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**BAL-TAM KÜTÜPHANESİNE GÖNDERİLEN KİTAP VE
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THE ROLE AND THE POWER OF WOMEN IN MACEDONIAN AND TURKISH FOLK LITERATURE

Jovanka DENKOVA¹
Mahmut CELIK²

ABSTRACT

In Macedonian folk poetry, the woman's character is the most present in relation to the other characters. Often, the woman is shown in a positive role. However, there are number of examples that reveal her "dark" side. Moreover, the lyrical songs and ballads for the separated families and the personal and family relationships often portrait the most common image of the dark woman as that of a stepmother, a sister as a murderer of her own sister, mother- murderer, etc...

The most impressive example of a sister as a murderer of the other sister due to the prohibited love to her sister's husband is the character of the heartless Neda, who not only smothers her own sister, but she makes a lot of heartless decisions trying to kill the two orphans who are constantly reminding her of the crime. Thus, Neda manifests as the most monstrous and the most heartless female character of this type in Macedonian folk poetry. The sister also appears as a murderer of her brother when he interferes with her relationship with the man that she loves so much and on the advice of her lover she murders her brother by poisoning him.

The most monstrous of all is the character of the mother-killer, mother-murderer of her child who appears as a real obstacle to the realization of her passionate relationship with another man. In Macedonian folk ballads, a character that stands out as a murderer of her daughter-in-law is the mother-in-law. Sometimes, after a curse failed and didn't make her son kill the daughter-in-law, the mother-in-law resorts to the latter, monstrous decision and does it herself. After which, she witnessed the suicide of her son and becomes his indirect murderer.

Sometimes, the two sisters become murderers of their brother's wife. Such crime is mostly motivated by the great love of the sisters towards the only brother.

And the wives of the brothers sometimes appear as murderers of the youngest brother's wife. The murder is usually motivated by the jealousy because of the great beauty the youngest brother's wife possesses, so they kill her by poisoning.

In this paper, the women's role, power and place in the Turkish folk literature, beginning from the past up until present days, i.e. in the pre Islamic period, during the rise of the Islam and in the period of increased western influence, will be taken in consideration.

Way back in the distant past, the family represented the most important social community in Turkish societies. The woman as a central and fundamental part of the family is beyond admiration and in the Turkish epos and philosophy is represented as a magnificent hero both of the culture and tradition.

Key words: *Macedonian woman, Turkish woman, murderer, western influence.*

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ÖZET

Makedon halk şiirinde, diğer şahıslara göre kadınların yeri ön plandadır. Genelde kadın olumlu nitelikli görevdedir. Bazen onun karanlık yönleri (karanlık kişilikleri) de örneklerde mevcuttur. Ailevi, lirik ve lirik- epik şiirler birbirinden farklar göstermektedir. Genellikle kadının karanlık yüzü kötü üvey annenin yüzüdür, kızkardeşin- kardeşini öldürme vakaları, anne katilliği vs.

En etkileyici kişilik Neda'da verilmiştir. Neda kendi kızkardeşini kocasına aşık olduğu için öldürmüştür. Kendi kızkardeşini öldürmekle beraber, iki öksüze de onun kötülüklerini hatırlattıklarından dolayı onlara acımasızca davranıyor. Bununla makedon halk şiirinde Neda en acımasız kişi olarak yer alıyor. Kızkardeş, kardeşini öldürüyor. Abisi kızkardeşinin sevgiliyle olan ilişkisini durdurmak istediği için kız sevgilisinin de onayı üzerine erkek kardeşini zehirleyerek öldürüyor.

Hepsinden en çirkin olay da annenin kendi çocuğunu öldürmesi olayıdır. Çocuk annesinin bir başkasıyla aşkına engel olduğu için katil olan annenin dramı söz konusudur.

Makedon halk lirik-epik şiirlerinde kayınvalidenin kendi gelinini öldürmesi de ayrı bir karanlık kişilik olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bazen beddualarla amacına ulaşamayan kayınvalide, oğluna eşini öldürmesi için emirler verir, kayınvalide en kötü kararı alır ve gelinine el kaldırır. O, oğlunun gelinini öldürdüğüne şahit olur ve kendisi indirek olarak öldürmüş olur. Bazen görümceler de yengelerinin katilleridirler. Böyle kötülükler genelde tek kızın, erkek kardeşine olan sevgisinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Etiler de en küçük eltinin katili olarak yer almaktadır. Bu şiirlerde ölüm motifi işlenmiştir; genelde eltinin güzelliğinden doğan kıskançlıklardan dolayı zehirleyerek öldürmeyi gerçekleştirirler.

Bu çalışmada kadının rolü, gücü ve Türk halk edebiyatındaki yeri göz önünde bulundurulmuştur. Geçmişten başlayıp İslamiyet öncesi, İslamiyet dönemi, Batı etkisinde kalan Türk edebiyatı günümüze kadar dahil edilmiştir. En eski zamanda Türk toplumunda aile en önemli sosyal birlikti. Kadın ailenin merkez bireyi olarak örnek alınacak kişilikteydi. Kadın, Türk epik türlerinde de, felsefede de kültürel, mükemmel ve geleneksel kahramandır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Makedon kadını, Türk kadını, katil, Batı'nın etkisi.*

Introduction

In Macedonian folk poetry, the character of the woman is mostly prevalent compared to the other characters. Particularly in Macedonian lyrical family songs the woman is the central character, the epicenter in and around whom all the turmoil, doubts, children's dilemmas happen. She is seen here in the role of wife, mother, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law (the brother's wife), sister-in-law (the husband's sister) etc. In any of these roles, the woman causes admiration by her "willingness to sacrifice herself for her children, with her constant vigil over them, her constant thought of them."³

³ Kitevski, M., Makedonska narodna lirika, Institut za makedonska literatura, Kultura, Skopje, 2000, p. 111.

However, the woman as a character is not always positive and well-intentioned. There are numerous examples in Macedonian lyrical family folk songs and Macedonian folk ballads in which her dark side is revealed.

In Turkish literature, A husband`s companion and a mother of her children are some of the most important commitments a woman has. What is even more important is that for Turkish people the woman is the only source of happiness and fertility. Being entitled with some specific rights along with the merits she deserves, the woman represents a respectable monument.

During the centuries, some changes have been noticed considering women`s lives in Turkish societies. The reason for these changes is the social, religious and political development along with the influence of some outer cultures.

According to some cultural changes in the Turkish civilization, the woman`s role and influence in the Turkish literature is divided into three periods.

In the pre Islamic and nomadic period, the woman is very similar to the man; respectively they can ride horses, throw arrows, use swords and even fight with the enemy. In the time period of accepting the Islam, women became more passive and lost their heroic characteristics.

Along with the western influence, socio-economic and cultural rights, women had more rights and became more protected.

The woman in Macedonian lyrical family folk song

In the lyrical family songs the most common dark character of a woman is the character of the evil stepmother, the sister - murderer of her brother or sister, the mother - murderer etc.

"If some songs sing about the great attachment of the sister towards the brother, others sing about their mutual or unilateral hatred that has a tragic ending. And if some songs do not specify why the sister decided to poison her brother, others clearly specify that she had done it following the advice of the lover whom her beloved brother did not allow her to marry:

"Have a drink, my brother, a strong brandy.

Have a drink, my sister, you are older!

Have a drink, my brother, God is older!

And drink he did falling down the horse,

Falling down the horse he landed on the blade,

Landed on the blade and met his death."(Miladinovci, 262)

In some cases, as a consequence of such hatred between a brother and a sister is the curse. When the brother refuses to buy the sister from the Turks who want to Islamize her for "two cups of gold, the third one of pearls", as a final chance for revenge she will curse him:

Let her bear you, let her bear you
young gentleman,
thy bride, thy bride,
a slave girl,
a boy child, a boy child
a slave itself!
Your fast horses, your fast horses
Turks did take away."

In another song with the same motive the sister will curse her brother: "he fell from the horse and landed on the sword" immediately after which the curse is fulfilled."⁴

As there are songs that sing about the mutual relationship between the brother and the sister, there are also a large number of songs about the relationship between sisters, especially in cases that sing about the sinful love of the sister Neda towards the other sister's husband. That love was the reason why Neda poisoned her sister to marry her son-in-law. "Not being able to understand that relationship that deviated from everyday interpersonal relations and relationships between relatives, the folk singer relates it with some kind of natural phenomena that come out of the blue or like thunder without rain:

"Listen, thunders without rain, Nedo my Nedo!

By Neda's injustices;
she poisoned her sister,
fell in love with her son-in-law!

Two children remained,
two children orphans.

Both of them said:

How do we call aunt?

Whether "aunt" or "mother"?

Let's call her aunt!" (Shapkarev, 68)

⁴ Kitevski, M., Makedonska narodna lirika, Institut za makedonska literatura, Kultura, Skopje, 2000,p.119.

The sister poisons her own sister because of the forbidden love towards the son-in law, but even that terrible crime does not provoke hatred in the heart of her niece and nephew towards the coldhearted aunt. They want to grow up to be useful to the aunt. She deprives them from their lives three times, but they resurrect in a different form and always want the best for their aunt - the bloodthirsty enemy."⁵

In Macedonian lyrical folk poetry there are a number of family songs which contain the character of the mother-in-law as a tale-teller, as well as songs about the relationships between the daughter-in-law and the sister-in-law (the husband's sister) or between the oldest and the youngest sister-in-law (the brothers' wives). In such cases, "the sister-in-law (the husband's sister) is not hostile to the daughter-in-law; she even often secretly tells her what others in the family think about her. When the nine sisters-in-law (the brothers' wives) want to poison the tenth youngest and the most beautiful sister-in-law Jana, the sister-in-law (the husband's sister) will find out and tell it to Jana."⁶

By this point, the potential victim has a choice which gives her the opportunity to avoid the fate of being a poor victim. But she rejects that choice and according to her patriarchal upbringing, she cannot refuse to try the poisonous bite offered by her husband, although she previously refused and her father-in-law and her mother-in-law:

"And then Jana rose,
And then she sat down for dinner,
The first bite she gave it to a boy
the second bite she gave it to a child
the third bite she ate herself.
The boy died at dinner,
The child died after dinner,
Jana died at midnight".

Here we confirm the claim of Prof. Tome Sazdov, PhD, that victims in Macedonian folk songs "are never passive victims, but people who emphasize their individuality through internal turmoil. In such moments the heroes take their right to choose their own destiny in the future."⁷

The woman in Macedonian folk ballad

⁵ Kitevski, M., Makedonska narodna lirika, Institut za makedonska literatura, Kultura, Skopje, 2000, p.119-121.

⁶ Kitevski, M., Makedonska narodna lirika, Institut za makedonska literatura, Skopje, Kultura, 2000, p.124

⁷ Sazdov, T., Usna narodna knizevnost, Detska radost, Skopje, 1997, p. 91.

In Macedonian folk ballad, the repertoire of ballads in which family murders are mentioned is really great. Among them "incredibly interesting are those that sing about the relationship between a brother and a sister, or those in which the sister appears as the murderer of her brother."⁸ The ballad in Miladinovci, p.no.262, where the sister wants to marry, but her brother does not allow her to marry the one she is asking for. The sister is advised by her chosen one to poison her brother at all costs as it is the only way to realize their mutual relationship:

"Go on from shadow to shadow,
Catch yourself two poisonous snakes
.....
To bind them with a green cord,
Maple will blossom, misery will rot;
To take a green cup,
To give him to drink."

Although in this case the sister is not a direct murderer of her brother, she leaves the act of killing to her chosen one.

Even more morbid is the case with the ballad in which the sister appears as her sister's murderer. The reason for the gruesome murder is the love she feels for the son-in-law, i.e. the husband of her sister, so she resorts to the only possible solution (according to her). But this murder is not enough, since the orphans that stay, now bother her with their very existence, because:

"The two children wonder,
How to call Neda,
Whether mother or aunt ..."

so she decides for a final act -their murder.

In Macedonian folk ballads there are numerous instances in which the mother-in-law appears as "an enemy" of the daughter-in-law. Such is the ballad in Miladinovci recorded under number 242. The plot in it runs like this: " Stojan tells his wife Bojana that he is going to be a best man at a wedding, and leaves her at home with precise orders regarding the domestic chores and with a specific order that does not allow any objection:

⁸ Popova, F., Makedonska narodna balada, Nasha knjiga, Skopje, 1990, p.132-133.

"When the relatives come,
Meet me on the road,
To join in for a folk line dance."

After she finishes all the things she was ordered to do, completely naturally, tired from the hard work - a nap comes over her and she is no longer able to stay awake and to meet her husband. At that moment the mother-in-law comes forth. Earlier the daughter-in-law begs the mother-in-law to wake her up when her husband arrives, but she receives no answer. When the son arrives his mother opens the gates of the house and when he asks why his wife did not do it, the mother responds that not only she is sleeping in her room, but from the moment he left she did nothing else but relaxed. The realization that she disobeyed his orders reflects deeply within, to the extent of strong internal tremors expressed in the scene when the thought of punishment becomes dominant:

"He went in the colorful room,
and found Bojana asleep;
He threw the colorful quilt away,
a sudden chillness Bojana felt..."
.....
He laid on her pale chest,
Took a sharp knife,
And lost Bojana in her sleep."

The slander (by the mother in law), triggered by just sensed but not explained hatred leads to a tragedy, and in a moment of remorse the truth is confessed, but with that confession not only that nothing can no longer be repaired, but it leads to a disaster -the son immediately takes his life ... the mother's confession does not just makes a turn for the worst regarding the son, it is also a feeling of guilt and a sense of protest, but also an inability to punish the real opponent."⁹

Another type of Macedonian folk ballads in which family and personal relationships are sung and where the evil woman appears, is the one in which the daughters-in-law slander the daughter-in-law (the husband's sister) to her two brothers. The brothers utterly respect and love the only sister and perhaps this is the reason for the hatred from the daughters-in-law who come up with a plan:

"How to separate a sister

⁹ Popova, F., Makedonska narodna balada, Nasha knjiga, Skopje,1990, p.134-136.

From her two dear brothers ..."

The daughters-in-law resolve for the horrendous murder of a boy (not specifying which one!), and they plant the bloody knife in the sister's clothes while she sleeps. When the brothers return home, they found their wives grieve over the murdered child and the bloody knife speaks enough. They want to punish her in the yard, but she begs them to do it in the woods, where for the last time she begs them:

"If I am on God's plains,
Now to make my tears leak,
Dry clothes would grow on me,
Clover to become a monastery..."

Christianity preaches that innocence must be proven in some unusual way, i.e. by some miracle, and soon enough it happens:

"Where blood was spilled,
Here a church was opened,
Where her head fell,
Here altar was build;
Where her tears were shed,
There water sprung,
Healing water sprung.
An angel boy beside her appeared,
An angel boy came to me ..."

Predictably, nothing happens without a cause, so when the brothers return home, they catch their wives in bed, suffering from a severe illness, from which they will suffer whole "nine years/ripped nine beds" until they go to the church with healing water. That's where the last miracle happens after which the brothers are convinced in the innocence of their sister. Their repentance is reflected in the fact that they dress like nuns and take vows.

The Macedonian folk ballads present a portrait of the mother- killer of her own child, for the love of another man. It is also the most monstrous character of the mother-infant slayer, mother - murderer of her child who appears as a real obstacle to the realization of her passionate relationship with another man.

Her husband is away, in a foreign land, a "relatively young woman stays with her only child and falls in love with another man. That unexpected love makes her lose her mind, once she decides to raise a hand at her own child, regardless the fact that her new lover imposes the idea of murder. While he is far away, the husband senses the upcoming events in the form of "a prophetic dream" after which he immediately comes back home. Furthermore, the events are so morbid that it is hard to believe that a human being, especially a mother, is able to do such a thing. If she already had a justification for the act of crime on her offspring, then a person can never grasp the fact of the pie made from the heart and liver of the child and a barely audible voice coming from the pan, warning the father not to try the pie.

From the above-mentioned examples, it is evident that there are two types of conflict situations in Macedonian folk ballad. "The basic requirement for the development of the plot in the ballad is always a conflict situation, which occurs at the beginning, introduces the audience to the plot, or that conflict evolves gradually. Here, another phenomenon should be noted: there are ballads that do not register any conflict between the characters, but they still end tragically, just as the conflict situation does not always result in a tragic resolution."¹⁰

WOMEN`S CHARACTER IN THE TURKISH FOLK LITERATURE

Considering her role in literature, in this paper, parts of some most important proverbs from the Turkish literature will be elaborated.

At the beginning, we represent you a quote from the father of the Turkish nation, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: "*You hero, you Turkish woman, you who should not be carried in one place, you deserve to be carried on shoulders, to be dignified up until the sky.*" Furthermore, in Bilge Kaan`s book, the addressing begins with the following words: "*You Anam Katum, our great mothers, our aunts, our princesses.*"

"The woman in Oguzname by Dede Korkut"

Interpretation of the woman by Deli Dumrul:

.....

Me to be inside, let my blood be

Your gold, the one who`ll whet it, the one who`ll spent it, let it be me,

Let it be my cover!

In stable,

To climb up, let it be my coffin!

After you, courage,

Me to be there and to love you, to lie down together,

¹⁰ Sazdov, T., *Ženata vo makedonskata narodna kniževnost*, Misirkov, Bitola, 1989, p.86.

*And the snake to bite me!
Let the place be a witness, let the sky be a witness!
Let the mighty God be a witness! Let my soul be your sacrificial victim! With the distress
to agree!
Avril came for your soul!*

In this text, the protagonists are Deli Dumrul and an immensely dedicated wife. In both parts of the story, the warfare between Deli Dumrul and Azrail is represented, as well as the woman who loves her husband to that level that wishes to die together with him. In this text the love and respect as a foundation of the Turkish family are being represented.

In the period after the Islam was vastly accepted, the woman`s role in the Turkish literature is clearly portrayed through the divine and love poetry.

In the divine poetry, the woman`s love and every pain she is ready to suffer in the name of love, are being emphasized. In the same time, this love also turns to God, leaving deep traces both in religion and mysticism.

Overview of a work by Fuzuli, one of the greatest names of the divine poetry:

Gazel

*Benim tek hiç kim zar u perişan olmasın ya Rab
Esir-i derd-i aşk u dağ-ı hicran olmasın ya Rab*

*Demadem cevriyledir çektiğim bi-rahm bütlerden
Bu kafirler esiri bir müselman olmasın ya Rab*

.....

*Fuzuli buldu genc-i afiyet meyhane küncinde
Mübarek mülkdür ol mülk viran olmasın ya Rab*

In this poem, Fuzuli doesn`t want anyone`s compassion about his condition. He wants to go through the love path all by himself. Thus, in order not to lose his interest in his loved one, he even surrenders to death, wishing his suffering never ended. Thinking that by going through love pains he will mature more, looking for the love of God, he emphasizes his suffering. The mentioned inn in the poem is compared with a tekkie. He mentions the inn as a walked path, looking for God and his love.

In the 19th century there is a movement in the Ottoman Empire during which some innovations were implemented. The process of women gaining more rights gained in speed. In this period some

significant changes can be noticed: women could choose their own husbands, they had more freedom concerning the dressing code etc. This period, of course, left marks in our literature too.

In the republican period, the most important topic for the writers again is the women's role. In this period the woman's position in society, her persistence for enlightenment and modernity, the husband-wife relationship and many more were in much of a interest.

In the 1940 with the Garip movement, the women problematic became everyday subject. In the 1940 when women gained their place in poetry, both their cons and their beauty were covered in literature. Writers began to represent women as practical persons. For example, in Nazim Hikmet's poetry the woman's identity is of a great importance. In his poetry women are represented as a man's companion, his wife and his love. When the husband is with his wife, it is only then that he becomes a person.

An extract from a women's poetries:

.....
The women
Our wives:
Dreaded and respectable arms
Thin little jaws, with big eyes
Our mothers, our wives, our loved ones.
.....

Describing the woman from every single point of view, Nazim Hikmet not even once showed that something is missing in her social status. From a social point of view, that is how she is remembered in poetry.

Having in mind everything a woman represented in the Turkish literature, one cannot do but mention the Turkish women living in Macedonia. The poets in Macedonia, no matter to which generation they belong, they always mention the woman in their poetry, as a mother, a wife or a sister.

Conclusion

From the above-mentioned, it can be summarized that women in Macedonian lyrical (family) folk song and in Macedonian folk ballad about personal and family relationships is shown with her good qualities, generosity and benevolence, care and protective urge for all family members. Although a smaller number, there are still instances in which she appears as a dark and evil character, as the character of the evil stepmother, sister - murderer of her brother or sister, mother - murderer of her child; the

character of the mother-in-law as the murderer of the daughter-in-law, who using slander failed to make her son murder the daughter-in-law, the mother-in-law resorts to the last, monstrous decision and raises her hand on her. Then she witnesses the suicide of her son making her his indirect murderer; then the daughters-in-law (the husband's sisters) reveal themselves as murderers of their daughter-in-law. Such crime is usually motivated by the great love of the brothers towards their only sister; furthermore, the daughters-in-law (the brothers' wives) appear as murderers of the smallest daughter-in-law. The murder is usually motivated by the great beauty the daughter-in-law possesses and because of their jealousy, they realize it by poisoning her.

The reasons for such morbid and gruesome murders may have to be searched in the socio-economic conditions in the past, and it is known that folklore is the largest matrix which in itself perceived and reflected the different phenomena in society. It is especially notable in the family songs as well as ballads for the personal and family relationships which sing about different relationships "of everyday life within the family, among some of its members."¹¹ These songs most faithfully reflect the people's life and all its phenomena in it.

Unlike the Macedonian folk poetry, where at times the woman's character is represented morbidly and destructively, in the Turkish folk literature the woman is depicted as someone completely devoted to her husband and her family, who loves her husband and is ready to even die for him.

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¹¹ Penushlinski, K., Trudovi, semejni, humoristichni pesni, izbor i redakcija Kiril Penushlinski Skopje, Predgovor, 1973, p.13.

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