his novel was typically sentimental, and gives life to this literary phenomenon called sentimentalism, remarked in some concrete authors and specific literary works. But, according to scholars, "the signs of sentimentality in Albanian literature can be seen earlier in the works of Muhammad Camit" in "*Erveheja*" and in "*Yusufi and Zelihaya*" and, to a less extent, in De Rada's works, especially in the work "*Songs of Milosao*" [3, P. 16]. The sentimental novel has been written for almost two centuries (XVIII century) in other European literatures precisely in English literature, while in Albanian literature, its appearance marks also the beginning of the history of this genre. It is done with the publication of Mihal Grameno's novels over the years (1904-1909) and also with the publication of Foqion Postoli's novel "*The Flower of Remembrance*", in 1920, which is about a century after the European one. Further, during the period of the 1920s, the prose in general continues to be sentimental. This is noted in Foqion Postoli's novel "*Flower of Remembrance*", 1920 [1, P. 467] and at the beginning of years 30, in the novel of Haki Stermilli, "*If I were a boy*", 1936 [1, P. 537]. Mostly in the subjects of these novels and long stories, besides the common features, with historical novels, or here and there with the motifs of the past, there are also noted to be important, the educational themes, which gave Albanian literature a good start to the narrative genres, since The Renaissance period, and especially in the period that followed, in which the sentimentalist literary phenomenon is firstly remarked. Distinctive features emerged in the efforts of Mihal Grameno expressing dissatisfaction with the moral norms of the upper strata of society, poetizing the spiritual values of the poor peasants and citizens, with whom the author raised his voice to awaken the social consciousness of the low strata, believing in influencing them for a self-respect and dignity.

And it is especially here where we can note the attempt of the writer "to depth the democratic breath our Renaissance literature" [1, P. 451]. His novels, through sentimentalist spirit, displayed obvious problems of Albanian life, considering the class situation, and condemned the social causes that stifled love and prevented its realization. The topic of the emigration was also addressed as a problem that brought misery. And also they dealt with the subject of conflict with neighboring chauvinism as a reflection of the efforts of the Albanian people to preserve the language, traditions and nationality. Distinctive features emerged in Foqion Postoli's tendency also to deal with reflecting current life, its fragile sides, the concerns of the poor, and in particular to present the fight against the big Greek intentions toward Albania and the line of love between two young people with different class positions expressing sentimental grades in the illusion of joining different classes. This kind of sentimental prose stands in a place that captures, therefore, important, sensitive topics needed for treatment such as: love between two poor, rich young people, mixing honest heart, friendship with good habits and on the other side dark, backdrops, like blood

feuds, social class division, the subject of emigration, and a lot of other motives that sometimes cannot escape patriotic ones. To this row and kind of works, also belongs the prose of Haki Stermilli, especially the novel *"If I Were a Boy"* published in 1936, just when the prose was developing well and maturing. Stermilli also thought of the novel as a reflection of the life of Albanian society, in particular the family and the woman, by addressing the issue of women's emancipation, by striving to become a worthy, free and active member of society. This novel is written in the manner of sentimentality, the feature of which is perhaps most significant, especially in the construction of characters and situations. Meetings with a boy called Shpend, the letters they exchange, the sufferings experienced, the fervent love between them, are truthfully rendered images that attest to the sentimental style of writing. To the tradition of Albanian prose, especially the sentimental one, in the field of the genre of romance, shown through Grameno novels and Postol and Stermilli novels, was added a new novel by Sterjo Spasse, *"Why?!"* Spasse, a literary creator of the 30's, who in his creativity, deals with social and erotic motives, generally conveys a sentimental spirit, but as the scholar V. Shipa observes, "The young writer S. Spasse, who came into literature in other social circumstances was not directed neither by historical nor by the patriotic theme differently from his descendants" [4, P. 177]. Being of rural background, Spasse draws on the reflection of the village's hard life, ethical themes, and especially the dismal state of some of the young intellectuals of the 1930s and the patriarchal molding habits. All of this also relates to unwanted and marriages for benefits and the lack of free expression and thought. It is precisely his famous novel *"Why"*, 1935, in which such motifs are expressed, whose character, John Zavery, focuses on life, love and death. Almost all the writers who came up with the sentimentalist theme preferred to make imaginary characters in their works, so they are constructed as factious characters but with rare exceptions...? Mustafa Greblleshi's novel *"The Abyss of Love"*, which was published in 1944, long after the first sentimental novels were published, is the third consecutive novel built on journal or diary form, with descriptions from school life including the sensitivity and ideals of the central character, because as Vehap Shita remarks: "In the style of eminent sentimental novels, adventurous and love-filled novels, where lust, sentiment, nostalgia, murder or suicide predominate, "The abyss of love" "is a kind of synthesis of all this, colored and dressed in the Albanian garment with some characteristics of our people, habits that mark our environment, the atmosphere and his people" [4, P. 377].

In general, this kind of novel with diverse love-themed, social stories that contained the subjects of many of the works of this genre, as well as some stylistic features, especially with dialogues between lovers, different social situations, with emotions, conveyed and various social conflicts, displayed in Albanian literature the characteristics of sentimentality. Precisely for the sentimental spirit they intended to convey, the aforementioned novels, Foqion Postoli's *"Flower of Remembrance"* and especially Haki Stermilli's *"If I were a Boy"* and others, have been the focus of thoughtful referring to the treatment of critical thought.

This type of literature that was already taking an important place and that was increasingly consolidated in the publications of those years, the kind of literature containing a number of constituent elements such as the fineness of the descriptions of environments of the village and its customary life, the creation of some (mostly negative) characters with psychological traits and behavior, determined by their social status, again failed to change the spirit of exaltation, whereby even the most conflicted the fiercest got a quick solution, so they could not disconnect this work from the generally romantic-sentimental course of the Albanian novel of those times. This literary innovation that emerged in the genre of the novel would also affect the reader by guiding him on how to build a new relationship between the art of writing and the psychological and social reality emerging in Albanian literature. In general, the literary work of this time is a reflection of social reality, so as the theorist Milivoj Solar states, "Literary works contain certain experiences and knowledge about different natural and social performances, and they also speak directly about social life" [2, P. 16].

In general, the novel with the social theme, with the phenomenon of sentimentality, with the tendency of the education novel, has succeeded in significantly deepening the reflection of social life and its sentimental disposition, thus giving space for dealing with some of the phenomena of reality that were part of his circle.

#### **Theoretical view of sentimentalism concept**

In this section, we are first trying to bring about an accepted scientific thinking on the concept or phenomenon of sentimentality in literature. In order to be clearer about what sentimentality itself means as a concept, what it represents as a phenomenon or a course in culture, literature, we must look at the genesis and the constituent factors from which this movement was formed. Historically, sentimentality in Albanian literature appears in a time and space, claiming the years after 1912. The term sentimentality is relatively evident in the Albanian literary context even earlier in Renaissance national authors especially shortly before Albania's Declaration of Independence. The concept of sentimentality refers to a European literary period of the second half of the XVIII century, which focused on reflecting the inner life, human feelings and nature, thus presenting things in an idealized way. Sentimentalism, both in poetry and prose, was in vogue starting in the eighteenth century as a reaction to the rationalism of the Augustan Age.

The sentimental novel is a literary genre of the eighteenth century, depicted by the emotional and intellectual tendencies of sentiment and feeling. It is important to be mentioned as a literary term, for the first time sentimentalism is used by J.J.Bode [6] in 1968, thus expressing the meaning of art based on empathy and romance in the genre of literature, but one cannot overlook the fact that this term is also encountered in a discussion of Friedrich Schiller on sentimental poetry. "Schiller's definition of sentimentalism did not give him a philosophical value more than moral, but he saw it as objective in most of the artistic texts" [7, P. 79].

Sentimentalism was born as a term by which we can refer to a variety of aspects in literature, such as sentimental poetry or sentimental novel. Furthermore, this term may refer to a practice of being sentimental, striving to be based on actions and emotional reactions to reason. In psychology, sentimentality is known or defined as the theory of moral feelings (moral sentiment), with known representatives of some versions of moral sentiment theory such as: "David Hume, Adam Smith".

It is difficult to precisely date the emergence of a concept or literary trend, especially when the concept under consideration in Albanian literature, in particular, has emerged as a phenomenon in certain works and over an extended period of time. In England, at the beginning of 1768, when Lawrence Stern's novel *The Sentimental Journey to France and Italy* was

published, the term sentimentalism, becomes a slogan of the writers, who proclaimed the cult of feeling. However the idea of sentimentality can be conceived as a manifestation or phenomenon of raising a certain awareness of time, historical or literary, an idea which may also relate to its main constituent element, which is its feeling-cult. In this way the hypothesis in which the debates revolve around the view is explained more clearly. Even though there is no definite start and end date, the concept of sentimentality was born during the last years of the Albanian National Renaissance in Albanian literature and in the European one this notion finds expression there in the 50-60s, in novels such as Samuel Richardson's *"Pamela"* (1740), Lorenz Stern's *"Sentimental Journey to France and Italy"* (1768), Henry Mencken's *"Man of Feeling"* (1771), *"The Sufferings of the Verter Boy" of Goethe* (1774), etc.

It was during this period that sentimentalism took on the meaning of a new literary stream, emerging as a contravention to the classicism and rationalist tendencies of the Enlightenment period. From the point of view of the researcher Michael Bell on this phenomenon we note: "If the 18th century is referred to as the age of feeling and empathy, the Victorian period is usually considered the culmination or trough of sentimentalism" [7, P. 118].

In literature, through this literary term, it would be represented the literary part of English writers of the 50-60s of the XVIII century or the literary experience of Albanian writers of the late 20s and early 30s of the 19th century. Scholars of sentimentality, normally after conducting numerous studies on the form of the creation and spread of this current genre in Albanian literature, have concluded that the original representatives of sentimentality are thought to be Mihal Grameno, Haki Stremilli and Foqion Postoli, who, apart from others, brought innovation in dealing with topics and efforts to solve the problems posed. While in Europe it was Lawrence Stern who, after publishing his novel *"The Sentimental Journey to France and Italy"* 1768, the new literary trend took the name of sentimentality. Well-known Albanian scholar's stated that sentimentality is first and foremost an expression of current life or reverberation of Albanian actuality. Scholars base their statement on sentimentalism on basic concepts that relates to: 1. Thematic. 2. Genre 3. Novelty (creating process).

According to this theory, sentimental literature must not only present thematically the problems of temporal reality, but must also express it as a living reality. These are exactly the ones that develop through the genre. Sentimentalism in one form also appears with novelty, where this is also associated with the concept of the genre. Scholars regard the interconnectedness of these concepts as reinforcing the sentimentalist tendency in prose.

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Не указан.

#### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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