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Shaping the Pain: Lamenting of Euripides', Kakojannis' and Kiš' Electra*

This paper is the continuation of a wider research, presented with its first part: *Shaping the pain: Ancient Greek Lament and Its Therapeutic Aspect*. In the mentioned papers' focus is creative-therapeutic aspect of a lament. The pain verbalized, revealed and shared with others –becomes itself a more bearable burden both for the woman that laments and for the bereaved family. Related to this therapeutic is the creative aspect of lament: the woman that mourns has to lament in order to make it easier for herself and others; but while lamenting, she is creating something. Deeply rooted in funeral ritual, a lament respects certain ritual rules, and yet it is a spontaneous expression of pain. A role of a lament in ancient Greek ritual is, as always when it comes to the Greek culture, an inexhaustible topic. The theme of a lament within ancient Greek tragedy is particularly interesting. Although tragedy belongs to literary tradition, it is a trustworthy source for ancient Greek ritual practice; a lament within tragedy is thus a ritual lament, and not only a literary one.

Therapeutic aspect of a lament is also in the focus of this paper which examines "shaping of the pain" in few case studies. Inspired by laments of Montenegrin women, those that I have heard or read, I am re-reading Euripides' *Electra* and *Electra* by Danilo Kiš (in which both Euripides' drama and Montenegrin folklore is reflected), I am watching the Michalis Kakojannis' movie *Electra*. Electra's pain for loss, her sorrowful dirge, the one that through despair leads to anger and revengefulness, is found written or filmed: it is captured in a work of art, but it emits folklore and ritual characteristics. From that perspective I am re-reading one of the most beautiful Serbian

Key words:

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Electra, Michalis
Kakojannis' *Electra*,
Danilo Kiš' *Electra*,
The Death of
Jugović's Mother

* This paper is the result of project *Interdisciplinary Research of Serbian Cultural and Linguistic Heritage; Creation of Multimedial Internet Portal "The Lexicon of Serbian Culture"* (No 47016), granted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic Serbia.

epic poems, *The Death of Jugović's Mother*, which tells us about a mother that didn't lament.

Electra's lamenting¹ in Euripides' tragedy *Electra*

The youngest in glorious tragedians' trio, Euripides, used female lamenting in the direction in which his whole creative work was aimed²: putting a human as an individual in gro plan, his heroines are rather independent personae than representatives of the female principle in general. Thus, in the tragic lament *commos*³, even earlier in Sophocle's work and especially in Euripides', more space is given to a heroine and her narrative, than to a choir and chorale lamenting.⁴ As his predecessors, Euripides dealt with the myth of ruling house of Atreids.⁵ In *Electra*, Orestes and Electra, brother and sister, take revenge on their mother Clytemnestra (and her second husband Aegisthus) for murdering their father Agamemnon. Electra is a daughter of slaughtered father and a sister of expelled brother; although married, she is not a woman but a virgin: her spouse, poor farmer who out of fear and respect didn't ask from Electra to fulfill her marital obligations, is not her real husband and protection. Consequently, under the roof she lives there is no male head or hand. Without any trace about brother, her only hope, she waits for his return and laments over the father and her own ill-fate. While coming back from a spring⁶, her first words, wails and the verse γόους τ' ἀφίημι' αἰθέρ' ἐς μέγαν πατρί | and send

¹ Ancient Greek lament, her structure, characteristics and aspects – esp. the therapeutic one, as well as its place in the funeral rites, are the themes of the first part of this research. Abundant literature was used for this research, and some of the titles are: Alexiou 2002, Danforth 1982, Loraux 1998, Stevanović 2009, Holst-Warhaft 1995, Burkert 2007, 67–76.

² More on this see Lesky 1995, 175–266.

³ Κομμός originally defines wailing followed by wild gestures and it is connected with Asiatic ecstasy and exaggeration. It was thus a very dramatic kind of ritual lament and her literary survival and adaptation is κομμός in tragedy, where a choir and actor(s) lament in a form of dialogue. Precisely these ancient elements – antiphonal character, dialogue form and role of soloist, as well as primarily different forms of wailing – tragedy revives, emphasizes and develops in this specific part of drama called κομμός. Alexiou thinks (Alexiou 2002, 12–14, 102–103) that commos could have developed as a dramatic form of ritual antiphonal lament in which a group of female non-relatives sings in a choir on the one side, and one woman, a closest relative, laments solo in a narrative on the other. Although tragedy belongs to literary tradition, it can be considered a trustworthy source for ancient Greek every-day ritual practice; the same way commos in tragedy is taken as a credible source for lamenting in every-day life in ancient Greece (Loraux 1998 and Freudenberg 1987).

⁴ On female choirs see Freudenberg 1987, 455–458.

⁵ To this myth cycle the following Euripides' tragedies belong: *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Electra*, *Orestes*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Summaries of these dramas see in Lesky 1995, 224–228.

⁶ Hair cutting as a sign of grief and lamenting by water or on a road to a spring are *loci communes*.

forth laments into the wide sky, to my father⁷ introduce us to the commos in the first act of the play.

Ἡλέκτρα

σύντειν' — ὦρα — ποδὸς ὀρμάν: ὦ,
 ἔμβα, ἔμβα κατακλαιούσα:
 ἰὼ μοί μοι.
 ἐγενόμαν Ἀγαμέμνονος
 καί μ' ἔτεκεν Κλυταιμῆστρα
 στυγνὰ Τυνδάρω κόρα,
 κικλήσκουσι δέ μ' ἀθλίαν
 Ἡλέκτραν πολιῆται.
 φεῦ φεῦ σχετλίων πόνων
 καὶ στυγερᾶς ζόας.
 ὦ πάτερ, σὺ δ' ἐν Αἴδα
 κείσαι, σᾶς ἀλόχου σφαγαῖς
 Αἰγίσθου τ', Ἀγάμεμνον.
 ἴθι τὸν αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γόον,
 ἄναγε πολύδακρυν ἄδονάν.
 σύντειν' — ὦρα — ποδὸς ὀρμάν: ὦ,
 ἔμβα, ἔμβα, κατακλαιούσα:
 ἰὼ μοί μοι.
 τίνα πόλιν, τίνα δ' οἶκον, ὦ
 τλᾶμον σύγγον', ἀλατεύεις
 οἰκτρὰν ἐν θαλάμοις λιπῶν
 πατρώοις ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς
 ἀλγίσταισιν ἀδελφάν;
 ἔλθοις τῶνδε πόνων ἐμοὶ
 τᾶ μελέα λυτήρ,
 ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, πατρί θ' αἱμάτων
 ἐχθίστων ἐπίκουρος, Ἄρ-
 γει κέλσας πόδ' ἀλάταν.
 θεὸς τόδε τεῦχος ἐμῆς ἀπὸ κρατὸς ἐ-
 λουῖσ', ἵνα πατρὶ γόους νυχίους
 ἐπορθροβοάσω,

Electra

Hasten your step, it is time;
 go onward, onward, weeping!
 Ah me!
 I am Agamemnon's child,
 and Clytemnestra, hated daughter of
 Tyndareus, bore me;

 the citizens call me
 unhappy Electra.

 Alas for my cruel pain and hateful life!

 O father, Agamemnon, you lie in
 Hades,
 by the butchery of your wife and Aegis-
 thus.

 Come, waken the same lament,
 take up the enjoyment of long weeping.

 Hasten your step, it is time;
 go onward, onward, weeping.
 Ah me!
 In what city and what household
 do you wander about,
 my wretched brother,
 leaving your pitiable sister
 in our ancestral home,
 to great pain?
 Come to me, the unhappy one,
 as a deliverer from this pain,
 oh Zeus, Zeus,
 and as a defender for my father
 against his most hateful bloodshed;
 bring the wanderer to shore in Argos.
 Take this pitcher from my head and put
 it down,
 so that I may cry aloud the night-time
 laments for my father.

⁷ Greek text Euripides 1913: *Electra*, 59; translation in English Euripides 1938: *Electra*, 59.

ἰαχάν, Αἴδα μέλος,
 Αἴδα, πάτερ, σοι
 κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέπω γόους
 οἷς ἀεὶ τὸ κατ' ἡμαρ
 διέπομαι, κατὰ μὲν φίλαν
 ὄνυχι τεμνομένα δέραν
 χέρα τε κρατ' ἐπὶ κούριμον
 τιθεμένα θανάτω σῶ.
 αἰ̄ αἰ̄, δρύπτε κάρα:
 οἷα δέ τις κύκνος ἀχέτας
 ποταμίους παρὰ χεύμασιν
 πατέρα φίλτατον καλεῖ,
 ὀλόμενον δολίοις βρόχων
 ἔρκεσιν, ὧς σὲ τὸν ἄθλιον,
 πάτερ, ἐγὼ κατακλαίομαι,
 λουτρὰ πανύσταθ' ὕδρανάμενον χροῖ
 κοίτα ἐν οἰκτροτάτα θανάτου.
 ἰὼ μοι, ἰὼ μοι
 πικρᾶς μὲν πελέκεως τομᾶς
 σᾶς, πάτερ, πικρᾶς δ' ἐκ
 Τροΐας ὀδίου βουλᾶς:
 οὐ μίτραισι γυνή σε
 δέξατ' οὐδ' ἐπὶ στεφάνοις,
 ξίφεσι δ' ἀμφιτόμοις λυγρὰν
 Αἰγίσθου λῶβαν θεμένα
 δόλιον ἔσχεν ἀκοίταν.

A wail, a song of death,
 of death, for you, father,
 under the earth,
 I speak the laments in which
 I am always engaged, day by day,
 tearing my skin with my nails,
 and striking my cropped
 head with my hand,
 for your death.

Oh, oh, tear my face;
 as a clear-sounding swan beside
 the river's streams calls
 to its dearest father,
 dying in the crafty
 snares of the net,
 so I lament you,
 my unhappy father,
 washed by the very last bath,
 in the most piteous bed of death.

Oh, me, your bitter cleaving by the axe,
 father, the bitter plans of the way from
 Troy!

Your wife welcomed you
 with no victor's garlands or crowns,
 but with a two-edged sword,
 making you
 the mournful victim of Aigisthus,
 she got a treacherous bed-fellow.⁸

The choir of Argive women joins her and invites her to a festival in Argos; Electra refuses, complaining that her plain look doesn't suit Agamemnon's daughter at all. The presence of other women encourages her lament, helping her to externalize the grief and to temper her rage; by this externalizing, expressing, expelling, exiling the pain – Electra helps herself; her lament has a therapeutic role. After pleas of Argive women to join them in the feast, she continues:

Ἥλεκτρα

οὐδεὶς θεῶν ἐνοπαῖς κλύει
 τᾶς δυσδαίμονος, οὐ παλαι-

Electra

No god attends to
 the voice of the ill-fated one,
 or to the slaying of my father

⁸ Greek text Euripides 1913: *Electra*, 112–166; translation in English Euripides 1938: *Electra*, 112–166.

ὦν πατρός σφαγιασμῶν.
οἴμοι τοῦ καταφθιμένου
τοῦ τε ζῶντος ἀλάτα,
ὅς που γᾶν ἄλλαν κατέχει,
μέλεος ἀλαί-
ων ποτὶ θῆσαν ἐστίαν,
τοῦ κλεινοῦ πατρός ἐκφύς.
αὐτὰ δ' ἐν χερνήσι δόμοις
ναίω ψυχὰν τακομένα
δωμάτων πατρίων φυγὰς,
οὐρείας ἀν' ἐρίπνας.
μάτηρ δ' ἐν λέκτροις φονίσις
ἄλλω σύγγαμος οἰκεῖ.

long ago.
Alas for the dead,
and for the living vagabond,
who dwells in
another land somewhere,
miserably wandering
to a slave's hearth,
yet born of that renowned father.
I myself live in a poor man's house,
wasting my life away,
an exile from my father's house,
on the mountain crags.
But my mother, with a new husband,
makes her home in a bed stained by
blood.⁹

Firstly, our *lamentress* presents herself to us, for two reasons. One reason surely is a requirement for a dramatic solution of a moment of recognition – Orestes will hear this wailing hidden in bushes and realize that is his sister. Another reason derives from the ritual base of lament: the lamenter draws attention on herself and her relationship to the deceased many times, stressing her own misfortune caused by the deceased's death. The lamenter herself, in our case Electra, is always one of the lament's protagonists. The second protagonist is naturally the deceased; it is he that Electra speaks to, her father Agamemnon, creating an atmosphere of imagined dialogue, which is a deeply ritual, compulsory and essential element of every lament. So is reminding of gathered people on the way that deceased died. Afterwards, Electra laments on her brother Orestes, wondering where he could be seeking charity in that very moment, inducing next character in her narrative. Lamenting on a close relative that is still alive, but for some reason had to leave home and/or homeland, is not rare and it is again connected to the *leitmotif*: to the wretch of the lamenter and unenviable position in which the absent one left her. Electra asks her brother how he could have left her all alone without protection, creating a fictive dialogue again, and she calls him to come back and take revenge on their father's killers. Calling on vengeance is that dark side of the lament, that destructive and yet therapeutic power of it. This revengeful scream is a catalyst that sets the blood cycle in motion, accelerates it, but also helps the pain to break out, to be decomposed and reduced by finding another focus. That focus is not only pain and loss any more, but a cause, a culprit; a culprit again is another protagonist of a lament. Electra returns to wailing for her father; synonyms for wailing and ritual practices during it come one after another (face- and neck-scratching, head-beating, short-cutting the hair). The comparative image of a young swan that calls in vain for his caught father is

⁹ Greek text Euripides 1913: *Electra*, 198-212; translation in English Euripides 1938: *Electra*, 198-212.

extremely beautiful example of allusiveness¹⁰ with purpose of accentuation and more picturesque story-telling. Allusiveness, antithesis (the contrast of the position in which Electra and Orestes are, and the one they deserve to be in by their great origin), repetition (of wails and the deceased's name) induce us in an inexhaustible miner of figures of speech¹¹ that are universal characteristics of ritual lament and of language of oral folk tradition. They intensify the rhythm, build *crescendo* and contribute to the dramatic potential of so many laments, this one too. In its live, organic whole, interdependent elements stir, elements dynamic and vital for ritual practice of lamentation. Some of them are: antiphonic structure (in the means of interaction between the heroine and the choir), form of imagined dialogue (in which, when it comes to ritual lament, the link between the living and the dead is made) and the survival of refrain (in the means of repetitive wails and calling the deceased by name). This *compos* proceeds with all its intensity towards the last distich, in which a call for revenge is implicated (the same call in other lines is explicit). Towards to the same point, to the moment of revenge, with an equal force, the whole tragedy proceeds.

Electra's Lamenting in Michalis Kakoyannis'¹² Motion Picture *Electra*

In this movie based on Euripides' drama, Irini Pappa (Ειρήνη Παππά) plays the never to be forgotten role of Electra. In everything about her we see painful decisiveness to take revenge: in her convulsed face framed by hair short-cut in grief, in tensed and stiff look in her eyes, in the gesture of the body clothed in poor rags and in the walk of rough bare feet, in the voice hoarse because of rage. The cruelty of Electra's ill-fate is emphasized by godforsaken wasteland, desolate *cul de sac* ra-

¹⁰ With allusive method an idea is expressed indirectly but in a picturesque and concrete way, by the agency of symbols and metaphors; this method is very characteristic for the language of the funeral ritual, since a person that laments not rarely avoids explicit mentioning of death, for the purpose of protecting herself and community.

¹¹ Inevitable and effective alliterations, assonances, homoioteleuton, parallelism and asyndeton, as well as mentioned figures of metaphor, apostrophe, repetition and antithesis in the cited excerpt, give enough material and inspiration for a paper.

¹² Μιχάλης Κακογιάννης is a Greek-Cypriot actor, theatre and movie director participates in famous festivals and wins valuable awards for film directing during the second half of the XX century (in imperatives such as Cannes and Hollywood, Moscow, San Francisco, Berlin, London, Thessaloniki, Edinburgh). Three times he turned to ancient themes, based on which are the following three movies: *Electra* (1962), *The Trojan Women* (1971) and *Iphigenia* (1976). In the interview incited by his "ancient trilogy" Kakoyannis says that special binds connect him to Euripides. With great *Electra* he took part at Cannes festival (1962) and won rewards for the best film adaptation and sound as well as the rewards of International Youth Union. Same year at Thessaloniki festival the movie won prizes for the best film, directing and female lead role. The Greek critics Union wreathed *Electra* for the best film, directing, female lead and secondary role, male lead role and for the best music. Same year the film is nominated for Oscar in the category for the best foreign movie and it gets awards at festivals in Edinburgh, Acapulco, Berlin (taken from the Wikipedia site).

ther than a village, threatening clouds that just won't move apart, a shriek of an ill-omen bird here and then, always present black-dressed women from the neighborhood (reflection of the ancient choir), as well as very suggestive music of Mikis Theodorakis. Electra's future company welcomed Agamemnon's daughter in their village, and from that moment her lament (altered commos from Euripides' tragedy) begins:

Ηλέκτρα

Είμαι η Ηλέκτρα, κόρη του Αγαμέμνονα και της Κλυτεμνήστρας.

Γυναίκα α'

Όιμε στις άκρες!

Ηλέκτρα

Και στη μαύρη μου ζωή!

Γυναίκα β'

Κόρη μου, μη στενάζεις. Παρακάλα τους θεούς και θα σ' ακούσουν.

Ηλέκτρα

Τους δικούς μου θρήνους μήτε θεός μήτε θνητός δεν ακούει. Συμφορά στον σκοτωμένο και στον αποδιωγμένο.

Γυναίκα γ'

Τον αδερφό της σκέφτεται.

Γυναίκα δ'

Ναι, τον Ορέστη.

Ηλέκτρα

Υιός ακριβός, τέτοιου πατέρα... πού είναι τώρα; Σε ποιά χώρα, σε ποιό σπίτι; Γιατί δεν έρχεται να δει της αδερφής του την κατάντια; Απ' το παλάτι του πατέρα της διωγμένη, σε γκρεμοτόπια μένει... Ενώ η μάνα μου, η κακούργα, κοιμάται με άλλον άνδρα σε κρεβάτι φονικό! ... Καλές γυναίκες, αν κάποια από σας ξέρει τον τάφο του πατέρα μου, να μου τον δείξει. Να τον θρηγήσω θέλω και να φωνάξω.

Electra

I am Electra, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra.

First woman

Oh, bitter fate!

Electra

Oh, cruel, bitter fate!

Second woman

Do not sigh, my child. Pray to the gods and they will hear you.

Electra

Neither god nor mortal hears me. I weep for the slain and exiled one.

Third woman

She means her brother.

Fourth woman

Her brother, Orestes.

Electra

True son of a noble father... where is he now? In what land, under what roof? If only he were here to behold her sister's plight! Driven from her father's house, out into the wilderness... While our strumpet mother sleeps with another man in her bed of crime! ... Good women, if you know my father's grave, lead me there... there let me vent my sorrow.

(Μία γυναίκα γνέφει. Η πομπή περπατάει προς τὸν τάφο.) (One of the women nods. The procession moves towards the grave.)

Χορός

Ἄϊντε, αἶντε, μόνος, τράβα και κλάψε. (2 φορές)

Και με το δάκρυ το πικρό,

να σου γλυκαίνει ο πόνος. (3 φορές)

Ηλέκτρα

(στον τάφο)

Ὅπως ο κύκνος στα ποταμῆσια
ρέμματα σπαράζει, κράζει τον πατέρα
του που χάθηκε σε δύχτια δολερά, ἔτσι
κι εγώ σε κλαίω! Μ' ακούς πατέρα μου
γλυκέ, που είσαι στο κάτω κόσμος; Τα
κουρεμένα μου μαλλιά για σένα τα ἔχω
κόψει, για σένα με τα νύχια μου τα
μάγουλα μου σκίζω!

Choir

Sad is the path, every step a tear. (2 times)

Let our bitter tears

sweeten life's whose. (3 times)

Electra

(on the grave)

Just as the baby swan weeps beside the bank, wailing for its father, trapped in the hunter's net... So I weep for you, my father! Sweet father, can you hear me? See my hair, shorn for you... for you I rend my cheeks!¹³

As we see, Kakoyannis recognized and stressed the importance of lament, using all its crucial elements. He kept dialogue form, not smothering the narrative of the lead lamenter Electra; he gave enough space to the effective choral and melodic element, through the song that women sing while approaching to the Agamemnon's grave. The whole lament is divided in three phases. First one is in the village, a public place of gathering and it is in dialogue form; second one is choral, with a refrain that is sang, during the procession (which resembles the funeral one); third one is on the very grave, where Electra laments as a soloist in a narrative, speaking directly to the deceased. The director has thus achieved retardation of the original Euripides' lamenting scene, via devices that are utterly dramatic and artistic, but we don't forget that they come forth from the funeral ritual practice. What I find as especially interesting is that ancient choir is used to its maximum, in a way that Euripides would have approved: it doesn't stick out by being non-functional, but it still doesn't participate in the action. Elements of mimart theatre make the choir even more appealing. The refrain that choir repeats, which doesn't originate from Euripides' *kommos*, is another brief reminder on comprehension of therapeutic aspect of lamenting, one that I choose to recognize as a deliberate rather than random.

In addition, let us mention that, thanks to the visual dimension – the advantage of film art, it is obvious now that the action of *Electra* develops to a great extent around the *threshold*, by the *hearth* and in the *yard* – and these are basic ritual positions and supports of the traditionally women's space, the home; the threshold

¹³ The text both in Modern Greek and English noted by the author of this paper.

is a demarcation line between male-public and female-domestic life, as well as a line that divides the domains of male and female power, authority and control.

Electra's lamenting in drama *Electra* by Danilo Kiš

Serbian writer Danilo Kiš approached to this Greek myth and tragedians' inheritance¹⁴ with somewhat of unpretentious ambition – his *Electra* is a yield of the Belgrade theatre *Atelier 212*'s requirement for a new and modern translation of Euripides' drama, suitable for scene.¹⁵ That is how Kiš started to write an adaptation or "a translation of a translation" keeping Euripides' characters unchanged, preserving the basic line of thought, supplying the text with the *couleur locale*: with imprints of his time, region, environment, and his own personal mark.¹⁶ In finding this coloring, what was of a major help to Kiš is the Kakoyannis' movie – Greek director woke up somewhat of the sleepy Kiš of Cetinje,¹⁷ and Danilo says about his movie: "I have noticed... in funeral rites, in the cruelty of stone and of faces, in laments, in region and climate, in the sun and in hearts of the people, some similarity with spiritual landscape and cruel ethic climate that in a way reminds the folkloristic Montenegro. Maybe that is why *deseterac*,¹⁸ curses and wailing are so frequent?" (Kiš, 1992, 41) Indeed, the language of his *Electra* corresponds to a great extent with the language of Serbian epic poetry (and with its lexica, melody and rhythm) which is still often heard in the Montenegro.

Similarly *Electra*'s lament, although literarily shaped and written in order to comply with Greek original and to bear the spirit of ancient times, with its atmosphere, meter and lexica positively originates from the Serbian lament.¹⁹ Her

¹⁴ In the 1960's two Serbian writers turned towards the ancient Greek heritage and wrote plays based on myth of Atreids' family and related tragedies. Jovan Hristić wrote radio-drama *Orestes*, and Danilo Kiš writes drama *Electra* based on Euripides.

¹⁵ Namely, the existing translation in Serbian language (of Euripides' *Electra*) was out of reach for scenic speech and ear. The premiere of Kiš's *Electra* was in 1968 at *Atelier 212*; next year under title *Electra 69* it has been presented to the audience of the third *BITEF* festival. Kiš made putting this drama on Serbian stage possible and he made its issues closer and more current for Serbian audience. Thus, in spite of modest initial intentions, a self-sufficient highly valuable oeuvre has been created. Mirjana Miočinović, a great expert of Kiš's opus, thinks that *Electra* is „the best product of his concealed poetic gift" (Kiš 1992, quotation from her review on the book cover)

¹⁶ Kiš's language, with its semantic potencial, its rhythm and melody, is an actual protagonist. It brings the dramatic tension, leaving to mimic, gesture, voice – just a final blow.

¹⁷ After imprisoning his father in Auschwitz and after the end of the war, Danilo Kiš lived his teenage years with mother Milica, a Montenegrin, and his sister, at Cetinje, Montenegro.

¹⁸ *Deseterac* is the ten-syllable-verse characteristic for Serbian epic poetry.

¹⁹ Serbian lament (*тужбалица, нарицаљка, запевка*) is a ritual song and a significant part of the funeral rites, as well as a precious phenomenon of the Serbian folklore and folk literature, which lately fades away. In Balkans, thus in Serbia and regions populated with Serbian people, a lament can still be heard in rural areas. This custom is preserved in those districts with the slightest economic growth, such as Montenegro, Herzegovina, Kosovo, Lika, Dalmatinska Zagora, south-western Serbia, and Macedonia. Although it is a spontaneous expression of pain (it was believed that preparation of a lament attracts evil), the dirge has conventional character with well-

curse and lament are constants on stage, whether she laments over herself, dead father, expelled Orestes or Aegisthus' corpse; over her mother's body she will lament speechless. "The young woman's lament tore at my heart."²⁰ Let us hear her monotonous wailing song, the one that corresponds with the studied excerpt from the Greek source.

Електра

Јаој мени!
 јаој мени, зоро ружна,
 јаој мени, бели дане,
 јаој мени, силни Зевсе!
*(Пауза. Са градских бедема
 чује се зов трубе: смена страже)*
 У ком граду, у ком дому,
 у ком свету, на ком тргу,
 сад просјачиш брате тужни,
 што остави сестру своју
 у јадима непроболним
 и са сунцем осветничким
 што ко нож ми срце жеже,

Electra

Alas me!
 Alas me, reddish dawn
 Alas me, white day,
 Alas me, mighty Zeus!
*(Pause. From the city fortress
 a horn is calling: a guard shift)*
 In what city, in what home,
 In what world, on what square,
 Do you wander now,
 My gloomy brother,
 That left your sister
 In misery without recover,
 And with sun the revengeful one

established ritual rules, ways, place and time for lamenting. It is begun, leaded and performed by the women who acquired skill and by which they were distinguished and remembered in the community (*тужлилице, тушкиње, нарикаче, покајнице, запеваље, јаукалице*). Primarily, it is the closest female relative that laments: mother's, sister's or daughter's dirge is the most sincere and the most touching one. Serbian ritual lament could be performed by one woman, two women taking turns, or more women together. The verse is of eight (*осмерац*) or ten (*десетерац*) syllables. The structure of the lament, conservative in its form, was preserved through many centuries. It is consisted of: a praise of the deceased with an emphasis on his/her qualities, messages for the dead relatives, a notion of the afterlife as similar to the terrestrial, etc. Monotonous, prolonged melody and prepared expressions and formulas help "building" a lament. Through it, women speak directly to the dead, they "raise them from their graves" and stimulate their interaction with those living. A certain (subversive, it may be said) power of women in the domain of death is reflected in this dialogue with the deceased through lamentation. In patriarchal societies in which a woman was constantly underestimated, apart from certain control over life (through the role of a parent and midwife), a woman also had a certain power over death, precisely through her role in funeral rites. While writing the paper primarily on the Greek lament, I certainly used precious and inspiring literature on the Serbian lament and the gathered laments (Шаулић 1929; Цаковић 1970; Караџић 1957, 144–197; Karadžić 1969; Ненадовић 1997, 117–132; Ђурић 1940, Љубиша 1988, 174–185; Зечевић 2008, 381–397; PKT 1985, under: *tužbalica/lament, narikača/lamenter*) as well as audio- and visual material that I recorded myself in Montenegro (the laments and interviews with lamenters).

²⁰ I cannot fail to quote at least these two verses from an extraordinary beautiful point of the dramatic poem *The Mountain Wreath* by Peter II Petrovich Njegoš, Montenegrin bishop and sovereign. It is a part of Vuk Mandušić's confession about his passionate but secret feelings for Van Milonjić's daughter-in-law: hearing her lament for her brother-in-law, Vuk Mandušić envied the deceased on those eyes that cried for him, on that mouth that lamented him. In the same poem Njegoš gifted us the lament of Batrić's sister for her brother, before suicide. This pearl among laments of high poetic and dramatic value doesn't quit to amaze. (Njegoš 1847; electronic integral edition in Serbian, English and Russian available on the internet page of the *Rastko Project*)

јаој мени!

Јаој Зевсе, моћни боже,
јаој брате, руко мушка,
долутајте до Аргоса,
осветите мога оца!

Јаој оче!

Место крви осветничке
ево крви из мог врата,
ево косе острижене,
ево мога лелекања,
јој богови!

Ево мога белог врата,
врата као у лабуда,
ево мога белог грла
што тужи ко лабуд тужни
кад ухваћен у језеру,
ухваћен у замке мрежу
зове оца беспомоћно,
јаој, оче!

Тако и ја, кћер ти тужна,
зовем тебе узалудно,
ох, богови!

(Пауза)

Жена ти је, оче јадни,
припремила задњу купељ,
руком белом, позлаћеном,
руком женском миришљавом,
руком нежном, накићеном –

(Пауза)

звизнула те секиром међ уши
као животињу,
рукама нежним, негованим,
рукама белим и кравим,
јаој мени!

(Пауза)

А онда је похитала –
не стиже ни руке спрати –
да загрли ону хуљу,
љубавника свог,
Егиста.
Јаој нама!

That burns my heart as a knife,
Alas me!

Alas me, Zeus, mighty god,
Alas me, brother, male hand,
Do roam over to Argos,
Revenge my father!

Alas, father!

Instead of avenging blood
Here is the blood from my neck
Here is the short-cut hair
Here is my wailing

Oh, gods!

Here is my white neck
The neck white as in a swan,
Here is my white throat
That laments as a mournful swan
When, caught in a lake,
Caught in a trap of a nest,
Calls its father helplessly

Alas, father!
That is how I, your sad daughter,
Call you in vain

Oh, gods!

(Pause)

Your woman had, my poor father,
Prepared for you the very last bath,
With her hand white and golden,
With her hand female and fragrant,
With her hand smooth and adorned –

(Pause)

She stroke you with an axe
Between your ears,
As if you were an animal,
With her hands smooth and cherished
With her hands both white and red
Alas me!

(Pause)

And then she rushed –
Without even washing hands –
To embrace that bastard,
Her lover,
Aegisthus.
Alas us!²¹

²¹ The third scene, Kiš 1992, 11-12. Translation in English by the author of this paper. Electra is in this lament (which means in the whole scene) all alone, the choir doesn't participate. Being

Kiš recognizes, consciously as well as intuitively, and partly due to Serbian folklore inheritance, the role that female lamenting has in Greek tragedy and Greek tradition in general. Making a stage-suitable adaptation of the text, he builds a self-sufficient scene, receptive and flowing, known to the Serbian audience.²² Thus trochaic *osmerac*, the folk eight-syllables-verse with regular four-syllables-verse join-in-singing, and these verses form the meter of Serbian lament. Thus numerous stylistic devices characteristic for the Serbian lament and for the lament in general²³. Regarding that ritual and literary forms and contents are highly intertwined, and that lament and tragedy have common topics and problems, the author's inscription to the French theatre-man Antonin Artaud shouldn't be omitted. Artaud supported ideas of so-called *Théâtre de la Cruauté* (*Theatre of Cruelty*), placing the accent on bodily and ritual level, on the level of suffer, pain, instinct, of boundary and dangerous.²⁴ In this time when the revenge and vendetta issues are so current (and when is it not?), Kiš writes an adaptation of Euripides' *Electra* so that revenge, its justification and grounds, its appropriateness and its price, would be put under magnifying glass on the boards of a Belgrade theatre. The scream for revenge has always found a path and a voice inside of a lament that, paradoxically and complementary, carries in itself this destructive and the other therapeutic potential.

The Death of Jugović's Mother – the Necessity of "Therapeutic" Lament

The Death of Jugović's Mother is one of the most beautiful poems from the Serbian folk epic poetry's *cornu copiae*.²⁵ The mother of nine heroes is the land Serbia, and also a symbol²⁶ of many female hearts that have mourned for their beloved ones, lost in a battlefield. Of those hearts that mourned and broke because of unbearable grief.

aware that choir in Euripides is suppressed and doesn't actually participate in the action, Kiš kept only two choral parts and transformed them to effect songs in modern theatric conception; these two songs are written in *osmerac*, the folk eight-syllables-verse, which underlines primary relation of this reduced choir with leading character's lament.

²² *Electra* by Kiš is adapted for film *Electra* (1993) directed by Jagoš Marković with Jasmina Avramović in the lead role; one of the most impressive scenes surely is Electra's lament, while she drags herself without aim or strength, alone and in rags, through dark, cold and moist halls – like those in her heart and conscience.

²³ Except for those already mentioned in analysis of the lament in Euripides' *Electra*, some of them are parallelism, anaphor and palilogia. Pauses and broken rhythm here and there make the lament convincing, direct and spontaneous.

²⁴ This inscription is a stylistic sign *sui generis*. By Kiš' idea, it was supposed to direct the author's writing and to obligate a director and actors. "In this play, without doubt, a full measure of cruelty should be brought in." (Kiš 1992, 41).

²⁵ The historic stratum of the poem (the Serbian-Turkish battle on Kosovo field 1389.) is integrated into the older, mythological stratum and old oral poetic inheritance (both pre-Christian customs and beliefs and some Christian elements are woven into these); see Lašek 2005, 51–64.

²⁶ On symbols in this poem see Đurić 1918.

Obtaining help of the God – wings of a swan (another encounter with a swan!) and eyes of a falcon, the Mother flies over to Kosovo field and finds her beloved ones dead – nine sons and her husband Jug-Bogdan. In three occasions other living creatures will lament over the lost heroes: nine horses, nine grim lions (their dogs), nine falcons, nine widows, and nine orphans; eventually, around the midnight, the famous horse Zelenko, will lament over his master, the youngest Damian. Women together with frightened children and animals are creatures joined in suffer and love towards the passed-away knights. They all will find different ways to express their pain, to externalize their loss with a scream. This scream, this lament, breaks through air with tragic and horrific plentitude of sounds: clamour, weeping, neighing, roaring, screaming. Only the mother suffers quietly: *E'en then the mother was hard of heart, / and from her heart no tear did rise.* – is repeated three times in the poem. Which side prevails in this powerful misbalance: the terrific sounds or the terrific silence? The mother couldn't, or wouldn't – or both – tell her pain; she didn't express it because it was inexpressible. Not before two black ravens, death and misfortune, put in her lap Damian's hand, and not before Damian's wife recognized the hand, did mother finally spoke:

Узе мајка руку Дамјанову,
окретала, превртала с њоме,
пак је руци тијо бесједила:
„Моја руко, зелена јабуко,
гдје си расла, гдје л' си устргнута! –
А расла си на криоцу моме,
устргнута на Косову равном!"
Надула се Југовића мајка,
надула се, па се и распаде
за својије девет Југовића
и десетим стар-Југом Богданом.

The mother took the Damian's hand,
She turned it round, fondled it.
Then to the hand she softly spoke:
"O my hand, my fresh green apple,
„Where did you grow, where were you
plucked?
"On my bosom you did grow;
„ Plucked you were on Kosovo's plain."
Inflated she got, the Jugović's mother ,
Inflated, and finally she breathed her
soul away
In her grief for nine sons, nine of
Jugović
And fot the tenth, the old Jug-Bogdan.²⁷

This scream was the cut that closed one cycle, one life. The pain was being tamed, suppressed, swallowed, but it was growing in spite. It couldn't find a way out, it hasn't been channeled or shaped, because Mother didn't verbalize it, she didn't express it, chopped it, cut it into pieces. She didn't envelope it in order to create something – if only a lament; the creative-therapeutic process fell behind. The mother's heart was petrified in pain, and how could she live without a living heart? Her late lament, weak and quite, barely audible, was her last breath for that matter.

²⁷ Text in original Nogo 1987, 126–128; translation in English by the author of this paper.

Conclusion

Although it belongs to the literary tradition, the lament within the Greek tragedy is a trustworthy source which enriches our knowledge of ancient Greek ritual practice. In this paper reviewed Electra's lamentation over her father and her own ill-fate is thus deeply ritual, and being so – it is highly vivid and vital. Precisely because it is pulsating with life, it has found its place in pieces of art, in which is always underlined this essential link to the ritual. One of the key-elements of the ritual lament, which is in the focus of this research presented in two papers so far, binds these three Electra's laments. It is creative-therapeutic potential of a lament. The pain verbalized, revealed and shared with others –becomes itself a more bearable burden both for the woman that laments and for the bereaved family. Maybe that is why Jugović's Mother shouldn't have been that *hard of heart*. Related to this therapeutic is the creative aspect of lament: the woman that mourns has to lament in order to make it easier for herself and others; but while lamenting, she is creating something. Mournful creativity of our Electra is an art that found itself within another art: that of Euripides, Kakogianis, Kiš. *Lamentresses* are folk poetesses, female rhapsods, composers and singers, as well as actors, scenic performers. Painful art of lamenting is an art of a woman, a gender-specific art. Women, who bring life, are to say goodbye to life when it departs this world.

Translated by author

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Ђурђина Шијаковић

Обликовање бола: тужбалица Еурипидове, Какојанисове и Кишове Електре

Овај рад је наставак опширнијег истраживања, чији је први дио представљен радом *Обликовање бола: античка грчка тужбалица и њен терапеутски аспект*. У фокусу поменутог рада је стваралачко-терапеутски аспект тужбалице. Вербализован, испољен, бол подијељен са другима – постаје подношљивије бреме и за жену која тужи и за ожалошћени скуп. У вези са овим исцјелитељским бива још један конструктивни, стваралачки аспект тужења: жена која тужи, то чини јер мора да испољи бол, да олакша себи и другима, но док тужи – она нешто ствара. Дубоко укоријењена у посмртни ритуал, жалосна запијевка поштује одређена обредна правила, а ипак је и спонтани израз бола. Мјесто тужбалице у грчком обреду је, као и увијек кад се ради о грчкој култури, непресушна тема. Нарочито је занимљиво питање тужбалице у грчкој трагедији; трагедија је, иако припада литерарној традицији, вјеродостојан извор за античку грчку обредну праксу, те је и тужбалица унутар ње – ритуална, а не само уско књижевна.

Кључне ријечи:

античка грчка тужбалица, жена, стваралачко-терапеутски аспект, посмртни обред, античка трагедија, Еурипидова Електра, Електра Михалиса, Какојаниса, Електра Данила Киша, Смрт мајке Југовића

Исцјелитељски потенцијал тужбалице у фокусу је и овог рада који прати "обликовање бола" кроз неколико студија случаја. Инспирирана тужбалицама црногорских жена, оних које сам чула и прочитала, изнова читам Еурипидову *Електру* и *Електру* Данила Киша (у којој се огледају и Еурипидова драма и црногорски фолклор), гледам *Електру*, филм Михалиса Какојаниса. Електрин бол због губитка, који кроз очај води у бијес и осветољубивост, налазимо записан и екранизован: он је запретен у умјетничком дјелу, али одише фолклорним и ритуалним одликама. Из те перспективе изнова читам једну од најљепших српских јуначких пјесама, *Смрт мајке Југовића*, која нам говори о мајци која није тужила.