

The reception of Isabel Allende's novels in Albania

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Abstract

The present paper aims to highlight the reception of Isabel Allende's works between the press and the criticism as an aspect that proves the world's literary spread, as well as the assessments made in the Albanian press, as well as the critical writings that reveal the literary values of the novels of Isabel Allende. Allende is one of the most prominent Latin American writers of the contemporary literature, and is the most widely read Chilean writer in Spanish language in the second half of the twentieth century. Her novels have been translated into Albanian language and have been welcomed by the Albanian readers, since her first novel known as Allende's masterpiece, *The House of Spirits*, to the latest novel. Moreover, this paper will provide an overview of the impact of Allende's novels in Albanian press but also in Albanian literary forums.

Keywords: Isabel Allende, magic realism, reception, Albania, literature, impact, etc.

Introduction

Isabel Allende's echo in Albanian forums

The greatest work of all Isabel Allende's literary creativity, which has given her international fame, is the novel titled *The House of the Spirits*, which is considered her masterpiece. This is not only because of the presentation of the destiny of man and his homeland, but also of the powerful presence of the feminist movement. For this reason, we have found it reasonable to investigate the way in which her literary work is seen from the point of view of Albanian literary criticism and the Albanian press, but we will initially start with its echoes in Albanian forums.

In Albanian blogs, there are several forums that discuss different topics related to the works of Isabel Allende, where readers who participate, among other things, express their likes or dislikes to the writing of the Chilean writer. Of course, such forums are not "the final saying" about the style and the values of this writer, but below we will provide some examples to show how the writings of the Chilean writer were received by the Albanian reader.

Here are some of the comments that can be read in Albanian forums.

"... Greetings to enthusiasts of the giant from Chile who grabbed the whole world with the publishing of *The House of Spirits*". The last time I read *The Portrait in Sepia*" and to tell the truth I am not disappointed at all. I know that the fast release of the next novel *The Daughter of Fortune*" was expected. (Blendi).¹

"I have read almost everything of the writer and all her works are to be read. *The Daughter of Fortune*", in fact, should have been published before *The Portrait in Sepia*", because they are related to each other and it serves as a preface. It is also the fact that the author wrote it beforehand. I believe it would make more sense. However, the events are different, so

¹<http://forumi.shqiperia.com/threads/isabel-allende.2045/>

it does not have that crucial influence. I hope it will be published as soon as possible in Albanian, because, to tell the truth, I have started to read it in English, but I am not enjoying it a lot." (Alba Shehi)¹

"Just amazing, a very sensitive writer. I have just bought "The Portrait in Sepia" and "The Daughter of Fortune" and the last book I read is "Aphrodite" (or Aphrodisiacs Recipes), which was entertaining. I can say that I haven't read such a book (I mean a cooking book). Allende is indeed one of Albanians' favourite writers." (Kordelja)²

"It is really a great writer, but it seems to me a little feminist and this is well expressed in the novel "The House of Spirits", and "Eva Luna", but still remaining a diva of the Chilean literature." (Skodrinon)³

"For me it is the best female writer.

I am sorry that I could read only two of her literary works: "Eva Luna" and "The Portrait in Sepia" (I have watched only the television version of "The House of Spirits"), because she is really impressive. She has a special style, very original way of describing the thinking process and the world of women. As you read in between the lines of Isabel Allende, you understand that there is something else, besides what you see inside yourself, inside a woman. It is the fine combination of the fragility and wilderness or better say, the power which naturally comes out in her novels. Maybe, as you read her, very often it happens to lose among pages with details, names, unknown connections, but in the end, everything goes to the reader as a jewel of that meaningful inner self, which makes us think longer and leaves behind an unforgettable feeling..." (Marsel – bitter girl)⁴

"For me it is a wonderful book and I had read it a long time ago and I just refreshed my memory last summer, by reading it again. I really liked "Eva Luna" (Gotika)⁵

Isabel Allende's literary works and Albanian press

In a careful investigation of the Albanian press, published articles in magazines and newspapers, it is noticed that the literary work of the author is shared very quickly, also in Albanian. The translation of Isabel Allende literary work in Albanian, since the very beginning, has been an important event, for many reasons, especially for the focus on several significant problems and issues of the time. The same value lies on two other aspects of her work: first, the work on the literary model of magic realism, which was a novelty; secondly, the presence of the feminist movement in her novels. For her writer and her novels there has always been a high degree of sensitivity, which has greatly approached the reader himself, and in particular the literary creativity. Thus, with a lot of interest is a short note found on page 14 of the newspaper "Drita", dated 06.11.1988, which represents the first data of the Albanian print media for this writer, where a brief interview with the author was published, Five Questions and Five Answers, translated by Petrit Ymeri, which is accompanied by this brief information: "The Chilean writer Isabel Allende was born in 1942. Her first novel "The House of Spirits" was translated into many languages of the world and made her creativity draw the attention of critics and readers. This novel is also translated into Albanian".

It is worth mentioning here that the work of translating the author's first novel, which was published in 1982 in Spanish, has begun, which means that in a short period of time from the original version the book would be published in Albanian language.

"... It is a long discourse on love, an extended description, which among other things, reveals to the Albanian reader the magic of the novel "Aphrodisiac", which is focused on the love affairs."⁶

¹<http://forumi.shqiperia.com/threads/isabel-allende.2045/>

²<http://forumi.shqiperia.com/threads/isabel-allende.2045/>

³<http://forumi.shqiperia.com/threads/isabel-allende.2045/>

⁴<http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads/26021-Isabell-Allende>

⁵<http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads/26021-Isabell-Allende/>

⁶F. Nikolla, Revista "Klan", janar,2000

Still in "Klan" magazine, nr.16, of April 2000, with a long and more detailed article, which was written by Albana Sala, entitled "For Latins and demons like them...", since in the beginning is clearly emphasized that "*Novels of Marquez, Allende and other writers, have fascinated for a very long time the Albanian reader. But, how Latin-Americans were translated, and why they are liked some much...*"

The writer of the article has chosen to discuss further the way how the works of the author have come in Albanian language, considering also the work of some other writers, well-known representatives of magic realism, especially of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Taking as a reference "Klan" magazine article, in nr. 223, of September 2001, pages 44-45, it was published a broader article entitled "Secrets of Isabel", where, among other things, what draws our attention are the following sentences: "*Allende is already a myth now, especially for the reader. Book shops all over the world are filled with her novels, which discover the amazing world of the writer.*"

Even in this case, there are made some general evaluations for the author and some of her most important works, which are translations or adaptations, but that still, besides the lack of interpretations and arguments why her work is valuable, there is still done a very good work: they urge the curiosity of the readers of her novels. Newspaper "Dita", of 11.09.2001, on page 18, entitled "Isabel confesses the secrets", in an interview-book entitled "Life according to Isabel", brings closer to the readers a complete atmosphere of the oeuvre of the author, of some of the most important moments of her achievements, but still in this case there is a lack of arguments of our critics, as specific critical papers, which elaborate on the literary and translation values of the novels, in Albanian language.

In newspaper "RD" of 04.09.2002, in a more condensed way, it comes a translated interview of the author regarding the novel "City of the Beasts", under the care of Armin Tirana. In addition, in June 2003, "Jeta" magazine, in nr. 32, on pages 14, 15 and 16, there is a more elaborated article, adapted by Flora Nikolla, where, regarding the stylistic values of the author's works, we can select a claim from the author herself: "*My novels come from the womb, a real sincere ascertain and also somehow strange, which emphasizes the subjective character of the literary works of the writer, but also her edging sensibility*". In newspaper "55" of 01.06.2008, in the literature column, we still encounter some ideas of the author herself: "*Writing is the same as making bad spirits go away... A thought where the relationship she has with literature is revealed, by seeing the process of writing as a catharsis and a moral force*". Regarding the way how the press has reflected the translated books of Isabel Allende in Albanian, we can reach some conclusions that are to be discussed, and which come from the reading and processing of thoughts, encountered in some main institutions of the press. In these notes, very often broad ones, there is not any single case of a detailed ore more literarily critical coverage, as a text investigation of the literary criticism. Thus, even though in the printed press of Albanian language, there is almost a total lack of articles dealing with a detailed interpretation of literary facts, of the literary structure and expression, of characters and other stylistic analysis.

In these writings, information about the author's life and her activity as a female and as the main part of feminist movement is dominant. We also encounter different general descriptions, regarding the way she started writing literature and how she very quickly became one of the most read female writers of the world. Most of these considerations are biographical and are related to the context where the work started and not to the text in particular.

Within a short time, Allende and her novels became very affectionate for the Albanian reader, thanks to many translations and raising the interest of many, compared to the work of a considerable number of foreign literatures authors of contemporary literature. Likewise, starting from the end of the 1980s to the current days, Isabel Allende has now her own novels, especially with the "House of the Spirits" and "Paula", which have attracted the Albanian reader.

In the articles of the Albanian press, more than anything it is noticed that there have been selected and published some long interviews of the author, regarding her literary work, focusing on some novels, as well as about her life in general, which bring about facts and many moments of her important road of her art. Isabel Allende is a well-known writer, which has overturned old mentalities in her country and she has strongly influenced in the whole world to mend the relation between husband and wife, for more rights for women, for a free society, thus making herself into an implacable warrior of feminist movement. Being an author who likes social issues, and a warrior of feminist movement for freedom and equality to men, and above all, writer of magic realism, she is today one of the most noted and well-known writers of literature.

It is also noted that the articles in the Albanian press, are more translations and adaptations that come from the foreign press. From what we could investigate, we see that there are not deeper investigations of her literary work as a writer, made by the Albanian literary criticism. As these writings are all articles, which either have been translated, or adapted, we are facing a situation where the information and other considerations about her work have been taken unchanged and they have been reflected as they were found in the foreign press. If we have to consider the translations more carefully, another issue which we encounter is the level of adaptations, which in all cases shows that there are lackings. The lack of a literary criticism, as a criticism of translations or a literary one, on the works translated into Albanian, is reflected very clearly in the relation with the work of the author.

Conclusions

More than an issue of bias or preference, the relation with the novel concerns the typology, because the novel is a literary genre in a continuous evolution process and as such, it is more attractive for the writer and the readers. However, currently, the preference towards this novel is one additional argument to enter into deeper relations with the author's prose, and especially to her novels, which bring to the reader a magic world, weaved in the artistic ground of magic realism. The highest level of literary model of magic realism perception, as a school and as a contemporary writing experience, is an important aspect of reception. This context takes value especially for the Albanian reader, who for a very long time, has been circling in a biographical and contextual reading of the prose, and leaving behind literary aspects; thus a reader, used to judge more on the context than on the text. The fact that the Albanian reader, after a relatively long period, was drowning in the deep abysses of propaganda reading of social realism, which is almost all an ideology, maybe makes it difficult to read and perceive the literature of magic realism, thus the novels of Isabel Allende, as one of the most prominent figures of this literary model. However, with the publishing of some novels in Albanian, the author has already captured the consciousness of the Albanian reader. On the other hand, she has been part of the printed and visual media, but this initial moment, rich in information on the life and literary work, in fact constitutes only the first phase of her presentation, of the acknowledgement and evaluation of the literary values. Regarding the value of the texts, she must be included in school curricula, in prose anthologies and above all, it must start the important phase of communicating to her, with the various literary art. The second phase, thus critical and study analysis, would affect in the comprehending of the literary universe projected especially in some of her most important novels, and as such, to enjoy all the details of the literary model of the writer.

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