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A SYMBOL LAUDING ANOTHER SYMBOL – NATIONAL ANTHEMS' INTER-SYMBOLIC PLAY

Romanticism literature had a strong connection with the representation of the imagined picture of the communities about themselves and “the other”. A lot of “patriotic hymns” were written as part of this new symbolism. Most of them are laudatum for the historical heritage of the nation and are in accordance with the nation’s historical goals. The national anthem of Montenegro, Oj, svijetla majska zoro (Oh, Bright Dawn of May), is a hymn to the “rocky hills”. The same does Deutschlandlied, a German National Anthem, which is dedicated to the German “homeland”. The French National Anthem, La Marseillaise, constructs the images of brutal enemies, while the English National Anthem, God Save the Queen, praises the queen in a religious hymn. There are, however, some other national anthems (around 26% of all anthems), which are not dedicated to the national epic or heroic values. They are attributed to one other symbol: the flag. Such anthems are that of USA, Stare-Spangled Banner, and that of Albania, Himni i Flamurit (Hymn to the Flag), both attributed to the national symbol, the flag and/or the national colors. The present paper is an effort to analyze the role of inter-symbolic play between two (ethno) symbols: national anthems and flag/colors. For this purpose, different literary hymns are analyzed, those who have been accepted as national anthems, but also other hymns which did not become anthems, but interplayed continuously with symbols like flag and national colors.

Keywords: *Hymn, anthem, nation, ethno-symbols, flag, inter-symbolic play*

1. Introduction

The *national anthems* as national symbols derive from the literary texts – hymn, a patriotic poem, written by romantic authors with a clear aim and purpose: to support the nations' aims and interpretation, distinguishing “us”, members of this community, who share the same cultural and linguistic values, from the “others”, quite different from us in cultural, language, religious or ethnic sense (Schwyzer, 2004: 9).

The aim of national anthems has always been to mobilize co-patriots towards a fundamental goal: the attainment of the sense of togetherness and a sense of belonging (Hummel, 2017: 225) between the community members (germ: *gemeinschaft*). They were proclaimed by people who defined themselves as patriots, but are written by literary authors. So far, the principal function of those texts would be literary. They would be considered well-written if they match the artistic level accepted to the gusto of the *ideal reader* (Eco, 2000: 50–66). However, after the epic songs, the *hymn* is the most wanted literary genre the readers use to “monument” their own culture, history, values and believes, giving an extra literary function to the hymn.

It is true: the *hymns* have always had a great impact in the mobilization of the community members, regardless of whether they were well-written, in the sense of literary melodic works (as Aristotle's *poiesis*), or if they have been simply accepted well because of their mobilization power. They have served as a *nurture* of the solidarity for those members and gave them one opportunity to reaffirm their past and (political) aim. By carrying the “community spirit”, the hymn has made possible to connect them in its verses or notes, regardless of the artistic level of the text or composition. As Benedict Anderson underlined:

No matter how banal the words are and how mediocre the notes are, in this singing is found the experience of simultaneity. It is in such moments that people completely unfamiliar with each other articulate the same verses in the same melody (Anderson, 2013: 193).

2. (Ethno)symbolic role of anthems

The hymns (literary texts) cannot reaffirm the “epic routs” of the nations without that extra literary function of the text. Being transformed into an (ethno) symbolic text instead of pure literary texts, the hymn becomes a part of *distinctive symbolic repertoire* (Amstrong, 1982) that creates a strong emotional connection between the community members. Along with other ethno-symbols it helps creating the continuity of life based on common values

and supports the members to build an even stronger sense of togetherness and belonging.

In the anthem's symbolism (carried out from the hymns), the whole history of the nation is intertwined, along with the inherited culture, the feeling for the common, for what "only we are". So, the anthem (like the flag) touches the deep sense of the nation's existence in history; it is the inheritance perpetuated in the symbol. The French Marseilles, for example, like other anthems, became famous for its touching and motivating language, more than for its artistic language.

But what vests the anthems with a power so strong to gather around at the same time thousands and possibly millions of people? Does this mean that the connecting language of the hymns unites them more than the blood does? If we accept, even as a provocative opinion, that this is true, we are again faced with two incompatible situations: what happens to the anthems without text (like that of Kosovo, Bosnia, Spain and San Marino) and, secondly, who are these people who experience simultaneity (Anderson) and cultivate the sense of belonging: people who speak the same language, or people who have the same blood? Or, those who decide to feel the hymn's verses and melody even without being related (connected) to the community by blood or language?

3. The inter-symbolic play between the national symbols

Now let us return to the feeling that the national anthem creates to the Albanians and the sense of belonging they can feel everywhere and whenever it can be sung. Albanian national anthem is a literary work (it was written like a "patriotic hymn") and from 1912 serves as a national symbol (anthem) and is dedicated to the other national symbol (the flag). Albanian national flag has been immortalized in the "patriotic hymn" and later accepted as a national anthem. This powerful connection between the two symbols is an unexpressed experience among other nations in Europe. The German anthem, "Deutschlandlied" (German: "Song of Germany"), for example, is dedicated to the German "homeland", the land of the Germans.

*Germany, Germany above all,
above all else in the world...* (Deutschlandlied, 1797).

The National Anthem of Montenegro does the same. The hymn tries to glorify the "mother of all Montenegrins", the land of heroic stones, the ideal that emanates from Lovćen Mountain, which brings "pride and glory to the beloved homeland".

*We love the hard mountains
and their eerie gorges deep* (Oj, svijetla majska zoro, 1863).

The French National Anthem, “La Marseillaise”, tries to achieve the unity of the people by constructing *images of brutal enemies and appealing to patriotic emotions of the French on the whole* (Yalçın, 2019, 47).

*Arise, Children of the Fatherland,
The day of glory has arrived!* (La Marseillaise, 1792).

The English National Anthem praises the queen (God Save the Queen). It is like a religious hymn, which praises the monarchy and the Queen.

*God save our gracious Queen!
Long live our noble Queen!
God Save the Queen!...* (God Save the Queen, 1745).

But, as is easily noticed, none of them is dedicated to a national symbol, the flag. Albanian anthem in contrast to above-mentioned anthems is different in terms of the dedication to national symbols, but it is similar in motivational language. The text of the anthem is:

*Around our flag we are united,
With one will and one desire,
A sacred oath are now proclaiming
For our salvation to aspire.*

*May only those avoid the struggle,
Those who are traitors to our laws,
Undaunted is a hero through and through,
He dies a martyr to the cause.*

*With weapons in our hands a-brandished,
We will defend our fatherland,
Our sacred rights we'll not relinquish,
The foe has no place in our land.*

*For God has told the world, proclaiming:
The nations of the earth shall wane,
And yet will live, will thrive Albania.
For her our fight won't be in vain* (Asdren, 1912).

The hymn created by Asdren was his long endeavor to prove the inseparable connection between the soul of the nation and its song; between the common values and joint expression. Such powerful bond has demonstrated only the United States' National anthem, "Star-Spangled Banner", which treats the flag and its colors as an "emblem to provide a unification of the members of (Americans) society" (Yalçın, 2019, 47). Their anthem, like in Albania's case, is dedicated to another symbol – the flag. The anthem was initially written as patriotic hymn, trying to unite the Americans around their flag/colors.

*(...) And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?... (Star-Spangled
Banner, 1814).*

In the anthems' history, there are not many cases where the flag/colors are the dominant theme of the national anthems. A recent publication (Silaghi-Dumitrescu, 2020: 292) shows that among two hundred national anthems, only 26% of them have a dominant flag/colors topic. The predominant theme however remains the (home)land with 72%.

Before writing this hymn, Asdren wrote another poem, entitled: "National Anthem". The author's aim was to offer to the Albanians this poem as their national anthem. The text was never formalized as national anthem, although the text of the song is quite similar to that of the national anthems of that time. In it, the sign of the land (homeland) is associated with the sign of God (eternality), while patriotism is associated with ethnic symbols, on which the sense of togetherness and common belonging is cultivated:

*Forward, boys, for the kin and family,
For the sacred land where we've been born,
With honour like the men before,
To protect the flag and the homeland (Asdren, 1987: 17–18).*

Another Asdren's poem dedicated to this symbol is the poem *National Flag* (Asdren, 1987: 78). In it the national symbol, the flag, is a mean of proving epic endurance. It is attached to the soul of the nation and lives within it, even renewing the powers within it. Its symbolism is associated with other signs, which make up the memory of the nation. Thus, its red field is the fire that stays burning inside the soul of the Albanian. Thus, it represents a motivating idea for freedom. The eagle, the identifying symbol of Albanians, meanwhile, is a symbol of loyalty, which expresses the permanent companion in the struggle for freedom.

*On the day you died,
The eagle flew away,
But today, the life you knew
It still stood over you* (Asdren, 1987: 78).

4. Other hymns

The connection between the national “soul” and national “song” was expressed also in Father Fishta’s poem, *The Hymn of the National Flag* (Fishta, 1997: 56–59). Like in Asdren’s work, the poem is dedicated to another national symbol, the flag. Fishta’s poetry links the hymn with religious and ethnic heritage and the nation’s memory of them:

Like the leaf of Aileen of God / The flag of Albania is beating (Fishta, 1997: 56).

The first verses create a strong connection with religious memory: the flag is an inviolable national symbol, a value accepted as a paradigm on which the memory of the people stands. Therefore, the flag of Fishta is a “leaf” coming from the heavens; symbol worshiped as God, which flutters in the air and in memory of each nation member. The poem creates strong bond with other symbolic signs: with the historical memory and with the symbolism of bravery, the example of which is brought by the memory of epic deeds of the Albanian medieval warrior: George Castriota – Scanderbeg (Alb: Gjergj Kastrioti – Skenderbeu): And calls the sons of Kastriot.

The poem expresses the sense of unity over the sacrifice of compatriots. In Fishta’s poem the flag is associated with a religious paradigm of heaven, in which earthly and heavenly harmony reign together:

*On the same Flag
The God with his own hand wrote:
“For Albanians it will be Shqypnija (Albania):
Whoever touches it, let him be cursed!”* (Fishta, 1997: 56).

Another hymn dedicated to the national symbol, the flag, is the poem of Hilë Mosi, *Flamur* (The Flag). Just like in the creations of Asdren and Fishta, Mosi sings the anthem to the national symbol of the Albanians, by treating it as a great motivator of the movement for independence. In his poem, national symbols once again become means of motivation for the preservation and cultivation of belonging, national and identity. Mosi creates a strong link between mutual sacrifice and the cultivation of identity marks. For him, the flag is the field in which sacrifice is symbolically perpetuated (Today we want to reddens

you with blood), which then becomes a motivating tool for further sacrifice for the protection and cultivation of belonging.

*Today the nation has only one wish
to see you 'free oyster' in the air* (Mosi, 1972: 21).

Fan S. Noli also wrote a hymn (Noli, 2003: 37–38), following the romantic tradition of attributing a “solemn song” to the flag.

*O flag of blood, o flag of vulture,
O place of hearth, o mother e father,
Wet with tears, burned with flame,
Red flag, black flag* (Noli, 2003: 37).

In the Noli's hymn, the flag is “a flag of blood”, a testimony of sacrifice. It is a “flag of vulture”, the distinguishing symbol of Albanians in history. The vulture (double-headed eagle) flies in the place, which, as Fishta said, God had made for the Albanians.

5. Conclusions

In Romanticism the literature had a strong connection with the projected image of the ethnic communities about themselves. They asked for symbols, which could reflect “their role in history”. The national flag, his colors, along the homeland, monarchy etc., were part of a national symbolism, important to testimony the existence of the nations in the history.

We have seen a tendency to write different (patriotic) hymns, aiming to impose them as national anthems. Most of them were attributed to the land or national pride, including the victories on enemies. We have analyzed the National Hymns attributed to the (home) land, above all the national anthem of Germany and Montenegro, or to the victories over brutal enemies, including the French National anthem, or to the queen, in English anthem.

We found that there are also few anthems (around 26% of all national anthems) dedicated to the flag, as the most precious ethnic symbol of the nations. The hymn written by national writer Asdren, called *Hymn to the Flag*, has become Albanian National Anthem. The anthem expresses the soul of the nation in the most well-known romantic hymn, *Hymn to the Flag*. Deifying the flag as a most precious symbol the Albanian national anthem has made possible continuous interplay between those two national symbols. Such power has demonstrated only the US National Anthem, *Star-Spangled Banner*, but in Europe this connection between two national symbols is unknown.

However, *Hymn to the Flag* it wasn't the only one hymn written by Asdren and it wasn't that hymn provided by the author to become a national anthem. Before writing it, Asdren wrote one other hymn, *National Flag*. The hymn expresses the Albanian epic endurance and it was written with the aim to become a national anthem. But it never did. The same happened to other authors' hymns attributed to the national flag, like the hymn of father Fishta, *The Hymn of the National Flag*, or that of Mosi, *Flag*, or that of Noli, *Give for Mother*.

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SIMBOL KOJI HVALI DRUGI SIMBOL – MEĐUSIMBOLIČKA IGRA NACIONALNIH HIMNI

Književnost romantizma imala je snažnu vezu s prikazivanjem zamišljene slike zajednica o sebi i "drugome". Mnogo je "patriotskih himni" napisano kao dio ove nove simbolike. Većina njih je laudatum historijskog naslijeđa nacije i u skladu s historijskim ciljevima nacije. Državna himna Crne Gore, Oj, svijetla majska zoro (Oh, Bright Dawn of May), je hvalospjev "stjenovitim brdima". Isto vrijedi i za Deutschlandlied, njemačku nacionalnu himnu, koja je posvećena njemačkoj "domovini". Francuska nacionalna himna, La Marseillaise, konstruira slike brutalnih neprijatelja, dok engleska nacionalna himna, God Save the Queen, veliča kraljicu u religioznoj himni. Postoje, međutim, neke druge državne himne (oko 26% svih himni), koje nisu posvećene nacionalnoj epici ili herojskim vrijednostima. Pripisuje im se još jedan simbol: zastava. Takve su himne SAD-a, Stare-Spangled Banner i ona Albanije, Himni i Flamurit (Himna zastavi), obje pripisane nacionalnom simbolu, zastavi i/ili nacionalnim bojama. Ovaj rad pokušava analizirati ulogu međusimboličke igre između dva (etno) simbola: državne himne i zastave/boje. U tu svrhu analiziraju se različiti književni hvalospjevi, oni koji su prihvaćeni kao državne himne, ali i druge himne koje nisu postale himne, već se kontinuirano prepliću sa simbolima poput zastave i nacionalnih boja.

Ključne riječi: *himna, hvalospjev, nacija, etno-simbolizam, zastava, međusimbolička igra*