

**Poetry which Requires Esthetic Understanding to Readers**  
(Features from the Lyrics of Frederik Rreshpja)



**Literature**

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**Aristidh Çipa**

**Department of Language and Literature  
University "Ismail Qemali" - Vlora, Albania.**

**Abstract**

Frederik Rreshpja - an exceptionally impressive poet – is considered as one of the earliest Albanian contemporary poetry modelers. As part of the avant-garde poets of the seventies, after suffering a seventeen years political imprisonment, in 1991 he comes renewed and strong in the elite spectrum of the Albanian authors and becomes a reference point for the new poetry. The author plays a substantial role in shaping the esthetic and fragile conscience of the new generation.

According to some well-known national and international scholars of literature, the poetry of Rreshpja is of high quality. The poet impresses you with his exceptional ability to use words and poetic images. His verse is organized in a civil way. The lyric poetry of Rreshpja is fragile and vulnerable to misreading and misinterpretation, thus requiring the esthetic understanding of the reader.

This article is aimed at outlining a profile of Frederik Rreshpja's creative personality by highlighting: 1. Aspects of poet's philosophical vision of the world. 2. Aspects of poetry's structure. 3. Characteristics of poetic style. 4. Aspects of the relation between Rreshpja's poetry and the receivers.

Approach to poetic text. a) Genesis of the literary work. b) Semantic – esthetic aspect. c) Materialization of the text.

A quite impressive poet, Frederik Rreshpja<sup>193</sup> is estimated as one of the early designers of the Albanian contemporary poetry. He is part of the avant-garde of the 70s, after suffering 17 years in jail for politics, recovered, appears with the power into the spectrum of the creative elite after 1991, by changing himself into the landmark of hope for new poetry. He plays an important role in configuring the aesthetic and fragile consciousness for the new generation.

To an attentive reader of the poetry such a name as it is Rreshpja, it brings to the mind a constellation of other poets, nearly a generation, like Adem Istrefi, Xhevahir Spahiu, Koçi Petriti, Musa Vyshka, Ndoc Papeku, Viktor Qurku, Sulejman Mato, Kiço Blushi, Hiqmet Meça etc. who have taken place in the poetic map of their time, even someone who has evolved and showed up as a poetic figure until later times. It is the word about a new spirit in the Albanian poetry in which these authors bring themselves, spiritual experience, and cultural heritage of the regions they come from. Together they acquire an interesting mosaic that starts to flash among the gloomy literary apathy caused by the dogma of social realism.

<sup>193</sup> 1940-2006 Author of several volumes of poetry, as 'albanians rhapsody' 'in this town' 'Erdhi ora të vdes përsëri' 'solitude' etc. It was translated into English, Russian, German, Italian etc and is regarded by scholars and critics known as a poet thrilling European caliber. Sadik Bejko 'the last albanian bohem' the newspaper "centry"

Frederik Rreshpja debuts in Albanian letters in the year 1968 with the publication of the poetic collection 'Albanian Rhapsody'. Since in the very title it is given to us a clear sign of the poetic atmosphere that this book carries, an atmosphere which it has its roots in the Albanian folklore in general and the north epics in particular. Symbols, landmarks, vocabulary and the exterior cladding, it is almost an epic, but the content is lyrical. Reading this book Rreshpja appears as the embodiment of an ancient bard, which is returned to our reality in the form of a lyrical poet. In a way, this idea is supported by the poet Sadik Bejko who, as regards the summary of the "Albanian Rhapsody", he writes something from the Knight's cycle, from inopportune snowy time and stratospheric time of legends it lengths argent strands of a poem with cool images beyond eternal and has a concreteness in these measures and sequences which you can pick up as crystals of winter landscape, as a poetic and delicate winter, and then to put them in a balance of the fragile pharmacy. With such time structures, loose in their sustainability, having these poetic filigree is built one above the other our Frederick's poetry.<sup>194</sup>

Briefly, in this volume, behind the epic facade of these poetries one will feel blinking an emerging lyrical organism which later in the books will become more fragile, more sensitive. The ancient bard will continuously comb the fragile child. The dividing line between lyrical matter and the epic one, at times appears and disappears, but not for good:

"It seems to me that thousands of years I have lived on this earth

Reading the red hieroglyphs of the thunders

And the calamitous ranges of Albanian mountains. (When the history was roaming) to come to the verses:

The bus is departing,  
oranges, you burn upon me  
all the landscape is seen round from the window (Lyrics).

At the 'Albanian Rhapsody' we see the wonderful childhood of Reshpja. Once we also distinguish the successful start of the poet towards a long journey to the promised land of the poetic speech. When we talk about Frederic Reshpja's poetry, we talk about a glass of poetic quality. It is very hard to match him with another poet from the spontaneity of creation and availability of poetic communication. Thus, in this context he is unique.

Reshpja's lyricism is delicate, fragile, and vulnerable from the bad reading and misunderstanding. If the reader who is approaching to this poem does not possess a register of sensitivity register to some extent similar to that of the author, if the reader does not contain within itself the totality of signs, symbols, images and sounds that represent his aesthetic consciousness embodied in art, then the poetry will be transformed instantly into the bunch of words. It seems

<sup>194</sup> Sadik Bejko: "Bohemi i fundit i poetëve shqiptarë", gazeta "Shekulli", 19.02.2006.

like it has to do with an elusive harmony of occult gestures, which are combined between them like a thunderbolt and reach to invent something out of nothing or to recover into attention some escaped emotion beyond the perimeter of memory.

Reshpja's relationships with poetry are surprising and not easily limited as it is commonly done with other poets. It is understood conditionally that one should decide first whether the term 'relationship' that we are using here is the appropriate one because neither the poet himself wondered to build a little bit from the rational type of relationship with the poetry. One thing seems certain: the poetry loved Reshpja more than he loved the poetry. Giuseppe Ungaretti, one of his most beloved poet says: "Poetry is manifested in a moment of our speech, when that which is the dearest for us, that which has disturbed and troubled our feelings and thoughts, that which belongs deeply to the reason of our lives, it appears in its most human authenticity; but with such a flicker that appears to exceed the human power and that doesn't allow to be conquered neither from the traditions nor from the study, however it continuously gets fed from both"<sup>195</sup> Poetry as inevitability itself is best suited to our lyrical poet.

It seems that the poet has got a clear sight for the antiquity, because the time of the lyrics<sup>196</sup> is translucent. He distinguished a host of live ancient scenes because as he himself is saying 'Time between us is transparent like the air.' (Martyr's crown). This constant poetic vision appears since from his first collection of poetry 'Albanian Rhapsody' (1968). Here exactly will be shown also another feature that will be accompanied throughout his whole creativity: unique tone. Reshpja is one of the few Albanian poets riding on the pathos without ever allowed to become pathetic.

Imagine for a moment 'the field ball' (Albanian rhapsody). We are convinced that this field ball if it was given to somebody else to hold it in hands, it would have roamed as worst as possible. Thus, what we mean is the fact that Reshpja is a humble poet. The humbleness of Reshpja's poetry is distinguished even to the socialist realist poetry. The poet sings softly. Excitement and roar are present there, but they are felt only after its reading. So, automatically we go to a different quality, vocality<sup>197</sup> poetry as love for the most authentic side of life, the artistic side. The feeling of the presence of artistic can be called differently the sense of nature. Reshpja's poetries, generally, as ancient works of art, are pure cores: they embody the artistic enthusiasm of the nature. So, the poet is completely converted into a poetic instrument.

Reshpja's poetry has a persistent tendency to discover unknown things, always by digging through all familiar things or digging into the things that arrogant consciousness alleges as known. The poetic observation is completely pure, a pure primal gesture, which beats out onto the surface of our consciousness emotions, sounds, colors and images covered by the dust of our concepts on too worldly developing on the progress of civilization. Therefore, it is revealed the situation of the diverse forms of the original picture into which there have not yet been human interferences or manipulations, but it is already felt the divine breeze being withdrawn only after the completion of

<sup>195</sup> Giuseppe Ungaretti, Eugenio Montale, Salvatore Quasimodo, summary of works, "Mondadori", 1972.

<sup>196</sup> Musical instruments used in ancient times. The figure of lyre is the emblem of music.

<sup>197</sup> Here: Aptitude for something that someone (for a profession or artistic composition).

the act of creation. In most parts of his poems Reshpja appears as a divinity in the Gnostic sense of the term, but he is a divinity that works with the human striving to meet and "upgrade" to the things that he thinks do not work, by being exposed as a mirror in front of the nature, other living creatures, flowers, the grass, trees, the sky, stars as models of excellence of primordial creation. The tendency to perfect the man is evident in Rreshpja's lyrics.

By some authors, it is occasionally said that Frederick Rreshpja is a significant poet with formalistic features. Even the poet Sadik Bejko notes that, "in its most good he is a perfect formalist". Notwithstanding this view, what we would like to add, is that in Rreshpja's poetry, formalism never gets a primary goal, thus, he lets it stay alone and in itself.

Formalism, as aim in itself, is a known phenomenon, but it usually suits to the intelligent authors, charismatic, whose strong points are not inspiration, content and narrative power, as a result, they are forced to give special importance to the shape, structure, exterior harmony of poetic sounding. We know that the natural human tendency manifested in all artistic genres is exactly narrative, the irresistible need to confess and to convey other messages. It is exactly this need that has made it possible the emergence of the art in general, the birth of the word of art in our case.

As a man, Reshpja is an irresistible narrator and that, exactly, because his poetry is filled with emotional stories, experiences and internal events, all these conditioned by an original style of life. He has lived stormily, therefore, his inner world is filled with indelible emotional outbreaks, from which will ignite a beautiful lyrical flame. But Reshpja is a formalist, as we said, but simply as a result of the overwhelming desire of narrative and not as a purpose. Initially, his company's most important product is the lyrical honey or wine, thereafter, it is quite normal for him to produce the respective glassy container and transparent. Thus, we come to a powerful verse, emotive, but it still remains elegant in its formal plan filled with a variety of emotional overtones. It is a verse that carries an incomparable poetic condition, a verse that appears as "a dawn delicate vase", "as a mule charged with rain", "as a black horse of sadness", "as a broken marble of the god of loss", etc.

Generally, Rreshpja's verse is loose, redeemed and unchecked by voluntary intervention as a separate order. Rreshpja's verse simply does not try to be beautiful in itself but to be more functional and accurate and carry out the task of tracking the reader to the most important sequence of poetic lecture; so, it aims to give to it tones as clear and understandable to the internal story. As well, it aims to enable a wider coverage to the emotional registers, images and poetic conditions, to emphasize and highlight the culminating points of the lyric, etc. Rreshpja's meter of the verse varies depending on the need to emphasize a sound, an emotional nuance, it matches in harmony with the time of the conclusion of a metaphor or extracting out of an image, onomatopoeia, an interjection, a break, all these placed in service of the natural flickering of his poetic vein.

The temptation to give as much vigor to the lyrical narration is so great. Reshpja's verses are so fluent, full of rhythm, rich and stylistically colored.

We can find endless verses as:

"I was put into sleep from the ballads  
Elders emerge on the verse of Rhapsodies" (lute songs)  
"it falls from the trees the winters sadness  
the valley tinted from the moon" (Requiem)  
Rarely happens to find a stripped string from the figuration, for example:  
If you don't believe us that we can take an action  
Damned ignorant!  
Amen! "(False prophets)  
or:  
"I have wandered everywhere around the world,  
But is not the same thing. (Air)

It is immediately understood that such verses were left from Reshpja intentionally in order to reduce the poetic rhythm after a "dangerously emotional" depiction so to ignite the engines in the following verse, or simply to vent directly his human pain beyond every figurative ornaments.

Rreshpja's verse does not attempt to surprise with subtle forms or excessive decorations, but it admits in its structure only the necessary and functional words or sounds. The verse is smooth, at all pathetic, but with great artistic importance, charged as it is with diverse literary figures, with metaphors, metonymy, comparisons, symbols, with rare and smooth words, etc., but overwhelmed with events and thundering images. Rreshpja's verse has obviously narrative features, a series that narrates the emotional history and genuine and existing experiences. Literary figures result entirely clear and give the opportunity to deconstruct and examine them carefully in order to see how they have been build, but this doesn't prevent to admire and to be amazed by the effect they cause. The true magic of Rreshpja's verse lies to the imagination, to the imaginative power, to the ability to detect these means of expression. So, not to invent them, but to discover.

"The old oak released in the floor the crown of the autumn  
As a sovereign that abdicates "(Lora's Death)  
"The flights sleep upon the trees,  
The bolts sleep in the depth of the clouds"(Night)  
Or:  
"A dead oak walks through the forest,  
Crossed its arms like a patriarch..."(The Oak's Death)

These and others are verses with such a very simple structure, which are constructed from simple words. The strong point of these verses stands at the natural relationship that they create

among them and at the submerge power of the imagination. With the help of these verses, we may find ourselves for a moment at the point where the poet sees things and can contemplate the nature with his own eyes.

In Reshpje's verse we confront with a specific fund of names, most of whom are still infringed by the ordinary poetic discourse, a fund that mostly is borrowed from the folklore, from the epic songs, from the dialect and oral heritage of the north highlands, from the Albanian mythology: Rozafa, Ajkuna, Omer, ballad, lute, by the Hellenic mythology: Olympus, Zeus, Prometheus, Dedal, Narcissus; from the Homeric epos Iliad, Homer, Ilion, akeas, Ulysses, Poseidon, Ithaca, Odysseus, from Christian literature: Eve, Noah, the biblical prophet, Crucifixion, etc.

These and other names are often recovered from the poet and placed in the center of gravity and mark the importance in which revolves the whole lyrical turbulence. But there are names like Medaur (Illyrian God), Garentina (Doruntina among Arbresh), Stradivarius (great master of violins), Tutankhamon (the youngest Faraon of the ancient Egypt) etc., that are seen to appear across Rreshpja's verse only one or two times. These names and others demonstrate Rreshpja's high poetic culture, a functional culture merely oriented towards mastery sequence. They are carefully selected and have a value that is associated with the strengthening of the poetic content, but also a special sound value that is placed in the service of the form.

In general, the lexical fund that we find in Rreshpja's poetry is limited, because the trend for raw material dredged is not quantitative, but qualitative. It is impressive the wide range of the encyclopedic culture of Rreshpja. His cultural aim is to dredge specific words with such a pleasant sound and profound meanings which he can use in his lyrics to give as much charm and expressive power. However, these words are not many. It's important that his lexis is chosen with taste and discretion, exploring in parallel through different fields of knowledge, literature, history, theology, mythology, etc. Even as regards the use of terms and names originating from the field of mythology, Rreshpja shows good recognition from the first two books of "Albanian Rhapsody" and "In this city"

In the first book we see recognition of the Albanian mythology, while the second book we find verses like:

"The world has created the god of Hefes,  
but there has never been a smith hero" (The smith hero)

And verses:

"Thus, every night they appear to us tripping over their tears,  
with their hands troubled by anxiety  
Niobe of the modern mythology, the waiting has converted them into statues"

We know that the book "In this city" was published in 1973, thus it is surprising the fact that the new Reshpja knows about Ephesus and Naobi by creating the idea that he knows the

Hellenic theology. There aren't to be excluded also words which belong to the chemistry science, a science for which apparently Rreshpja has a detailed knowledge: "The metal of the silver Sun", "Around the galvanized trees with the moon" There are verses except that they are original, they prove knowledge on other arts "I got out from the Guernica of this night" Or: "A bunting as Stradivarius". Or: "Zeus, Athena and all the gods need to be broken / to rebuild the hands of Phidias."

Sometimes, in a verse of Rreshpja we encounter ourselves with some rare epic interjections, which are as unfamiliar as they are to our modern poetry, surprise us and they gave energy and resounding to his verse and stanza:

"I have escorted to the cemetery the warriors,

When hauntings were beating their chests while dancing  
Croaked the money through the gorge, ho, ho! "

As well as:

"I put my voice idly on all this pain and said:  
Enisë, enisë!"

Seen from one standing point, every verse of Rreshpja resonates to us like an interjection for beauty, bliss, sadness, loneliness, but yet his interjection is special and shakes our conscience. His verse is modern, fast, with high velocity and conveys an aesthetic rapture unrivaled in today's Albanian literature. It is verse which at one time is simple and at the other time is stylized in an admirable way, once peaceful and solemn, sometimes wild, rowdy and aggressive. At last, this range has only one purpose: to confess, to show the deep spiritual and shocking truths, to convey to the reader the pain and love, more love and more human pain.

But all this great tumult of feelings comes organized entirely in a civilized way through a sculpted form with care and dedication of his whole life sacrificed in poetry.

## Conclusions

Author of several volumes of poetry, such as "Albanian Rhapsody ", "In this city ", "It's time to die again", etc. Frederik Rreshpja (1940-2006) is estimated by scholars and critics recognized within and outside national borders as the best poet of the contemporary Albanian poetry. His works are translated into English, Russian, German, Italian etc, and is considered as the most shocking poet of European caliber.

Frederik Rreshpja had a debut in Albanian letters with poetry volume "Albanian Rhapsody "(1968). After serving 17 years in political prison, he reappears in the spectrum of creative elite after 1991, often becoming the crucial point for the new poetry. He never wrote about the prison. Overall, he wrote global poetry.

The Volume "Albanian Rhapsody" warns the next poet. From the very title itself, it is being given a clear sign of the poetic atmosphere that has its roots in the Albanian folklore in general and in particular to the northern epic. Symbols, landmarks, vocabulary, the outer embedding is almost epic, but the content is lyrical. Rreshpja appears as the embodiment of an

ancient bard, who has become our reality in the form of a lyrical poet. Poetry as inevitability, this we think is best suited to our lyric. It is one of the earliest designers of modern poetry. (Rreshpja is an easy shade-maker poet). This shadow of Rreshpja's poetry is well known since from the poems of socialist realism. Rreshpja's poetry has a persistent tendency to discover unknown things, digging through all accustomed things. It is one of the few that has recaptured childish eye. The poet appears as a deity in the Gnostic sense of the term. The tendency for the perfect man, by being a model of perfection, the nature, is evident in his lyrics.

As one of the Worlds's known promoters of literature, occasionally, Rreshpja is described as a poet with intrepid formalistic features. Aside this opinion, we can augment that formalism is never self-purposed. It's solidly accepted that Rreshpja's poetry is with outstanding quality. It is conditioned by an original style of life; the poet appears as a tempting narrator. Rreshpja impresses the reader with quality words and poetic images. His verse is generally loose, unattached, rhythmic, sometimes simple and sometimes stylistic but nevertheless modern.

At last, this verse has only one purpose: to confess, to show the deep spiritual and shocking truths. Rreshpja's poetry surprises the reader with a very special fund names, most of which are not yet trampled by the ordinary discourse. This fund in most cases is borrowed from folklore, epic songs, from the dialect and oral heritage of the northern highlands, Albanian mythology, Hellenistic, from Christian literature etc. These names are often borrowed, placed in the center of the poetry and mark the point of importance, such nucleus which revolves around the whole poetic turbulence. The Rreshpja's verse comes very civic and organized.

Reshpjes lyricism is fragile and vulnerable to misreading and misinterpretation. If the reader that accesses the poetry does not have a record of sensitivity slightly similar to that of the author, if the reader does not contain within himself the totality of signs, symbols, images and sounds that represent his aesthetic consciousness embodied in art, then the poetry becomes a pile of words at that moment. It seems that we are dealing with a mysterious harmony of occult gestures which are combined among one another to construct something out of nothing or to bring back the attention to emotions that run away beyond the perimeter of memory. Rreshpja's poetry generally requires readers' aesthetic understanding.

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