

# NJEGOŠ AS TRAGIC HERO IN THE THOUGHT OF KOSOVO

*Ivo Andrić*

**T**HIS DRAMA BEGAN in Kosovo. Ljuba Nenadović, though a Serb himself, was rather surprised when he saw in Montenegro in the nineteenth century, the power of the Kosovo tradition live, which in those hills centuries later was a reality, just as close and real as the bread and water. Wearing women that were resting besides stacked wood on the edge of the stony road talked to him about Kosovo as of their own fate and personal tragedy.

“Our rights are buried in Kosovo” the people were saying with resignation not even having one thought about looking for it in any other way than that which is dictated by the Kosovo covenant; the entire fate of all these people was marked and guided. As in the most ancient legend, which is always the biggest human reality, everyone has personally felt a historical curse which nobles, turned into farmers, leaving in their souls “fearful thought from Obilić,” to live like that crucified between their “farmers,” people’s reality and knight like Obilić thought. Montenegro and people who escaped to the hills were quintessential of that Kosovo mystery. Everything that was born in those hills arrived to this world reflecting the view of Kosovo blood.

That is where the beginning of the Njegoš drama begins. Without it the tragedy of Njegoš life would be understood with difficulty. Njegoš is a prototype of a Kosovo fighter. And as poet and as a ruler and as a man, he is a personification of Kosovo battle, defeat and unbroken hope. He is, as someone said “Jeremiah of Kosovo”; and at the same time an active, responsible fighter for “removal of curse” and bringing to reality of Obilić thought. It is argued that the word “Kosovo” besides the word “God” is mentioned most frequently in the Mountain Wreath. But, neither thought nor poetry are indispensable for Kosovo tradition; this tradition for Njegoš is very life, it is a subject of his realistic and cautious diplomatic correspondence as it is a subject of his main poetic work. In his correspondence with Russia and Turks, for him Kosovo is one date which influences all decisions and solutions of most concrete questions.

In formulating his petitions, he begins with words “from the fall of our kingdom.” He speaks about Kosovo as of any other moral-political argument, as of live and crucial factor of collective and personal fate. In official correspondence, he writes to Osman-Pasha of Scutari: “...When wild Asian crowds destroyed our small heroic kingdom, then my ancestors and some other selected families, which did not die there from Turks, left their fatherland [Serbia’s Kosovo] and settled in these hills.”

In those hills “They serve the Cross and lived by Miloš.” And only in that light the fate itself can be understood and as well as Njegoš’ work.

(Excerpt)

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