The articles in this book are an edited version of the papers presented during the First International Conference on Media and Memory “COVERING THE COMMUNIST PAST: MEDIA TRANSFORMATION AND MEMORY IN ALBANIA“, on 9-10 November 2015, in Tirana.

The conference was focused on the following themes:

- The role of the media in the past
- Journalistic culture in the past and the present
- The collective memory of other periods through the lens of communist experience
- Media journalistic practices in producing and reproducing collective memory
- The role of the media producers in the construction of collective memory
- The role of media technology in archiving collective memory
- Social media and collective memory
- Media of remembrance: Literature

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The book that you have in your hands is a product of the First International Conference on Media and Memory “Covering the Communist Past – Media Transformation and Memory in Albania”, held in Tirana on 9-10 November 2015. Both the conference and the edited volume were conceived by the editors with the conviction that journalists and the media play a key role in the collective memory of a country through the way they report on different historical figures and events. Similarly to other communist countries, Albanian media and journalists during the dictatorship were part of the regime’s propaganda apparatus. As one of the contributing authors, Peter Gross (Chapter 1) puts it, their transformation in the early 1990s to independent and since the fall of the Stalinist dictatorship in Albania, and it is time we examine the role Albanian media and journalists have played on the societal reflection on the country’s past during this period.

*Media Transformation and Collective Memory in Albania* bring together media and cultural communication scholars who discuss their views on the attitudes of the media towards Albania’s past with a special focus on the previous totalitarian regime. In order to put the Albanian experience in a comparative context, international scholars with an academic interest on memory studies, in general, and on Central and Eastern European countries that have undergone similar transitional processes, in particular, are also included in this publication.

With *Media Transformation and Collective Memory in Albania* we hope to make a theoretical and empirical contribution in the under-researched field of Media and Collective Memory in Albania and elsewhere. In order to give a more complete picture, the book is
divided in 5 different Parts, each covering different but equally important aspects of the matter. However, we do not claim we are covering every key area in the study of Media and Memory. During the selection process we had to be very strict in accepting only those papers that examined specific aspects of collective memory in Albania and in other countries with similar transitional history. We hope that *Media Transformation and Collective Memory in Albania* will be a useful compendium resource for anyone who is interested in the media and collective memory in post-communist countries.

The book starts with a chapter that offers an overall reflection on the transformation of the media in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism, followed by an overview of the status of the Albanian journalist before 1990, which help us understand the challenges journalism has been undergoing during the transitional period in Albania. The other chapters include approaches to the transformation of language and images in media and literature; international perspectives; memory in the new media; as well as critical views on the process of the mediatization of memory.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all contributors for their excellent work. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work together. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for its support of IDMC activities, without which this publication and the conference that preceded it would not have been possible.

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THE AUTHORS
THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN CONSTRUCTING MEMORY THROUGH TIME
Introduction

The process of transformation in Eastern Europe remains unfulfilled by the systemic transition from communism in 1989-1992. Neither historical memory – that junction between myth and historical truth – nor the values, beliefs and attitudes, accumulated over time and expressed in elite and mass behaviors and practices, can speedily be erased by systemic changes. This is true even if and when, as scholars argue, such changes provide both incentives and opportunities for alterations in culture. This essays briefly outlines the transition-transformation of the media systems in Eastern Europe and suggests an approach to its understanding different from the traditional political-economic one.

The development of Eastern European media systems since 1989

Systemic transitions occurred instantly once Eastern Europe’s Communist regimes disappeared in 1989, in some cases within weeks or months. Transitions in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia began even before 1989. The second phase in the evolution of post-Communist nations, the transformations in the very character of the political and media systems, in the roles and functions to be fulfilled, in the ethos informing and guiding their functioning, and in all other institutions affect them, is a work in progress.

In the brief transition-transformation overlap period, in most instances, but not all, both the incipient democracies and their now liberated media systems endeavored to return to imagined permutations of the vaguely remembered pre-communist situations. On the political side, old traditional political parties were resurrected,
at least in name, alongside newly created political groups. On the media side, too, particularly in Central and Southeast Europe, the name of pre-communist newspapers appeared on the newsstands once again, side-by-side with newly established ones. In truth, both the resurrected political parties and newspapers, and in a few instances radio stations, were only pale reflections – if even that - of their namesakes. Those who remembered the pre-Communist era for sentimental reasons, and young and old anti-Communists for symbolic value, kept alive the resurrected political parties and newspapers, and in a few instances radio stations.

The new media systems in the region were almost instantly encumbered by economic problems, legal challenges, political manipulations and varying degrees of overt and covert attempts to control them. Additionally, the lack of professionalism, the absence of well defined, accepted and enforced conceptions of what a free press means, and of a sense of what its character and roles should be in a democratizing society, also stymied the systems’ contributions to democratization. Briefly put, twenty-five years after the overthrow of Communism, the media systems in the region are not faring very well in regard to media freedom and professionalization not in the old established nation-states nor the new ones carved out of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. In some cases, like Hungary, one of the perceived front-runners in the transformation to democracy and democracy-serving media in 1989, we are witnessing regression to a quasi-authoritarian, un-enlightened, retrograde media system whose freedom declined in 2010-2015. The same is true in Russia. In other instances, Albania included, the media are only partially free and facing a slew of organizational, legal, economic, ethical, professional, and other challenges. Even in countries with what are considered free media, there are attempts to curb this freedom. The 2015 Freedom House press freedom surveys shows that of the 29 former communist countries only 7 are considered to have a free media, while 13 are only partly free and 10 are not free at all. In short, the transformations of the media systems in the region and of their roles in the democratization process have been disappointing.

The lack of media freedom in Eastern Europe are assigned to the political system and its politicians, media that are now business
enterprises, judiciaries that lack independence, the absence of solidarity among journalists, vertical hierarchical systems at work on the societal level as well as within media companies. The state of media freedom is an outcome of the inability, unwillingness, and lack of freedom to professionalize, which are concurrently the cause of the curtailed freedom. What scholars largely missed is that media systems and their journalism function on the basis of distant but mostly near historical-cultural memory, and long-set values and attitudes whose most negative exemplifications have been accentuated by the Communist era. Thus, among many examples: (1) political arguments today resemble those made by the Communist media, except now both the political system and partisanship are atomized instead of being centralized; (2) resistance to the enactment of press laws is fought with forceful reminders of the use of such laws under communism; and (3) each media institution, their relationships and the societies in which they function are defined by vertical hierarchies.

It is not surprising then that the contributions made by media systems in Eastern Europe to democratic transformations have been mostly unwitting, indirect, inconsistent, limited, or absent altogether. This is in some measure true even in the few Eastern European countries were the media are considered to be free.

It is widely argued that the principal culprits for the not-to-salutary contributions to societal democratization are the controls and manipulations by political parties, politicians, businessmen, media owners – often concurrently politicians and businessmen – and even editors, directors, star commentators, analysts and journalists who are making deals that benefit them financially or in other ways. Because of this, corruption is robustly present, or so the argument goes. But here is where we missed the central truth: corruption is not created by the political and economic systems, by politicians, political parties, the very authors of the aforementioned systems. Corruption is created by behaviors and practices that are expressions of individual and collective values and attitudes.

This gives Eastern Europe’s media parallelism, instrumentalization and clientelism, for example, a different profile from their Western counterparts. The Eastern European versions are in a hyper mode and are Janus-like creatures, a mixture of traditional and non-traditional types, affected by endogenous and exogenous factors and
actors. Parallelism is much more of a melding of political, media and journalists’ interests than just simply synchronization between goals held by media and political parties and politicians. Also differentiating the region’s parallelism, instrumentalization and clientelism from the Communist period and from Western modes is that they are neither ideological nor political. They are personal. Clientelism is an institution-to-institution phenomenon, as much as it is an institution-to-individual(s) and individual(s)-to-individual(s) one, each acting as a kind of condottiere for the other. Clientelism and political parallelism are often expressions of the powers of the manager-journalist or star journalists and not only of owners of the media, of the political system and its political culture, and of the politicians and political parties.

Culture as a driving force in media system transformation

Media systems models place a great deal of importance on who wields power over the media and its ideological and political uses. They focus on consensus or majoritarian political systems giving shape and meaning to media systems and how they function. They disregard what the impetuses are for how and why power is used and misused. This requires a Habermasian approach, focusing on the human element. Consequently, as James Mark points out in his seminal work dealing with the sense of the communist past in Central Eastern Europe\(^1\) (The Unfinished Revolution, 2010), to understand the region one “must integrate the study of politics, culture, society, and memory.”

The political-economic approach to understanding media systems, their natures, functions and effects has not answered some fundamental questions, as I outline in my upcoming book, Focusing on the Core. A Cultural Approach to Media Systems:

Why did our expectations, tied so very intimately to systemic changes, fail? After all, if the new Eastern European systems have the same architecture, the same reasons for existence, the same supposed aims and values, their institutional natures, roles and manners of functioning should be the same. If these societies are democracies they should function more or less the same as those in the West, and their operative system should do so as well. They don’t and so the simplistic onus of responsibility is placed on societal systems and its institution.
Therefore, media systems scholarship is incomplete because we measure transformations in politico-economic terms and not cultural ones, or also cultural ones. Media scholars continue to approach their study of media systems worldwide with a common and exclusionary ideational core: (1) The political and economic systems explain the media system, its relationships to the former two, as well as to other societal systems and institutions, and underlie transitions; (2) Changing politics and economics fundamentally mark transformations.

I strongly disagree. For these axioms to be valid and practical, we would first need the still absent explanations for what drives the character and workings of the political and economic systems whose relationships and interdependence with the media system constitutes the purported map to its understanding. Furthermore, we need to know what drives the behavior and practices of groups of individuals, mainly the elites (i.e. media owners, politicians, editors, media managers, star journalists, etc.) who are key to a media system’s functioning, to the policy making process, the establishment of standards and criteria, and their enforcement, and to the guiding ethos on the societal and institutional levels. And, finally, we must understand the underpinnings in the nature of the relationships between political, economic, and media elites, and between them and the masses.

Put another way, I am suggesting is that we distance ourselves from the dominant proposition that media system take on “the form and coloration of the social and political structure within which” they operate. This creates a silo effect detrimental to painting a full, nuanced, meaningful picture of systems and the reason for and manner of their functioning. For instance, pre-judging media systems and their ways of functioning by whether the political systems is a *majoritarian* or *consensus* one, as Dan Hallin and Paulo Mancini suggest does not work out for Eastern Europe.

Instead, I suggest that we pursue the notion that media systems take on the form and coloration culture gives them. I furthermore propose that culture fundamentally colors these systems’ inter and intra-systems relationships, and the manner in which and with what outcomes they do so. Those scholars who urge us to take the “legacies of the past approach” in studying post-Communist evolution reinforce the idea that culture must be the basis of media systems modeling
or theorizing. In the same spirit, culture as the main approach to understanding systems is also bolstered by those who posit that even with radical changes occurring in society, such as revolutions, there is no discontinuity from the past, because of culture’s pervasive influence. As I explain in my *Focusing on the Core*,

“If we are to truly decipher and understand how systems work and interact, we must explore both the collective and individual culture of those making them work, and that which defines the roles and nature of the systems’ functioning: the interpretations, applications and enforcement of laws, rules, regulations, policies, ethics, ideologies, and standards defining and driving them.”

To do so we must identify specific cultural and historical elements affecting media transformations or the impact the media themselves have on them. Each of these elements must be intrinsically tied to the character and workings of media markets, political parallelism, clientelism, instrumentalization, profesionalism, the degree and nature of state intervention. They should also be tied to each other in ways they can help us understand how they inform the behavior and practices of the elites and others associated with a media system, and with other institutions with who it has relationships.

A cultural approach does not deny the power of politics and economics to influence culture, and the workings of societal institutions. Nor does it deny the potential of culture combining with other influences that may or may not arise from a particular political and economic system, and those from outside of a society and from within it. But the starting point of our inquiry into the character and modes of functioning of media systems needs to values, beliefs and attitudes of both the elites and the masses.

1 James Mark (2010). *The Unfinished Revolution*. Yale University Press
Introduction

Mass-media constitute an important element in the life of modern societies, and often an indicative factor of the level of a certain country’s democracy. The way how current events are reported and the space provided for journalistic analyses, accounts for the degree of respect of freedom of expression. During 1945-1990 in Albania, all public communications were controlled by the Party –State, which paradoxically declared freedom of expression formally and moreover, this was sanctioned by the law on the press, published in 1947, where Article 1 cited: ‘Press in the Republic of Albania is free. Except as otherwise provided by law, everyone has the right to freely express his own opinions be means of the press. What is contradictory within this definition, relates to the above idea that the entire system of media of the time was considered as a “property” of the communist leadership. Hence, the scholar Artan Fuga in his publication called Monologue states: ‘The press and official media, the only ones in place, constitute elements of the authoritarian political system. Media convey those informative messages offered by the power itself and, after transmitting them to the public, the power on which this public depends, returns the echo it wants to hear. No news, comment or correspondence could be chaotic, spontaneous and let alone in contradiction to the ideology and the ruling political line’”.

Features of the communist system from media perspective

According to Fuga, the whole ideology, and official propaganda was declared quite open and massively, and the media system was fostered to transmit it to the foreground and incessantly. Moreover, Hysamedin Feraj, states that “standard schemes of thinking, especially political thinking were created...”5. One of the creators, in addition to the Institutes of Sciences and the like, were also the radio-television network and press. Features of communist media were defined by Wilbur Schramm,
who addressed criticism against “Soviet Communist Theory”, in the collective work “Four theories of the press”4, stating that: 1. In the course of communication with masses the press was used as an instrument of the state. 2. Mass-media was closely integrated with the state instruments (ministries, etc). 3. Even the Parties were used by media as instruments within the State. 4. Mass-media were instruments of agitation and propaganda.5. Mass-media was characterized by a strict compelled accountability. Meanwhile leaders of the communist society claimed that the distinguishing feature of their media was: “Leninist theory of the press ..., normative theory, which ruled on how the press must be, on mass-media function as a whole and its political role”.5 With regard to the communist media regime has written also the scholar of the deontology of media, Claude-Jean Bertrand, in his book “Deontology of media”, published in Albanian as well. He states that: “Under the totalitarian regime, the state uses media to propagate its official ideology, to teach it to people, to encourage people to follow this ideology and, finally, to impose it”6. Milovan Gjilas, a former senior official in the Yugoslav communist regime and later one of its critics, writes in his book “The face of totalitarianism”, that in these systems: “From birth to death, the man is surrounded by the Party’s care for his awareness and “growth”. Journalists, ideologues, writers already sold, special schools, the single state allowed idea, large financial tools, constitute the care in this regard. To complete the picture here you can add also the large volume of mass-media, radio and any other kind of propaganda”.7. We are often critical against persons or certain social categories as to why they do not engage in changing the situations. But what could the Albanian newspapers of that time do? And to know their limits, let’s see who worked in the media of the time as journalists; how journalists and media were organized; who influenced the work of journalists and media; and finally why the Albanian media could not be democratized prior to the beginning of the system collapse?

Methodology

With regard to realization of this paper, already based on my PhD thesis, are used data empirically obtained from analysis of the press of the time and the archives of the professional journal “Tribuna e gazetarit” (The journalist’s tribune), as well as other publications related to the press of the time (with the term press, at the time object of this study was generalized the whole media system). In addition, is used the
comparative analysis between the theoretical model and its application in the Albanian journalistic terrain.

Journalists controlled by state structures

Organization of the work in the editorial office depended on several factors, among which the periodicity of media publication. Periodicity, on the other hand, along with the publishing entity influenced also on the themes dealt with by the media, and accordingly even in sectors which overwhelmed the press pages. Similarly, the type of media influenced on the organization of the work in the editorial office, also due to the technology used for the realization of the final product. Each press body had an executive council. Organization continued with: editors-in-chief, vice/editor-in-chief, secretary of the executive council, heads of sections, permanent correspondents in the districts, creative staff (editors and correspondents), employees of technical sector, assistants. Before a certain article, whether or not brief, could see the light of publication, it must initially receive seven signatures from all levels of this hierarchy. Editors-in-chief, journalists and the media figures, not only had their previously defined positions and tasks, according to the hierarchy where they practiced their profession, but were also totally under the subordination of political and state structures. The editing process, assumed special importance: Ensuring professional accuracy and authenticity of facts; proper building and organization of the form of material bound for publication, by improving its style, finding words, improvement of sentence structure, etc. And the most important point was that editing was conducted by the journalist in such a way as to be in compliance with the politics in force. On top of the leading hierarchy of the power in charge of media, is:

1. First Secretary of the Party Central Committee; this was the most important person with reference to the life fate of journalists and other actors of mass communications. Fuga states that he used to give the overall orientations and tasks about media, which were binding to be realized by the press and media in general. He used to harshly criticize in cases he deemed appropriate that different practices of journalism were not in accordance with “the party line”. 2. Secretary for propaganda. Fuga states that this was the person who generally led the party lines in the areas of education, culture, science and press. Journalists were
under his subordination as regards employments. 3. Head of the press sector. This was the person who directly exercised the then power of the Central Committee over the media and press. The relation of journalists with it was fully professional. No news, speech or any other form of information conveyance through the media could be published or disclosed to the public without first passing under relevant control and receiving its approval as well.

In addition, at each executive committee in districts, was established the Sector for Agitation and Propaganda, commonly known as agitprop, which in turn, consisted of five control sectors: “1. Press and agitation sector; 2. Theoretical reference sector; 3. Cultural sector; 4. Technical organizing sector: 5. Pedagogical sector” Its tasks were: First, ensure coverage of the whole country with central and local press bodies; second, ensure proper treatment of certain issues in the press; third, it decided which issues should be published and where to put emphasis on; fourth, it would specify the political line to be followed by the press.

Organization in the Union of Journalists of Albania

Apart from the hierarchical organizations and those intra-editorial, since the beginning of 1949, for Albanian journalists another form of organization, namely the Union of Journalists of Albania was in place. Its mission was mainly to influence on professional growth of journalists. This organization was joined by media journalists and employees. In 1964, it started to publish the professional magazine “Tribuna e gazetarit”. Similar to all other strata of the Albanian society during 1945-1990 the journalists as well, used to live within certain frames and limits imposed by the dictatorial system. But journalists, being in charge of a special profession, enjoyed some more apparently “privileges” accompanied with some more pressure. “The Leninist type journalist is a political man, a spokesperson of the Party and people, educator of masses, master of grasping key problems, in deep interpretation and analysis as well as in their creative solution.”

Ethics – a party code

The Albanian press of the time had to be guided by Marxism-Leninism doctrine. Luan Zelka, one of the most senior scholars, in his article “Ethics
of the journalist”, published in the magazine “Tribuna e gazetarit”, No. 8 of 1969, lists the ethical features of the communist journalist as follows: “He must be faithful to Marxism-Leninism, Party and the people, aware that being a Party member does not and could not bring any personal privileges; he must be simple and listen with due attention and respect the voice of the masses, know their pulse and concerns, be on top of them; he must also be an enemy to conceit, arrogance, spirit of command, privileges, nepotism, etc.; he must bravely fight against anyone demonstrating such tendencies, he must be vigilant and revolutionary, he must act under pure justice, be principled, aware at work, place always and above all the general interest”. Claude-Jean Bertrand states that “communist propaganda was full of denunciations (on racism and imperialism) and tempting declarations (on peace and development) obtained from governments of “unengaged” countries and Marxist Universities in many democratic countries13. When speaking about the deontology of the media, this author thinks that Deontology cannot be developed without having free media. Other requirements laid out before the journalist were: to be aware that being a Party member does not and could not bring any personal privileges; he must be simple and listen with due attention and respect the voice of the masses, know their pulse and concerns, be on top of them; he must also be an enemy to conceit, arrogance, spirit of command, privileges, nepotism, etc.; he must bravely fight against anyone demonstrating such tendencies, he must be vigilant and revolutionary, he must act under pure justice, be principled, aware at work, place always and above all the general interest.

In a letter, addressed to “Zërit të Popullit” newspaper on the 10th anniversary of the establishment of this body, on 24 August 1952, was reformulated the following thought: “Newspaper should always be a more powerful agitator, a fervent propagandist and a better collective organizer of our working masses ...”.14 We have greatly announced that: “The Leninist type journalist is a political man, a spokesperson of the Party and people, educator of masses, master of grasping key problems, in deep interpretation and analysis as well as in their creative solution”.15

The position of journalists in the society
Fuga has studied the Albanian reality of the time, stating that the system of mass media in totalitarian societies is built hierarchically. “Situated between the peak of the power pyramid and the reader, the journalist
fluctuates between them both, takes sides by the power but also by the mass of citizens and anonymous individuals, difficult to be controllable in ideas, convictions, grievances and their social relations”. According to Fuga, a journalist of that period could be a medium official, but even a simple individual like all others, who, the more evaluated, the more treated as an anonymous individual, as a simple tool in use, as a person whom the government doesn’t trust completely, but moreover, is suspicious against him and keeps him under certain daily control. Meanwhile in his position as a simple person or a low or medium staff of the Party or State administration, he appears as an instrument of power and is unified with it. In short, the journalist of that time is a person attacked by the power but who can also attack on behalf of the power, ideology and politics in force. He is both weak, thus kept under control, but he is also powerful and exerts pressure and control over the others.

Conclusions

1. Albanian media in the period of the communist system were set up and placed under the use of the state and its propaganda pursuant to the authoritarian model, also known as the communist press model. Journalists work under constant pressure conditions, generated from various professional and social groups to which they belong and serve simultaneously;

2. “The primary role of totalitarian media is by no means the one classically specified for media in general. ..... Informing the public is a sub-function that, as a matter of fact, depends on other priority tasks. It depends on how it serves to the involvement of masses within power, or otherwise, on how it accomplishes massive manipulation to make acceptable to the public the current politics, political system, namely life in a society with totally curtailed individual rights”.

3. Media was initially viewed as a propagandistic body and the best way to achieve this, was education of the audience with Party-state principles, whose legitimating was often achieved on the grounds that they had scientific basis. Preliminary planning of press articles and journalists’ work is displayed as a means of guaranteeing media controlled system in the eyes of power.

4. Under these conditions, the Albanian journalists of the communist period used to live in situations of building and maintaining standard
schemes of thinking, and more specifically of political thinking over the past, the present and the future, where only Politburo and Enver Hoxha had the monopoly of the truth, and accordingly no one could claim to be working for its discovery;

5. The Albanian journalist could not go beyond official alternatives, opinions and directives; yet, even in that period, no exercise of professional journalism was in place.

6. Contrary to the “press-means of public information” principle, journalism of that period was inclined towards Lenin’s idea, according to which “press should be an instrument of agitation and propaganda” with the aim of achieving “brainwashing of the audience” and, as Zhak Ellul wrote “psychological merging within certain frames, of the society, nation, organizations, etc.”

1 Fuga, Artan (2010): Monolog, Dudaj, Tiranë
2 Fuga. ibid. fq. 52.
4 Siebert and al, 1963
5 Sparks, Colin (2001): Komunizmi, kapitalizmi dhe mass-media, ISHM, Tiranë, fq. 84.
6 Bertrand, Claude-Jean (2007): Deontologia e mediave, ISHM, Tiranë, Fq. 16.
8 Boriçi 1986.
9 Fuga. ibid. fq. 85.
10 Fuga. ibid. fq. 86.
13 Bertrand. Ibid. fq. 11.
14 Partia e Punës e Shqipërisë për shtypin, Shtëpia botuese “8 Nëntori”, Tiranë, 1980, fq 123.
16 Fuga. ibid. fq. 175.
17 Fuga. ibid. fq. 127.
TRANSFORMATION
OF LANGUAGE AND IMAGES
IN MEDIA & LITERATURE
Introduction

Everyone supposes that different speakers speak the same language and that they are equal between them when they speak and we all suppose that communication is symmetrical. But, language does not exist separately from its users, speech does not exist independently from its speakers. Language changes in time, space, based on classes or different layers of the society and according to concrete situations. The language used by a certain community reflects its features, way of living and opinions. Language forms perceptions and points of view of the reality.

Language and opinions expressed in media reciprocally influence each-other. There are the same norms that regulate expression of opinions in the press that affect the words. But, on the other hand, every opinion expressed in the media will have at its disposal a well-determined fund of words that would consist of the code of the bearer and transmitter. Nevertheless, media discourse does not mean one is free to saying everything. Media discourse is influenced by the language of state institutions and certain circumstances. In this respect, this will also be reflected in its linguistic aspect.¹

Journalists use the words to achieve their goals that include spreading of information, which may deal with their social and cultural identity, as well as the role of the latter in the complexity of social inter-actions where it is involved.

Language in the media during the communist period

The ideological use of words or the modification of their content due to the intervention of political groups or certain social strata to comply them with affiliation, politics and their point of views is a phenomenon present in different historical stages of the human society, but it
has become more evident and generalized especially at a time when in a country it is established a special political regime (totalitarian or autocratic). This has happened in Albania during the period between 1944 and 1990, when, as a result of totalitarianism, the Marxist-Leninist ideology and its philosophy ruled the entire life of the country and managed to penetrate in every Albanian society of the time by politicizing everything, as a result even the linguists.

The language before the ’90-ies was full of ideological clichés, made-to-order phrases. Due to isolation and censure for a long time of the words with an acceptable content by the regime, the public, journalists, and communication actors in general were deprived from the recognition and use of a necessary lexicon to articulate the opinion beyond cultural and language limits of the political-juridical framework of the time. In this respect, the media discourse is characterized by the use of political phrases, mainly based on the political situation of a certain period.

In the press and media of a certain period are used only those words expressing a fully defined and unified political content. The thinking not only faces extra linguistic obstacles, but also cannot clearly define itself, due to the lack of authentic expressive words. Figuratively, we can say that “thinking suffers”. The message cannot be fully expressed, because the sources as well as its transmitter do not have that codified system of signs that could allow the semantic content to be freely expressed. Albanian language does not necessary lack words or speech structures to express all kinds of messages, no matter how complicated it may be. Finding the right words is not easy. Especially, if such thing is not the job of an entire language institution but on the hands of an individual - journalist - who wants to establish clear relations with his media audience.

We should take into consideration also the problem of frequency of use of political words present in the media discourse in general. This is called the phenomenon of “bombing” the public opinion with the same political terms within a certain period of time. The more important the message transmitted by a word within this period, the more frequently this word is used.
Language in the media after the ‘90-ies

One of the key features of media in the post-communist Albania of the first transition period is that all political parties managed to found a dignified press body interesting for the reader, which has managed to survive. The great politicization of the press is also a noticeable fact in the media life of the Albanian post-communist society. Language after the ’90-ies is more open to linguistic structures, neologisms and expressive words.

Language differences before and after the ’90-ies

Another feature is the power of newspapers in the dissemination of political messages and the propaganda of political parties. The press, the media, the publications, the educational system, and others at a certain moment offer only a certain terminological universe to express different messages, certain social realities and start to exclude from the communication traffic all other rival linguistic signs.

One of the most cited anthropological thesis written in 1929 from Eduard Sepir says that “language in a potential manner conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes.” As a result, the language used in these bodies was affected by the style of political language.

The focus of our study is a corpus composed of the total of texts consisting of newspaper items. We have collected them based on determined principles, mainly covering the 1980-2015 period, in order to provide a thorough analysis to reflect the lexical-grammatical phenomena of language differences in newspaper items before and after the ’90-ies.

This works analyses language differences in media discourse before and after the ’90-ies in varying parts of the linguistic system:

a) In syntax, before the ’90-ies long sentences were used with several parts and junctions, full of political and propaganda clichés, ready-made phrases:

- “Po atehere pse s ’vihet ne binare se pari nga organet dhe organizata-baze, te Partise ky drejtim, ky “nen” i levizjes, por rri gati i palevizur numri i ketyre mungesave ne Valias, ne Mushqeta, ne Proforma?”.
The media discourse of this period is full of such ready-made phrases: “tejkalimin e shif rave ne disa zera, tejkalimin e planit, arritjen e rendimenteve te larta, te persosim figuren morale ne luften kunder shfaqjeve te huaja.”

Likewise, there is a considerable use of question sentences, affected also by the ideological aspect due to the necessity of raising questions.

We notice also the presence of generalizations: youth, the young female, all.

Whereas, after the ‘90-ies, the sentences are short, led also by the journalists style of nowadays, characterized by summarized sentences.

b) In the morphological aspect, it is noticed the use of certain prefixes -ist, -izm, mostly affected by politics: -ist (ballist, komunist, fashist), izem (realizem, socializem), but after the ‘90-ies these words are not as frequent as before.

Journalists used to write with a big number of adjectives before the 1990-ies, whereas now we have the trend of use of a smaller number of adjectives: disipline e shendoshe, element i shendoshe ose i semure, unitet i celikte. These were not natural adjectives, but forced to be used to highlight the propaganda.

c) In lexicology, it is noted a modification of colouring character of the word’s content, influenced by extra-linguistic factors, affected by the ideology of the period.

Some words were accompanied by a negative coloring or were not used any more, or new words or meanings were introduced due to the ideology of the system. Such as kulak, kooperativist, bashki, plan 5-vjecar.

New meanings:

bulevard “diçka që u përshtatet shijevë të këqija mikroborgjeze”,

fidanishte “mjedis shoqëror ku përgatiten e edukohen të rinjtë e të rejat për të vijuar në të ardhmen atë që kanë bërë paraardhësit e tyre”.

njollë politike - Njeri me njollë “ndikim i dëmshëm i botëkuptimit,
In media it is public language that is articulated, but the audience also has its say. Both sides express their opinions not with their internal language, but with a censured language and information, naturally modified with euphemisms according to a determined normative deontology with ethical and institutional codes used by media and are protected by law and ethics. Media discourse is extremely concrete and has its own modest terminology, as a mix of terms taken mostly from the political vocabulary of the past, partly borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon liberal political culture of classical times, but on the other hand it is also built in a metaphorical way through audacious auto-didactic attempts.

The structure of Albanian newspapers does not consist of an entirely occasional sociological data. It has been a result of a series of transformation in the Albanian press, affected by an entire process and new phenomena. Sapir and Wharf have introduced their theses called the theory of Linguistic Relativity, according to which the language structures are conditioned by the psychological and social structure of the society, affecting also the concepts of people about time and space, i.e. the structure of a language determines or greatly influences the modes of thought and behavior characteristic of the culture in which it is spoken. This theory fully matches the situation of the media and political regimes in Albania.

Language can offer a form to perception with the help of its lexicon and syntax. The lexicon services to percept in a selected way the real world, whereas syntax offers people the chance to communicate for time, space, relations between individuals, etc. This idea that highlights that language affects perceptions and mental models of those who speak it by conditioning their world vision is known as the theory of Sapir and Wharf.

In a broad methodological meaning, society is nothing but the
communication between individuals that are part of it. Communication cannot be realized outside the cultural matrix of the society, while the society is not a solid substance, but the total of communications carried out inside of it.

Media discourse does not only reflect the “reality”, but also builds the hegemonic definition of what is accepted as a “reality”. In reality, the language changing process and space and time differentiation has two fundamental components, one cognitive, related to structure characteristics of the languages the other one is connected to the use of language by speakers.

The speaker uses the word to meet the goals that could include the information, but could also deal with its social and cultural identity and its role in the complexity of social inter-actions in which it is involved.

But the infinitive expression capacities of a national language and use of language in totalitarian media are two different things.

Labov takes into consideration the social identity of participants and social environment of the language exchange. He highlights that language varieties are influenced by social point of views.

But at a time when Albanian speech is experiencing the understated dynamism from the infinite capacities created by the democratic framework of expression, some concerned linguists are trying to formulate the language discourse that matches this reality.

1. R. Scruton, Dictionary of Political Thought, 1982
2. J. Thomai, Prejardhja kuptimore në gjuhën shqipe, 2009
3. M. Samara, Reoth leksikut politik e shqëror në gjuhën shqipe, 2008
5. Blendi Fevziu Historia e Shtypit Shqiptar, 1996
6. Gjovalin Shkurtaj, sociolinguistike e shqipes, 2009
7. Artan Fuga, Media, Shqëria dhe politika, 2008
8. Artan Fuga, Monolog, 2010
11. Artan Fuga, Komunikimi Masiv, 2014

1 Fuga 7: 550-555
2 Marku 9 : 220-230
Introduction

Ismail Kadare is one of the most important names of the Albanian literature. His literary canon is distinguished for its geographical, temporal and sociological scope, which while bringing back within the Universe destinies and identities find ground to clash and re-emerge again. Kadare is known to be as political as any other writer from countries like Albania. The reasons why his work is so flattering, according to the political scientist, Enis Sulstarova, is related to the fact that ‘Kadare, unlike many other writers of socialist realism, has managed to create an identitary literature … [because] he has chosen to treat as subjects moments of crisis on the verge of radical transformation in the history of the Albanians.’1 Dissident or not, his literature has served as a magnifying glass for tracing characters and events that have shaped the history of countries like ours. By analyzing the image of the woman in two of his works, *E penguara*2 and *Lulet e ftohta të Marsit*3, written after the fall of communism, in this article we try to understand how the author builds that past reality, already distanced from it, focusing on the discursive features of the female characters.

Methodology

*Objectives and hypothesis*

The feminine is absolutely a concept from where we can start a journey to understand “the politics” and the ideology of a certain historical period. As a semiotic body, which Lemke calls semantic holding body4, the woman becomes a carrier of social meaning and as a subject it is expected to perform in line with what is perceived as such by the society.

This article starts from the basic premise that “literature is a social institution, which uses language as a means of communication, which
itself is also a social institution that reflects life, when life is... social reality itself"5 ... and as a form of art “it not only reflects life but also shapes it”6. The same opinion is shared also by Umberto Eco, who states that “helping in the formation of language literature creates identities and communities.”7 As such literature, namely the author and his text undertake the role of medium, conveying messages and reflecting sociological types of the period which the work refers to.

The research question to which this paper seeks to find an answer is how Ismail Kadare builds the image of the woman in communism, with the main objective to create new research pathways within Albanian literature that constitutes a very rich fund for the identification of ways and mechanisms on how literary identities influence the reader.8

By comparing the image of the woman in two of Ismail Kadare’s works, both written after the fall of communism, novels “E penguara” (The impeded) and “Lulet e ftohta të Marsit” (Cold flowers of March), this paper tries to prove the thesis that the image of the woman and the feminine in both these works does not undergo radical changes per se but it is used differently by the author in favor of his thesis as a dissident of the communist era. Both Linda B. and Vajza, gain voice in the discourse only by means of their sexuality, with the distinction that for the former it is a gateway to escape from reality, while for the latter it is seen as a general distortion.

**Language, power and gender**

Wording is a process, whereby one becomes aware of the world and grasps this awareness in the form of language; [for him], language is not a channel or a transparent tool for any certain content, nor a simple reflection of reality.9 Language plays multiple functions in our life. It not only allows us to communicate information and inform each other, but it has a series of other special functions. To mention two of them: language allows us to be, and to do. Having said that, language is more than just providing information (informing), it is also doing (action) and being (identity).10 Discourse analysis constitutes the study of language in use and it takes into consideration how the written and spoken language give life to different social, cultural and identitary perspectives11 while Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aims not only
at describing how language works... but also at intervening in social-political issues as other forms of social action with which the language interacts. As an approach, it analyses “the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by the text [both written and spoken] in the social and political context.”

This dimension makes language strongly affiliated to ideology and power. Norman Fairclough has further elaborated this concept and views the relationship between power and language from two perspectives. Firstly, he views power within discourse and secondly, as something outside it. The first perspective, on which we will focus a bit longer, views discourse as a domain where power relations are born and developed. According to Fairclough the power within discourse has to do with powerful discoursers who control and force contributions of less powerful lecturers.

The integration of the gender variable in CDA was seen as a positive novelty by these authors because it complements the analytical instruments with which these methods operate. As mentioned above when we referred to ideology and its relationship with language, according to Fairclough, the feminist approach to CDA calls this process of analysis as demystification or denaturation, thus its role is to undo those gender assumptions, which are nothing but ideological and strengthen the division of power and inequality. This approach is clearly political, emancipating, committed to raise awareness and produce social changes through a criticism of discourse... [against] gender ideologies or assumptions that contribute and reproduce such a power disparity between groups [ or social actors].

**Analytical tools**

Analytical tools are mainly borrowed from Ruth Wodak, Van Dijk, which are similar in many points with the feminist approach developed by Michele Lazar which can be summarized in four main points:

1. *Lexical selection* – adjectives, verbs, prepositions, allusions, etc, types of words based on their origin.
2. *Structure of arguments* - subordinate sentences or not, types of sentences, indicative, conditional, exclamatory.
3. *Conversational turn-taking* - their position in dialoguing
4. **Analysis of context** - image of communism is now viewed after the wall of years

**Findings of the analysis and discussion**

Linda B.

‘Requirem për Linda B’. This is a novel where life and death are joined and an important aspect to be analyzed is politics. This is said because the characters themselves are political in what they represent about the context where the event evolves. The triangle Rudian – Migena – Linda B. constitutes the most important semantic unit of the novel and if we analyze communicative actions of the three, we understand that Rudian, character and narrator, builds the dominant discourse and it is exactly his voice that outlines the portraits of the two female characters. Linda B. never present, becomes the protagonist with her absence and death while Migena as a character carries a key role in the communication between the two main heroes; she is their meeting point. If for Rudian, Migena was the girl who had fallen in love with him, for Linda, Migena was the message sender of her love, was the extended vector of her freedom already lacking. Both, Linda B. and Rudian, decide to use this communication channel as they want, in view of their thesis.

Rudian uses qualifying words about Migena like: “typical” with the same words and her tears were the same. Or he asks her: Do you find yourself complicated? With those still Marlene Dietrich notes, I love you and I don’t love you? Do You? Now listen to me: you are not complicated, you are nothing but a....


“Complicated”/”not complicated” (Orig. text: “E ndërlikuar”/”jo’e ndërlikuar”) is a word game that presumes the sexual control Migena might have over him, a dichotomy of roles and conditions in which she is forced to coexist, not only beside him but also due to her role as a woman. The comparison with Marlene Dietrich in the same sentence and then labeling her as a provincial duckling (orig.text: bibë provinciale),
confirm that Migena is bound to suffer politically the divisions of her gender role.

Rudian Stefa, despite using Migena as a communication channel, is understood as a receiver because the sender was Linda, and suffers from the inability to understand the coded messages that Migena conveys humbly, unable to find the proper way to bring to him the voice of a dead girl (orig. text: zërin e një vdekure) like her friend. Migena as a communicative extension to her, constitutes the enigma because it is feminine, thus it is insoluble. Migena’s name and the word “enigma” flashed his mind as if they wanted to link. It was not quite an anagram, as it seemed to him initially, but almost as such. Migena, enigma, he repeated to himself. (orig.text: Enri i Migenës dhe fjala “enigmë” i flatruan në kujtesë, si të donin të lidheshin. Nuk ishte krejt një anagram, siç ju duk në fillim, por pothuajse. Migena, enigma, përsëriti me vete) (p: 455).

Linda B. represents the culminating point of events. Although she herself never appears, it is exactly her memory that weaves events. Migena is the medium who creates her identity and like media she requires to be necessarily her, the one who creates her image to Rudian.

How don’t you understand, - she said, distracting him, - it was a story with you! Do you understand, with you! It was the only way to...mate, as they say, with you. Don’t be nervous, - he said. – I know this and I understand it very well. This is known. (orig.text. -Si nuk arrin ta kuptosh, -tha ajo , duke e shkëputur, ishte një histori me ty! Më kupton me ty! Ishte e vetmja mënyrë të...pleksej, siç i thonë, me ty.- Mos u bëj nervous,- tha ai. – E di këtë dhe e kuptoj fare mire. Kjo është e njohur). (p: 483)

The conversational turn-taking between two characters, finds on one side Migena’s need as a medium to properly convey Linda B.’s message for Rudian; exclamatory sentences come in the form of a loud yelling and the impossibility to decode properly what she intended to say. On the other side is Rudian who “Understands very well” nothing but his idea of what the message that Linda B. conveys can really be.

- Even I know those stories with admirers whatsoever, but this was quite different. Don’t you really know that Linda was different?
- It wasn’t a story of admirers, or anything similar, she loved you in the other meaning of the word, understand? She wanted to meet you... to touch you... kiss each other...do everything... Do you understand?

(Orig.text - Edhe unë i di historitë me adhurueset e c’janë ato, por kjo ka qënë ndryshe. Vërtet ti nuk e kap që Linda ishte ndryshe?
- S’ishte histori adhuruesesh, e më the të thashë, ajo të donte në kuptim
tjetër të fjalës, më kupton? Don te t'ë takonte... t'ë prekte... t'ë putheshit... t'ë bënit gjithka...Më more vesh?) (p: 484)

Linda B. is sexually and politically a courageous person; her wishes do not relate to Rudian per se but to what Rudian represents as a man. Her wishes are also representatives of her impossibility as a political being.

The most culminating point of the novel is undoubtedly the moment when Linda and Migena, experience a physically and spiritually close moment, which the author depicts with both tragic and erotic tones. *Linda was staring into her friend’s face. Then, with a very slight movement, dream-like, her fingers touched the lower lip. And then both. How strange, she said as if talking to herself. You kissed them. His lips. ... How strange she said again and brought her lips closer to mine. It was a strange kiss, cold and in that position, already stiff, had smiled to each other, until Linda had asked: did you go further?*

Migena answered, not sharp, convinced that any delay of her or revealing the truth could be fatal and with this Migena meant that Linda could be encouraged to go further.

*No, I said aloud. He only caressed my chest.*

With her thin fingers she unbuttoned her shirt buttons, while with the other she looked for my hand. She was not wearing bra, like me, recently fashionable for girls feeling safe about their chest. She put my hand to her breast and after whispering “you do this like him”, she got fixed with half-closed eyes.

*(orig.text. Linda e kishte përqqendruar vështrimin dikur ne fytyrën e shoqës. Pastaj, me një lëvizje fare të lehtë, si të endërrt, gishtat e saj ia prekën buzën e poshtme. E më pas të dyja. Sa çudi tha, si të fliste me vete. Je puthur me to. Me buzët e tij. ...Sa çudi tha prapë dhe afroi buzët e saj tek të miat. Ishte një puthje e cuditshme, e ftohtë dhe ashtu, ngrirazi, i kishin buzëqeshur njëra tjërtërës, gjersa Linda kishte pyetur: ke shkuar më larg?) (p: 512)*

*(orig.text. Jo, thashë me zë. Vetëm gjoksin ma ka përkkëdhelur. Me gishtat e holli zbertheu kopsat e këmishës së saj, ndërsa me tjetrën kërkoj dorën time. Nuk mbante sutişna, ashtu sikurse unë, modë e kohëve të fundit e vazhave të sigurta për gjoksin e tyre. Ma afroi dorën te gjintë dhe pas pëshpërimës “bëj si ai”, qëndroi shtang, me sytë gjysmë të mbyllur. (p: 516)*

“You do this like him”- expressed in the imperative form, reaffirms once again Linda’s willingness to overcome any obstacle so as to experience her freedom. The moment she shared with Migena
was not a manifestation of homosexuality; it was her persistence to overcome what was considered normal for the *two girls, two daughters of socialism, in a remote Albanian province in the late 20th century*. It was mastery of the medium and the desire to use it as she already wanted, uninfluenced by its structure. “You do this like him” – is a call to help a person that was born and lived in isolation, with suppressed desires and halfway realities; it is an order to oneself to find an escape route by instrumentalizing sexuality, whose power seems to overcome the limits of politics. But in the end, it does not happen because sexuality results to be more political than any other thing.

*The “cold” Girl of March (Vajza “e ftohtë” e Marsit)*

While the first novel speaks about a drama of a bygone period, ‘The cold flowers of March’ refers to a drama of the present. Still the feminine gains ground in the novel but now to compare it with the drama of the main character, who occasionally appears to be the author himself even though Kadare has never admitted self-unification with his drama so as not to find himself within the present.

Given the powerful symbolism that names play with the destinies of characters, not unintentionally the female hero of this novel remains a person known only as the girl. Non-denomination of her is determinant to her status; the author uses her as a communication channel of the hero with the past because the new and the old confront with each other within her body like never before. Ideologically her body represents the entire theoretical feminist debate that is linked to the objectivism of the female body, where sociological, political and personal concepts of every culture are encountered.

In the beginning she becomes a character through her sexuality and in the end through her brother’s drama; the girl is the linking bridge of Mark Gurabardhi’s fatality and the social context, represented by her brother.

Vanity and falsehood of the time changing is symbolized by the girl’s body changes; the painter then, words these details through his canvas.

Legs led him back to the easel, where he looked at the paint-brushes to be used, touched the fabric at the bottom of nude abdomen, where he had just started to paint the pubic dimming. Only if it hadn’t come to her mind to trim again the side parts, he said to himself and looked at his watch.
Recently they had discussed exactly about the pubic hair. He tried to explain that this does not concern only his masculine taste, but primarily the art. He could never present in his picture a trim-halved pubic, either in erotic films or in fashion parade. She was scarcely convinced.

......

The girl’s steps were cheerfully heard along the stairs. She had made a new combing, that suited her too much and when he embraced her, he felt that she had changed her perfume.

......

Whew, well now, - he said bringing his head nearer to her armpits – You have removed it all
- Below as I promised to you, I haven’t touch anything at all, - the girl said.
- And did you have any reasons for these? – he whispered

(orig.text: Këmbët e cuan prapë te kavaleti, shqyroto furcat që do të përdorte, preku me dorë pëlthurën te fundi i barkut të nudos , aty ku sapo kishte nisur t’i pikturonte errësinin e pubisit. Vec të mos i kishte shkrepur në mendje ta qethte përsëri anëve, tha me vete dhe pa orën.

Kohët e fundit kishin bërë fjalë pikërisht për leshnajën e pubisit. Ai ishte përpjekur t’i shpjegonte se nuk lidhej vetëm me shijet e tij mashkullore, por në rradhë të parë me artin. Kurrres i s’mund të jepte në pikturën e tij një pubis të përgjysmuar nga qethja, si në filmat erotikë apo në paradën e modës. Ajo ishte bindur me vështirësi. (p: 288)

.....

Hapat e vajzës u dëgjuan gëzueshëm nëpër shkallë. Ajo kishte bërë një krehje të re, që i shkonte shumë dhe kur e përqafoi, ai ndjeu se kishte ndryshuar parfumin. (p: 316).

.....

Pa shih , pa shih, - tha ai duke afruar kryet te sjetullat, - I paske hequr krejt
- Poshtë sic të kam premtuar, nuk kam prekur asgjë, -tha vajza.
- E për këto ke pasur ndonjë arsys? - përsphëriti ai. (p:336)

Similar to the superficial changes the girl undergoes from the novelty named “Capital City”, her answer reaffirms the social pressure. First – The reason of all females, so all of them, as to why I should make an exception to be part of the whole group and second – All females in Tirana do such a thing – Tirana, along with the capital and the novelty, legitimizes everything that the northern city could not accept. The girl nourishes the cliché on how the weaker sex has an external locus
of control and cannot adopt any behavior unless social approval is received. However, at the end of the day they did not manage to detach her from her drama as a woman.

Her brother is her point of connection to the past, the anguish of the dictatorship she has never experienced, the revival of old habits. Figuratively, Mark fears any incest between them, to show that conception with the past is often stronger than changes a person undergoes. Mark, the Girl and the Brother, is the communicative triangle, to which the social context in transition in Albania, confers upon each a certain role: Mark is the hero with interrupted dreams, the Brother is the past that extends its claws while the anonymous Kadare’s Girl, is a representative of the false change a certain society can undergo after the dictatorship; such a change remains physical, detailed, in canvas, but it never settles down and it never becomes the present either.

Conclusions

*Linda B. vs Vajza*

Two female encounters, two representatives of their personal times; the first is the voice of protest in communism and the second is the undetermined individuality in democracy. Their identity contains some important elements that should be analyzed. Firstly, they are political, move and develop with the ideological burden set by their denomination. The impeded Linda asks to break by any means barriers of her normal, while the undenominated Girl seeks to escape the vanity offered by the real. Secondly, they are feminine, not due to their gender, which the author seems to build on the basis of social stereotypes; they are feminine because they change or at least they try to do so. Potentially as characters they can change but it seems to be the author’s “hand”, focused more on the context than on the individual destiny which makes them not raise their alternative discourse to the end; with alternative discourse here we refer to the ability to perform their role differently, in utterances, arguments or even action. Gender seems to be the penalizing element of their solutions, since every action thereof should be legitimized by the presence of the masculine and the man. For Linda B. Rudian is the opportunity for freedom, whereas for
the Girl, Mark Gurabardhi is the escape from her first role as a sister. Kadare, whether or not intentionally, links their protest to sexuality. At first sight this appears to be something positive but he uses it for two different purposes. In the first novel he gives to Linda the sole weapon of change, the use of sexuality to come out of the normal and to state how the writer uses the sexual as something that enriches the feminine in the sense that he enhances it, when we know that the image of the woman in communism must have been stripped of sexuality, considered outside the morality of time. In the Girl character he reuses sexuality but now he treats it as something quite normal because as such sexuality was considered even in democracy, namely as a normality. Through Linda as a character Kadare brings forth the image of a barren communism while through the Girl he brings forth a barren democracy. The male hero in both periods is inclined to suffer. Linguistically, or in terms of the linguistic structure, themes and arguments brought by the two female characters have no difference, or at least this change should emerge solely in the context but both in communism and democracy they become characters only through their sexuality. And this can be the biggest reason to criticize Kadare; he fails to create a female hero who should not link her resistance to her sexuality. As a cliché he reaffirms that the strongest weapon of a woman is her body, which semiotically becomes the ground where ideologies, power and social principles clash. Basically the two female characters, despite being born in two different times, suffer the permanent drama of determining the role, the politics and the sexual within them out of the dominant voice, whether a hero, context or author, whose last word becomes determinant of her fate.

1 Sulstarova, E (2013) Arratisje nga lindja. Tiranë: Pika pa siperfaqe, fq. 156
6 Po aty, fq. 102.
8 Marku, M. Letersia Shqipe në GAIA 1. Fq. 35-39
9 LLoshi, Xh. (2005) Stilistika e gjuhes shqipe dhe pragmatika. Tirane: Albas, fq.95
11 Po aty, fq. 13.
12 Van Dijk 2010, fq.352.
Introduction

In 1993, Lech Walesa stated that “the level and situation of mass media conditions the level of democracy” thereby awarding to media such an essential contribution to democracy. During the wriggling years of Albanian transition the media and its journey in an attempt towards professionalism could be subject to a more extensive analysis and multidimensional analytical approach; however, this paper is focused on how the figure of the new woman is presented as an inherent part of the “new man’, the most present and current offspring of the dictatorial system, invisible but omnipresent, and with which at best we fight every day inside ourselves and at worst have accepted as an alter ego, a ghastly gift of a system which de jure collapsed 25 years ago but de facto its remnants can be clearly gleaned in the life of the Albanian society, already capilarised to its cells.

If we analyze policies and approaches to the woman in communist Albania, it is impossible not to take into consideration a magazine addressed precisely to this target group: women and this is “Shqiptarja e re”, a magazine for the society, politics, literature and art with a focus on the Albanian woman, in which were involved not only articles and reportages form the daily and current political events, but also short prose, letters from the base as well as advice on healthcare or, in the 60s, even advice on how women should dress “well and clean”. Striking in this column of the magazine are photos presenting samples, always within the dry framework of political indoctrination including molds and tips on how women in every corner of Albania could make dresses themselves. This magazine which was released from November 1944 to December 1989 cost 2 euro and its circulation was not made public.

In the plurality of the media in the transition period, attempts were made to publish such magazines that were not always successful, because apparently such a format was completely outside the market demands and any attempts to bring to light something hybrid adapted to new conditions, failed. Now the market is overwhelmed by numerous
magazines, mainly fashion ones, which do not touch upon themes and current events apart from the most recent trends of international catwalks targeting a group of women passionate about them, well-off enough to afford prices beyond Albanian people’s means and of course with the proper dose of vanity. Therefore it was considered appropriate that the subject of analysis becomes the supplement “I, the woman”, of the daily magazine, Panorama, a supplement released each Sunday since 2007 and has a miscellaneous content, on top of which stands a central story most of the time with themes from the past, followed by current events about women and some suggestions on dressing and cooking. This supplement constitutes an Albanian version of the so-called lifestyle magazine in its role to unveil a new set of cultural values naturally related less to consumerism and hedonism than its counterpart even within the same magazine such as the Saturday Supplement. Since its genesis, the supplement targeted a certain audience with the identical heading and content in the same line with similar publications in the western media, such as “Io, donna”, a supplement of the daily Italian magazine “Corriere della sera”.

With its suggestive title, this supplement along with others emerging before or after it, following the same trend, constituted the base for illustrating the cultural tendencies into a consumer-oriented format and specifically for advertising as defined by the researchers Kaneva and Ibrosheva². Unlike the massive communist media approach, this supplement addresses a clear target group, that is relatively educated, interested on history and a healthy lifestyle (here are considered recipes for a balanced diet), with a fine dressing-style taste and with the desire to approach urban living style. The characters presented in it are also international showbiz stars, therefore it is deduced that this target group has adequate access to the internet, knows foreign languages and claims a certain quality life.

Alongside this category, it seems there are also another one curious and hungry for semi-conspirative stories with Block shades and flavors of bride – mother-in-law arguments. However this supplement undertakes through its title to hold on its fragile shoulders exactly the difficult mission of re-conceiving the meaning of consumption, from the dish we must eat to the jackets in fashion this season, from comments over the last play in the TOB (Theatre of Opera and Ballet) to the political events wit female overtones. With front and back pages in color, the supplement tries to suggest not only the ways of life organizing as mentioned above,
but also to articulate thoughts and materialize the voice of the post-communist woman. The main indicator of the distancing from the past in the woman’s coverage is naturally related to the essential change of addressing the subject. The model of the woman as a soldier and worker at the forefront of the struggle to revolutionize the life and model of the dedicated parent under the lessons of mother Party, was replaced by the visuality model of the female and her graces, revealing a certain kind of hyper-femininity which Borenstein argues was a trend of post-communist societies in general, linking the sex discourse with the economic discourse, certainly without avoiding the phenomenon of the subjectivization of the female and her body.³

The fact that women’s stories are generally treated in a weekly supplement shows the tendency to distance female micro-stories versus male narratives of great stories published in the daily press pages. Worth mentioning is the fact that while the pre-90s press propagated a radically androgenized woman, a woman-man able to work the furnaces in three shifts fully estranged from the revelation of her female graces, the post-communist press uses visually the outward female appearance in view of consumerism⁴, as that appearance sells and therefore is present in the supplement selected for analysis, as well. But how is “the new woman”, offspring of the new socialist man reflected on the press pages dedicated to the woman in transition?

Data analysis

In the analysis conducted to this supplement there are distinguished the following functions of women’s stories presence:

The rehabilitating function: On the supplement pages there are published articles and interviews enabling a certain kind of rehabilitating spirit for exponents of the totalitarian system including Nexhmi Hoxha. The widow of the dictator is brought through the pathetic depiction of a prison guard, which brings to the reader a wise, polite, simple, clean grandmother and ready to help anyone around her, conveyed by the descriptive character of the article. The same positivist spirit is used also for other figures such as the dictator Hoxha, Mehmet and Fiqerete Shehu or members of the Politbyro. Secondary characters such as prison guards, gardeners, or teachers of the Block men’s children years ago, come with their memories of the good and egalitarian behavior of the
nomenclature exponents. But this make up devised for the dictator is enriched with pop culture elements such as the entry into dance of the brides, grandsons and granddaughters who with their followers on social networks tend to normalize his figure especially to the younger and uninformed generation through such a political marketing operation. The arsenal of weapons available is increased when family members autobiographical books, mediocre books ideologically sponsored claiming to bring historical truths far from reliable sources and extremely personal viewpoints, are used. These include Hoxha family women’s books, namely Nexhmije’s, Teuta’s and Liljana’s books.

Not to be neglected are also the offspring-related cases of other Block families such as the case of Natasha Boçaj, Adil Carcani’s niece, who in a scandalous interview dared to state that she had never benefitted from her uncle’s position while in the same sentence she talked about her three month holidays at the holiday villa in Vlora, the servant-maid at her home, the coveted job position in the publishing house “8 Nëntori” as the chief of the propaganda department as well as frequent visits across the world, as if this was a normal life flow for an average Albanian during the years of communism. In the same line of thought follows also the story of the photographer tasked with sorting out the photographic archive of the Hoxha family, who brings the memory of a dictator as an affectionate grandfather and underlines his wife’s scruples to preserve photos untouched after purges in the Party in view of the history, excessive comments and by no means based on the reality considering that it is not even known where the majority of them is buried; so history is challenged by these pieces of nostalgia for privileges and the sense of being different from others.

The informative function is accomplished with stories placed mainly in the communist regime. There are those based on archival sources further developed and contextualized as in the case of extracting from the shadow of forgetfulness artists and professionals like the sopranos Shqipe Mingomata and Vera Gjergo, the teacher Vezire Gjiraku, or the pianist Lola Gjokutaj Aleksi, as well as the ballerina Ganimete Simixhiu Verdesha. During the analysis conducted with both the supplement “I, the woman”, and the magazine “Shqiptarja e re”, on the cover of the latter was found Meleqe Rrënja, at that time a Roma girl selected to speak at the Berat conference in 1969 in the framework of the conference on the New [Female] Fighter, one of the Chinese-like manners to involve
women and girls in the eradication of religion, in the fight against bureaucracy, prejudice and backward habits.\(^5\)

The same character, equally pathetic, but more mature is featured on the first page of the supplement dated 6 April 2014, in an unhesitant celebration about the past system, to which she owed her education and candidacy for member of parliament, which was thankfully unsuccessful. Brainwashing has remained the main feature characterizing both her speech in 1969 and the interview in 2014.

*The witnessing function*: Such stories are based on eyewitness accounts or inherited stories about controversial moments in the history of our country such as the murder of Ramize Gjebrea, a moment brought through Olgga Lazri’s narration, a co-partisan and Sofokli Lazri’s sister. This group also includes stories of good-hearted and unfortunate women like the one of Nica Papadhima Saliasi or Laura Këlliçi imprisoned at the age of 16 just because she had marked the cross sign on the road, near a church. This category includes also articles in an attempt to shed light on events which still today have remained unanswered such as the disappearance of an architect sportsman, friend of Pranvera Hoxha and the reasons as to why this fact is still kept silent. Taking Asllan Rusi to the psychiatric hospital and later his “accidental” death are objects of questions raised in the same article. Yet, another account appears about the dictator’s daughter with regard to the fact that allegedly the designer of the Museum of Kruja was not her, but the executive engineer who oversaw the works. In this category there would also be listed a detailed article about Liri Gjoliku, a judge of the time talking about the existence of crimes such as pedophilia, but that no one spoke publicly of.

An important place is also occupied by “The gossip column”, which sells well both in summer and winter. It includes the romantic correspondence of Margarita Tutulani, that of Mit’hat Frashëri with a woman in Shkodra, or his sisters’ feats in Istanbul, details on the intimate life of Jorgjie Truja and Andromaqi Gjergji or even curiosity-satiating details about Maria Callas or poses of the female highlander convinced by Marubi to pose with her breast uncovered. A whole number is dedicated to the first Albanian courtesan, Ganimet Cuka or Coco Chanel’s visit to the King Zog’s wedding ceremony. Fully detailed in this category comes also the suicide of engineer Strazimir in the 30s as a result of his unrequited love to Dr. Zyma’s wife.
Conclusion

It can be noted a general sense of nostalgia which Fred Davies explains with the fact that the object of nostalgia is not the past per se, but a past with specific features, the meaning of which should be deciphered in relation to the reality of the present.⁶ Svetlana Boym suggests analyzing nostalgia as a cultural and social phenomenon giving voice to its relationship with the collective memory.⁷

Post-communist countries of the Eastern Block have encountered their near past in different manners. In her study conducted for 9 countries of the Eastern Europe, Lavina Stan divides these countries into 4 main groups according to their position in the segment that starts with punishment and ends with forgetfulness. In the first group she includes countries such as Eastern Germany, which followed an aggressive policy of encountering and, not coincidentally, Albania is categorized in the fourth group, namely that of forgiveness and forgetfulness.⁸ Part of this collective “forgetfulness” was also the figure of the woman, revealing a chaotic landscape of characters in the press as opposed to each other in a descriptive, not at all analytical and highly prone to media scoop which is translated into sold copies and excessive consumerism.

Reducing the role of journalism in the coverage of bride– mother-in-law debates and entertaining oneself with the outcome of these debates while avoiding the confrontation with the image of “the new woman”, the offspring of the dictatorial system, shows clearly the current situation and the lack of will to deal with and explore the near past, which still hurts and in front of which we continue to pass by blindly.

¹ Lech Walesa, deliver held on Freedom Forum World Center , Va, 21 April 1993
⁵ Kapo,Vito: Albanian Woman-Great Factor to the Unity of our People. Speech held at the Fifth Conference of the Democratic Front of Albania in the role of the President of the General Council of UAW.
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