

## Aesthetical and Political Aspects of the Relationship between Literature and Ideology in Albania in Dictatorship and in Post-Communism

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**Abstract** This paper focuses on the relationship between literature and ideology in a former communist country, namely in Albania. The relationship between literature and ideology in Albania resulted in both aesthetical and political consequences, during communism and also in post-communism.

In the aesthetical point of view this relationship damaged the previous literary tradition in Albania, it created a limited linguistic model in all literary genres, and it formed a false concept of Realism to the readers and an unlikely perception of the social reality itself. This relationship between literature and ideology caused the denigration of the dissenting authors and their expulsion from the literary history even though they were representatives in the Albanian literature.

In the social and political point of view it strongly supported the war of classes through imprisonments, internal exile of the writers and their families, and even the execution of the writers that were considered enemies of the Party and people.

Even presently in post-communist Albania there are still opened debates on the political persecutions of the writers based only on their ideological disagreement with the regime, but also about the other side of the issue, which is the possible connection between writers and the State Apparatuses where they might have served during dictatorship.

These phenomena will be analyzed basing on methodological lines that are mainly culturologic ones.

**Keywords:** Ideology, Literature, Aesthetics, Socialist realism, Dictatorship.

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### 1. Introduction

Even though the beginning of '90s was the end of the Communist rule in Albania yet today, 20 years after the fall of communism, the sharp political sensibilities in this country make it hard to study and objectively analyze almost any aspect of political, social and cultural life during 50 years of communist regime. One of these aspects refers to the relationship between literature and communist ideology. This relationship during the communist period led to four main consequences that strengthened the war of classes and the control of the state over literature and the society as whole. These consequences are: (a) the persecution of the writers who opposed the regime and Socialist Realism, which was the only literary method allowed by the state; (b) the denigration and even disappearance of the literary work of dissenting writers that have been unknown to the public until the '90 as their literary work was confiscated by the Secret Service and the names of the writers were never mentioned in any literary studies by the Albanian academics; (c) the tragic damage to the Albanian literary tradition; and (d) the role of several Albanian writers in the State Apparatuses and especially the possible collaboration with the Secret Service, which is an issue that currently represents a strong interest for the public opinion and academics in Albania but also is a delicate argument connected to the opening of the Files of the Secret Service of the communist regime.

These four consequences in which displayed the relationship between literature and ideology in communist Albania encompass a mixing of aesthetical principles and political ones. This mixing seems to describe the very nature of Albanian literature, Literary Studies and Cultural Studies under the ideology of the communist dictatorship in Albania.

The fundamental role of ideology in literature during communism is an indisputable fact that was openly and continuously expressed by the system itself through its representatives in literary and political circles. One of the key representatives of Social Realism in Albanian literature and Literary Studies Dhimitër Shuteriqi speaking about the punishment of three dissenting writers— Mark Ndoja, Mehmet Myftiu and Kasëm Trebeshina— stated publicly in one of the sessions of the Writers Association of Albania in 1954 that literature in Albania followed unquestioningly the very objectives of the Party and State (Hoxha, 2008).

Today it is possible to articulate several points about the relationship between literature and ideology during communism in Albania and also to create the necessary space for studies in the field of Sociology of literature that in Albania is seen with skepticism because of the political sensibilities. The same benefit could be also for comparative study in the field of Critical Theories and Cultural Studies as long as Albania was only one of the communist countries of Eastern Europe even though the crimes and extremism of the communist regime here — and particularly against dissenting writers, artists, scientists and intellectuals— compared to the number of the population of Albania (about 3.1 million at that time) were far worse than in other communist countries (Marko, 1991).

## **2. Aesthetical Aspects and Consequences of the Imposing of Ideology Over Literature**

Literature is a crucial component of culture and it is both an aesthetical and a social fact. Even though this statement applies also to non-communist societies since the social and political contexts influence the literary product and literature has a certain impact in the society, this statement is especially significant for communist societies. In general, literature and “the history of modern literary theory is also part of the political and ideological history of our time” (Eagleton, 169), but in communist societies as the Albanian society in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the pressure of ideology and politics over literature and Literary Studies was extremely strong and transformed literature into a genuine medium of the state propaganda (Hoxha, 2008). Therefore, I strongly believe that the integration of Literary Theory with Critical Theories and the focus on “the Sociology of Literature as incidence with a double orientation: the occurrence of the social element over literature and also the event of the literary fact over the social one” (Pagliano, 2004) is a key factor in understanding both the literary scene in former communist countries and particularly in Albania, as well as the mechanism of power and the political and social context. As we focus in the communist period of Albania the four consequences in which displayed the relationship between literature and ideology involve the role of censorship, political and cultural dissent, the distortion of social consciousness and of literary tradition, and the politicization of literature through the Socialist Realist method as well as their consequences in Albania’s post-communist literature and society.

In communist Albania, literature, arts, and the very perspective of the reality were seen through the vague spectrum of ideology, which even became a geoculture of the contemporaneous system of life. Ideology displayed through literature starting in the elementary classes in school and this was the first phase of the Albanian experiment of communism that led to the distortion of consciousness and depersonalization of people (Vyshka, 2006). Thus, for the case of Albania applied what Alexander Zinoviev declared referring to the Communist Russia, that Russians do not live, but carry out epoch-making experiments (Crouch and Porter, 1984). In support to this statement remember that Albert Einstein also called communism a human experiment (Leci, 2006). Literary works, which were taught in Albanian schools, were selected according to one principle alone: they had to be faithful to the Socialist Realist scheme and to serve directly to the political orientations of the Party of Labor of Albania proving in such a way also the excessive indoctrination of the system of education in all levels (Kraja, 2002). Therefore the literary product was one of the basic mediums to perform the human experiment of

communism, which consisted in one clearly stated purpose: to shape the consciousness of people in order to create the *new communist man*.

The way literature was to contribute in obtaining such a result was through the application of the literary method of Socialist Realism. This is also one of the main aspects of the relationship between literature and ideology during communism in Albania. This method was proclaimed to be the only literary method officially allowed. The principles of this method were not aesthetical but rather political. The heart of the Communist aesthetics was the *social engagement* and the foremost principles of Socialist Realism are the positive hero, the Marxist perspective on the world, the proletarian content of art in order to be relevant to the worker's class, the partisan view, which means that it was intended to be supportive of the aims of the State and the Party etc. None of these principles describe the literary process or the literary work but the ideological role that literature was meant to have in the society. This method led the Albanian literature to the formation of a linguistic format that not only reflected the pressure of ideology over literature and the poverty of literary discourse but also legitimized the *official naming*, to use Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1994) language, in all fields of art. "There was no worse damage done by the Socialist Realism than the obliteration of language and the construction of a new discursive code that drastically excluded any other code. Freedom starts exactly from language and after acquiring freedom, language guarantees one's freedom. This very dimension of freedom was neglected to Albanians." maintains the well-known Albanian writer of the avant-garde of the '90, Agron Tufa (Tufa, 2010).

One of the most paradoxical components of Socialist Realism is exactly the "realist" element in its title. This component is the most inconsistent one, since this method succeeded in destroying the very sense of realism and the aesthetic sensibility of the readers. Socialist Realism and Communism in Albania had indeed unrealistic regard not only about literature but even about history aiming to understand, interpret and even create the history in relation to their own self instead of projecting the self regarding history. This is a common feature of dictatorships that in literature and in Albanian society left very deep traces. One of the worst traces is that individuals were transformed into subjects to whom was illusively given the free choice while the alternative was Socialist Realism/Communism or persecution. In such a case human identity was the first to suffer the consequences and in Literary Studies and Humanities in post-communist Albania there has been introduced the term *homo-neo albanicus* in order to name the *new communist man* that ideology and state propaganda were meant to create (Vyshka, 2006) through the pressure used on the Albanian literature in the first place.

In the Socialist Realism method there was only one almost literary principle: the Positive Hero and this hero was the incarnation of the *new man* of communism. Hence, who or what was the "positive hero"? He was a completely alienated individual reflected in the broken spectrum of Socialist Realism. In the words of Fyodor Gladkov, a "positive hero" was a person who,

"...because of the enormous love for life, recognized his own strength and knew how to externalize it in the reality; ...his personality was determined by his critical relationships to the objects, to the people and to himself. He was educated by the proletariat and by the Party. He was modest, honest and his everyday deeds were heroism, creative research, war, and victory. His personal goals were those of the community and of social usefulness. His relationships to labor and the work sector were relations to his own self" (quoted in Tufa, 2010)

Socialist Realism has largely contributed also to the fact that in Albanian literature, literary and non-literary components are so mixed that there is a continuous controversy between historical fact and literary fact. The result of this controversy was the deformed aesthetics of literature and art in general. Literature written in 50 years of communist regime is the very proof of it.

Probably the only crucial exception is the literary work of Ismail Kadarè<sup>1</sup>. His work created *the elegant enigma* as French critics call it referring to the message and style proceedings of Kadarè (Kuçuku, 2005). But Kadarè and part of the literary work of few authors such as Petro Marko, Fatos Arapi etc. are good examples that stress even more the fact that Socialist Realism and the political context that generated it are inseparable from the censorship as a strong institution in totalitarianism. Almost every one of the most important Albanian writers of that period had at least one literary work prohibited by the censorship and suffered a form of punishment for the deviance from the Socialist Realist method (Elsie, 2001). Censorship in Albania reached unprecedented levels even compared to the censorship in communist Russia since in Albania dissenting writers were most of the time punished even before they openly expressed their disagreement with Socialist Realism as a literary format and with the political establishment (Tufa, 2010a). The writer and researcher Agron Tufa maintains that because of this extremist nature of censorship and surveillance over writers and intellectuals it would not be correct to speak about mere dissidents in a political sense in the Albanian literature (and science) — such as Solzhenitsyn, Herbert, Kundera etc. for the respective countries— but of opponents of Socialist Realism and of the regime (Tufa, 2010a). As the Albanian reality and literature was atypical than probably the criteria that would help to understand and analyze it better should be suitable to it and therefore differ from the standard ones. This is most likely the best way to approach Albanian dissidence as well. The only document that openly confirms as a dissident act in Albania (including literature, science and intellectuals in general) is the *Pro memoria* of the writer Kasëm Trebeshina sent to the Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha in October 3, 1953 and that precedes even the *Letter of Solzhenitsyn to the Soviet Leaders*. While Solzhenitsyn, in his letter, clearly discussed the heavy burden of ideology on the nation, an ideology that was dead and never a science (Solzhenitsyn 1974), Trebeshina openly called the state's ideology as the cause of ruin of the Albanian nation in every aspect of literature, art, science and social life and openly named the communist regime as knee-deep in blood and crime (Elsie, 2001). There has been opened a debate among Albanian intellectuals and literary critics on the authenticity of this letter (Bejko 2007) but there has not been found yet in the archives any documented prove to contradict its authenticity. This open letter of Kasëm Trebeshina results to be the first act of dissidence in the communist countries in Eastern Europe in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but in Albania it is also the only one because there is no other document to prove the open political dissidence of writers, or intellectuals under the extreme pressure of communist rule.

As a result of this charged context and extreme measures of control and censorship Albanian literature was forced to focus on topics —far from any dissident approach— such as the partisan war and the construction of socialism and could not express the universal human dilemmas, which were considered by censorship as revisionist and decadent influence. Albanian literature was transformed in great part of it into a flat and one-dimensional entity where thoughts and content were under surveillance more than anything else. Language and thought were now unilateral. T. W. Adorno said that real thoughts are those that cannot grasp even their own meaning (Steiner, 1998) but in Socialist Realism there was one meaning alone and one thought alone, which would serve to the state ideology.

The consequence of this ideological and political pressure over literature had a direct impact both in the quality of the literature written in that time and in the damage caused to the literary tradition of Albania. The expressive image of Albanian literature that was being shaped in the 1930s — with the flourishing of modernism, symbolism, hermetism etc. (Mullaj, 1968) — was

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<sup>1</sup>This novelist is well-known as the winner of Man Booker Prize in 2005 and of the Prince of Asturias Award in 2009. He has been regularly short-listed for the Nobel Prize in Literature and is well known for his parables, symbolic language and allegory on totalitarianism. His novels are translated in more than 35 languages and have had more than 637 reprints all over the world (Kuçuku, 2005).

demolished. This fact was overt in the quality of literary discourse, topics, style, conceptual and aesthetical proceeding and was also obvious in the realm of Literary Studies and in translation. Before the communist takeover, writers and authors such as, Baudelaire, Dostoyevsky, Durkheim, Freud, Nietzsche, Bergson, Max Webber etc.— or a number of Albanian modernist authors such as Poradeci, Kuteli, Koliqi etc.— to name a few, were normally translated and published in literary and social periodicals; but after 1945, the Albanian literary periodicals were a conglomerate of works selected according the criteria of Socialist Realism and written by Soviet and Albanian writers that gladly and generously applied the principles of the theorists of Socialist Realism in communist Russia Lunacharsky and Zhdanov.

The strong pressure of ideology was imposed also regarding the translations of the classics of the world literature. These translations were accompanied by instructions for the readers where critics had to explain the “conceptual limitations” of distinguished authors of world literature, such as Dickens, Tolstoy, and Balzac etc. that did not counterpart with the ideological line of the Party. While Flaubert, Dostoyevsky, Wilde, Baudelaire and hundreds of eminent writers of the world literature were not allowed to be translated or read by the population in the original language. The introductions mentioned above were obligatory for every edition or reprint of the classics that the censorship allowed to translate and are part of each publication of the most famous Editing House in Albania *Naim Frashëri*, whose books are easy to find even today as they are in the National Library of Albania, in Tirana.

But did Socialist Realism have its representatives in Albanian literature as it happened in other literatures, for example in communist Russia or in other communist countries? Yes, Socialist Realism did have its own representatives in Albanian literature. They were writers whose names say quite a little today to the aesthetic principles and selection of the literary art and heredity in the Albanian culture, for example: Fatmir Gjata, Shevqet Musaraj, Aleks Çaci, Andrea Varfi etc. They were authors of the declarative model in poetry or prose and their work was mainly an anthem for the regime and socialist life. However, for these very reasons their work helps to understand the influence that ideology and politics can have on literature and how literature on the other hand may became a successful medium of propaganda.

On the other hand, the first writers to be punished by the regime but who expressed a motivating concept of literary art and criticism in their first works even though persecuted — or even executed by the regime — were Sejfulla Malëshova, Kasëm Trebeshina, Arshi Pipa, Musine Kokalari, Mark Ndoja, Trifon Xhagjika, Genc Leka, Vilson Blloshmi etc.

In such a complex merging of literature and politics, Socialist Realism damaged the Albanian literature, caused a deviation of its natural course and violently divided it into five streams in which this literature unnaturally existed for almost 50 years during the 20th century. The academic Agron Tufa summarizes these streams as follows (Tufa,2010): (1) The literature of the exile (Ernest Koliqi, Martin Camaj, Arshi Pipa, Bilal Xhaferri etc.); (2) The literature that was officially unaccepted by the official critics and state (Gjergj Fishta, Faik Konica, Vinçens Prenushi, Anton Harapi and particularly the Franciscans and Jesuit literary tradition); (3) The literature that was neglected or at least ignored, as a literary fact (Mitrush Kuteli, Lasgush Poradeci, Petro Marko, Mustafa Greblleshi etc); (4) The literature developed in the Communist prisons (Ethem Haxhiademi, Ndoc Nikaj, Astrit Delvina, etc.) [I do not consider this a stream on it's own because their literary topic can hardly be considered a classifying criteria]; and (5) Literature of Socialist Realism itself (Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Fatmir Gjata, Aleks Çaçi, Dritëro Agolli, etc.).

Another aspect of the reality of literature under communist ideology was the complete distortion of methodological aspects of literary study. There was no argument nor an interdisciplinary approach of Literary Studies and humanities in general with sociology, philosophy, history, psychology and other disciplines whose contribution in Literary Theories has been well-known since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand the names of the poets and writers that rejected Socialist Realism weren't usually named in any of the

university or scholar texts. In particular cases they were mentioned to “prove” their decadence as it happened with the literary works of Fishta, Koliqi, Konica etc. The authors that rejected Social Realism and Communism and that escaped at the beginning of communist rule in Albania, and lived abroad were condemned in absence and were not allowed to ever return in Albania. Their names and works were erased from the fundamental texts such as *The History of Albanian Literature* that was published in the 1983 by the Academy of Science of Albania. Such authors were Mustafa Kruja eminent albanologist and linguist with main contribution in Albanian language and Historical Studies in the `30-`40; Ernest Koliqi poet and founder of the Institute for Albanologic Studies in the `30; Mehdi Frashëri founder of the National Front Party; Branko Merxhani well-known publicist in the `40; Faik Konica former Ambassador of Albania in the USA in the 1930s and founder of literary criticism in the Albanian literature etc. The political orientation of these authors was the cause of their deletion from the Albanian literary heredity for 50 years.

Another harmful limitation in the methodological aspect was that the only methods allowed to study and interpret literary work and arts in general was the one defined as *historical-cultural approach*. However it was not applied in its totality counting Cultural Studies, Critical Theory etc. because its outcome was already formatted and had to focus on the revolutionary development of the society and the ideological education of the masses. Methods such as structuralism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, post-structuralism, semiotics etc. were forbidden in the academic environment. *The History of Albanian Literature* published in Tirana in the `80s by the Academy of Science is a living proof of this fact.

### 3. Political Persecutions and Literature

The political persecutions in communist Albania that were exercised over writers, artists, intellectuals, scientists, common citizens, foreign citizens living in Albania etc, had different forms and particularly the tortures inflicted to the victims were considered by Amnesty International as extreme violation of human rights (Amnesty International, 1984) and even genocide. The nature of torture under communism whose subject have been many Albanian writers has been reported and described in horrifying details by the survived writers and intellectuals of the communist prisons (Titani, 2006)

The forms of punishment suffered by the writers who were opponents to the regime or to Socialist Realism included lack of the right to publish, internal exile of the writers and their families and lack of the right to professional career in any field, as a key point of the war of classes, imprisonment, and execution. Most of the executions — that were done either with or without trial — of a considerable number of Albanian writers happened in two main periods. One is the period 1944-1954. A report of the Secretary General of the UN states that during that period the general number of the people who were imprisoned and sent to the labor camps by the regime only for ideological and political reasons was 80.000 people. 10.000 of them died (Leci, 2005). In this period were imprisoned and executed the authors that had a contribution in the literary process of the `30 which is well-known in the Albanian literature for its maximal achievements (Elsie, 2001) and the literary tradition was violently interrupted. Some of the writers who suffered the forms of persecution in this period for ideological reasons and for the nonconformist nature of their literary work are: the archbishop and poet Vinçens Prenushi (1865-1949) who died under torture; the dramatist Ndre Zadeja (1891- 1945); the translator and poet Lazër Shantoja (1892-1945); Father Bernardin Palaj the scholar who studied the Albanian Legendary Epos (1884-1947); the translator of the masterpieces form the ancient Greek literature Gjon Shllaku (1907-1946); the first Albanian Cardinal of the Catholic Church Mikel Koliqi (1911-1997), the translator of Dante’s *Inferno* Mark Ndoja,(1912-1972); the predecessor of the Albanian modern novel and one of the international soldiers in the War of Spain Petro Marko (1913- 1991); the poet and translator Sejfulla Malëshova who was internally exiled until his death

(1900- 1971); the translator of the works of Ismail Kadare in French Jusuf Vrioni (1916-2002) who was imprisoned and completely marginalized from the artistic and intellectual circles of the country etc. (Bejko, 2007).

The second period of an extensive campaign of persecutions was in the '70. It was a campaign against revisionist elements that lead to prison poets and writers such as Visar Zhiti (1952), Bashkim Shehu (1955), Frederik Rreshpja (1941-2005) etc. Ramiz Alia, the ideologist of this new Cultural Revolution in Albania that synchronized with the Chinese Cultural Revolution, proclaimed in public in 1965 the new cultural policy, which defined the role of literature and arts in the simple fact of making the population of Albania immune to the bourgeoisie and revisionist influences whenever they would come from (Elsie, 2001). The years '70 were the extreme implementation of this new policy by imprisoning most of the young writers, scholars and artists of that generation.

This reaction of the state against dissenting writers persisted until the end of communism. Even two years before the fall of the regime there was a public execution of a poet for ideological reasons such as Havzi Nela (1934-1988).

Another important aspect and argument regarding the relationship between literature and ideology during communism in Albania, is connected to the fact that there were Albanian writers who collaborated with the Secret Service in order to survey the developing of Albanian literature and the activity of the writers (Hoxha, 2008). The argument goes that very few of the writers that were integrated in the network of Secret Service as collaborators have publicly admitted this fact in the post-communist era. There were Albanian writers or critics who collaborated with the regime through the literary expertise of the literary works of dissenting or surveyed writers, through letters of recommendations, referee process (Jubica, 2007) etc. Therefore, the argument about the relationship between literature and ideology opened in Albania in 1995 and than again in 2005 without concluding until the present days as it now focuses in the debate about the opening of the Files of the Secret Service that are related to writers and artists during communism (Bejko, 2007). Even though the opening of the Secret Files has not been authorized yet and it is a non-literary issue in essence, it has an overt impact on literature as well as in all social and political life of the country. The public opinion, the Association of the Political Persecuted People of Albania, experts in politics and sociology and also specialists of literature have openly act in response that the material contained in those files would help to explain many unclear issues regarding different phenomena — literary phenomena and political ones— in the Albanian society under dictatorship. That part of the interested parties —politicians, intellectuals, former executives in the previous regime etc— who oppose the opening of Files maintain that this is not the proper moment for the opening of these Files because part of the current politicians of Albania might have been involved in the activity of the Secret Service and this would cause a social chaos and further trauma to the victims of communism. According to them this process should take much more time. Meanwhile, another option is the opening of files in a selective way and gradually that would start with writers and artists (Kadarè, 2006).

However, remains the fact that Albania is the last former communist country in Eastern Europe that after 20 years of the fall of communism hasn't opened the files yet. I believe that this process is inevitable and must start even though it should not take place in a politically and emotionally charged climate, neither through the implementation of laws that are voted in the Albanian Parliament without the participation of the opposition or in the presence of other interested parties as it happened with law nr. 10034, date 22.12.2008: *On the Integrity of the Figure of Executives in State Administration*<sup>2</sup>. In October 2010<sup>3</sup> there has been formed by order of the Council of Ministers of Albania the National Board that will lead the Institute for the Study of the Crimes and Consequences of Communism. The project of this law (Nr. 10 242) started in

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<sup>2</sup> On line source: <http://www.lajmifundit.com>

<sup>3</sup> On line source: <http://www.sot.com.al>

February 25, 2010 but the voting on the members of the Board of the Institute took place in winter 2010. This Institute will focus on the study of Literature, History and social reality during communism and will publish series of Memoirs of the persecuted writers, scientists, and intellectuals, series of the censored works of these personalities, and also monographic studies by the Albanian or foreign academics on this period and about writers or other intellectuals that suffered the several forms of punishment under communism for their ideas and works. But still this doesn't give the guaranties on the opening of the files even though it is a basic responsibility and goal of this institute.

Some of the documents that are now in the State archive and that have been analyzed so far has given certain information about the panorama of the Albanian literature and part of social and political life where writers have had an overt role during communism. Even though this is still a small part of the information that is needed to study in an empiric way the relationship between literature and ideology, it has been useful to encourage the research in this field and also the awareness of such an important issue for Albanian culture and politics in post-communism and in the future. The information that was found, analyzed and commented so far has been made public in books, journals, newspapers and literary reviews in Albania such as *Fjala*, *Aleph*, *Mebr Licht*, *Ars* etc.

Therefore the relationship between literature and ideology has opened also an ethical debate about this other side of the role of writers in the functioning of the totalitarian rule and of ideology over literature during the communist period in Albania. This is one of the reasons why the opening of the Files of the Secret Service during communism is considered by many academics and intellectuals as a crucial step toward a better understanding of the literary process, on the social and political past and future of the country and as a sign of emancipation of the Albanian society in post-communism.

#### 4. Post-Communism and Literature

After the '90 the survived authors of the communist labor camps wrote literary works that in the Albanian studies are sometimes called the *Literature from the prisons* because their main topic is the reality of the communist prisons and the dissolution of human identity under violence. However, I consider it difficult and unnatural to define this as a literary stream of its own. The well known authors of this literary product are Father Zef Pllumi, Visar Zhiti, Maks Velo, Fatos Lubonja, Uran Kalakulla, Pjetër Arbnori, etc. Their literary work represents a particular content that distinguishes it from the other streams of literature that have developed in these 20 years after the fall of communism.

In the aesthetical aspect Albanian literature in post-communism developed in another stream that proved to be an impressive attempt to introduce a new type of poetry and another conception of the individual and society. This is the generation of the '90 who was the first to introduce to the Albanian literature a poetry that deliberately destroyed basic linguistic structures aiming to free language from the format imposed by the previous communist ideology and interrupt any possible conceptual and aesthetical connection to the literature of Socialist Realism. These poets, such as Rudian Zekthi, Gentian Çoçoli, Agron Tufa, Rudi Erebara, Ilir Belliu, and Ervin Hatibi didn't perform an ideological critique to the literature of Socialist Realism but changed drastically the content of poetry and its linguistic conception and proceedings (Marku, 129-130).

However, in post communist Albania the literary process has still suffered the impact of communist ideology and this has happened in different ways; first of all through the mere fact that several authors such as Kasëm Trebeshina, the best case in point (Bejko, 2007) maybe have been politically rehabilitated but on the aesthetical point of view their literary work still represents an open debate. The previous approach to most of the literary work of the writers who were persecuted during communism I believe is more a moral support rather than the



assessment of the aesthetical values of those literary works. The eagerness to correct the crimes of the previous regime has guided literary critics to this mistake that has a high cost for Literary Studies, and for the History of Literature in a former communist country such as Albania.

Other writers such as Arshi Pipa<sup>4</sup> are still almost unknown to the public. His contribution in literary criticism is important but still he is not integrated in the academic texts of literature, critical theories etc. because his studies have not been translated yet from English and Italian— as they were written in original in these languages— and the author is still surrounded by silence. Again political issues and non-literary interests stand on the way of literature and Literary Studies. In such a context Literary Theory in Albania has found itself within a gap because of this lack of equilibrium between the political and aesthetical rehabilitation that would distinguish the social role of a writer as an intellectual and the value of the writer for the aesthetical achievements in literature. Even though the situation seems to change gradually the heredity of the forced relationship between literature and ideology during communism has left deep traces in the Albanian literature and since literature has a direct influence on the people as a medium of propaganda, the relationship between literature and ideology left a strong outline also in the Albanian society. These facts represent open debates and unsolved issues in more than one field in the present Albanian reality but that are a fundamental field of interest for the sociology of literature and for Critical Theories in the Albanian literature and culture presently.

## 5. Conclusions

In communist Albania the aesthetic principles of literary art were intentionally distorted in order to serve to the political ideology of the communist state. The result of such a strategy was a considerable aesthetical damage to the Albanian literature and the interruption of the literary tradition of the '30.

On the other hand communism and Social Realism influenced the nature and methodology of Literary Studies, Critical Studies and Humanities in general, as well as the aesthetic quality of the literary product. The principles of Socialist Realism were political rather than aesthetical and formed a distorted concept of realism in literature and a false perception of the social reality of Albania to the readers.

The pressure of ideology and politics over literature through the State Apparatuses and the censorship became a crucial component of communist rule since it led the masses towards the formation of a political consciousness whose result was the creation of *the new communist man* and the general acceptance of the communist power.

In every epoch literature and Literary Studies are connected to an ideology (Eagleton, 2003) but the communist dictatorship in Albania allowed one ideology alone and one literary method alone that would serve to its political power. Therefore the relationship that was imposed between literature and ideology caused also political and social consequences because it served directly to the war of classes. It resulted in imprisonments internal exile and executions of many writers, the neglect of the right to high education and university studies, and also of administrative job positions and professional career for the members of the families of these writers and of all the political prisoners. Compared to the population of Albania (about 3.1 million at the time) these punishments are the worst in all communist countries of Europe.

The post-communist period has brought to the light new facts about the relationship between Albanian writers and the Secret Service of the communist state. As writers, translators, editors, intellectuals, scientists etc, were under continuous surveillance by the Secret Service, investigative and informative Files were formed for each of the suspected dissenters. These Files

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<sup>4</sup> Arshi Pipa was a literary critic, poet and translator who was imprisoned in the late '40 by the communist regime. After prison he escaped and lived abroad. He continued his academic career in the USA in Berkley University, Columbia Univesity, Adelphi University etc.

contain important information and further research in this field represents a fact of extreme importance for Literary Studies in Albania, for Comparative and Critical Studies, for the Sociology of literature etc, but it is also a fact with ethical and social impact in the Albanian society as a former communist society.

Therefore, in a former communist country such as Albania, that had such a complex political and cultural context the aesthetical principles were mixed violently with the political and ideological ones causing the formation of a literary model and a general social conception of art and reality that did never answer to the real facts and had consequences in the Albanian society in dictatorship and in post-communism.

Studying this relationship between literature and ideology in Albania during communism I believe that helps for a comparative study in this field with other former communist countries. Literary works are both what a culture produces as well as what reproduces the ideology. Therefore studying them in the context of Albanian society can lead us to understand better the connections between literature, politics and society in this very important epoch of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as communism whose interest for the propaganda and the manipulation of the masses through literature and arts lead to the formation and function of a very strong State Apparatuses and ideological structure.

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