

Postmodern Approach to History in the Novel "Selvitë E Tivarit" by M.Kraja

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v6i2.1696>

APA Citation: Kalo.V. (2024). Postmodern Approach to History in the Novel "Selvitë E Tivarit" by Author M.Kraja. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*.6(2).414-429. <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v6i2.1696>

Received:

05/04/2024

Accepted:

29/05/2024

Keywords:

History,
postmodern,
fiction,
references,
narrative
techniques,
fragmentation.

Abstract

This study article aims to analyze the special way through which the important events of the historical past are integrated into the fiction of the writer Mehmet Kraja with the aim of ironizing and not documenting them. Our main argument is that in the novel "Selvitë e Tivarit" the historical context of the Tivari War is effectively portrayed through postmodern narrative tools and techniques, which highlight doubt and unreliability towards references and the absolute authenticity of historical narratives. The use of techniques such as the presence of a "dubious" narrator's voice, fragmentation, time distortion, ironic representation, etc., appear as postmodern strategies that play an important role in blurring the boundaries between reality (truth) and fiction and enable the thematization of important issues of history, culture, and human and national identity. Our methodology includes the use of analysis methods, which will enable us to delve into the interior of the text, at the levels of narration and discourse, as well as the comparative method to highlight the differences and commonalities between traditional and contemporary models of historical fiction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Postmodern literature, which emerged prominently in the latter half of the twentieth century, is distinguished by its eclectic styles and narrative techniques that fundamentally challenge and redefine the conventions of traditional storytelling. Employing methods such as parody, ambiguity, fragmentation, magical realism, pastiche, metafiction, and intertextuality, postmodern works foster a unique interaction between the reader and the text. These techniques "encourage readers to transcend the bounds of current reality into a richly imagined world" (Hutcheon, 2013).

In contrast to its widespread acceptance in European and worldwide literature, postmodern poetics within contemporary Albanian literature manifests in a "fragmentary way" rather than as a "uniform literary or cultural movement" with all its typifying elements (Dado, 2020). Despite the challenges in consolidating postmodernism as a dominant literary aesthetic alongside modernist aesthetics, in the last three decades, Albanian authors have integrated distinctive postmodern innovations such as doubt in metanarratives, metafiction, and the concept of play.

A quintessential figure in this literary field is Mehmet Kraja, recognized as one of the preeminent Albanian writers of his era. His works, highly esteemed within the realm of contemporary Albanian prose, are celebrated for their "high aesthetic awareness" and profound engagement with themes such as "the existence of society and the human being." Kraja's style, rich with postmodern influences, demonstrates a nuanced understanding of contemporary literary trends (Aliu, 2013).

His novel, "*Selvitë e Tivari*" (1981), exemplifies postmodern fiction through its "intentional distortions of historical facts," which serve as "comments on the inherent fictionality of historical representation," thus highlighting the author's critical engagement with the portrayal and understanding of history (Waugh, 1984). This novel aligns with Linda Hutcheon's description of postmodern historical fiction as "historiographical metafiction," which problematize the distinction between history and fiction by "questioning the essence of historical knowledge" and using it (the history) to construct a "new fiction" (Hutcheon, 2013).

Such fiction frequently revises the content of historical data, documents, events, and figures, often "demystifying or dismantling the orthodox version of the past" and thus "transforming the very norms of historical fiction" (McHale, 1987).

Accordingly, "*Selvitë e Tivari*" will be analyzed as a historiographical metafiction that challenges conventional representations of history through its narrative form, characterized by an inversion of style and the use of irony, as specific features of postmodern poetics.

This paper aims to emphasize the postmodern narrative tools and techniques within the novel that allow the blending of historical elements with fiction. We will examine how postmodern principles of portraying history manifest through narrative techniques such as the selection of an "untrustworthy" or "suspicious" narrator, time distortion, and the absence of linear narration, which mixes historical facts with fiction. (Currie, 1998)

The analysis is structured around three main arguments:

1) the subjectivity of the historical narrative, viewing history as a socio-cultural and ideological construction subject to Kraja's poetics, which emphasizes the subjectivity of historical narrative and the idea of constructing "many histories"(White, 1975);

2) multiple narrative voices and the "destruction" of the narrative scheme, focusing on how the narration of history through a "doubtful" or "uncertain" voice blurs and inverts historical narration, paving the way for its recreation through irony and fantasy (Fludernik, 1996);

3) Fredric Jameson's postmodern theories, notably his concepts of "pastiche" and "the loss of historical depth," provide a critical framework for analyzing Mehmet Kraja's novel "*Selvitë e Tivarit*" (Jameson, 1991). In the novel, Kraja eschews a linear narrative in favour of a fragmented structure that embodies the idea of "circular, spiral time." This approach not only challenges traditional historical narratives but also portrays history as a multifaceted and intricate experience, highlighting the postmodern scepticism towards a unified historical truth.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This analysis draws upon several seminal postmodern theoretical frameworks to dissect the narrative techniques employed in the text, emphasizing their role in challenging and redefining traditional historical narratives.

Linda Hutcheon's *Historiographical Metafiction*: Hutcheon's framework is pivotal for understanding how works of fiction, such as those by Kraja, do more than narrate historical events. They engage in a critical reflection on the act of writing history itself. Hutcheon identifies metafictional strategies—such as parody, pastiche, intertextuality, and narrative fragmentation—that not only disrupt conventional historical narratives but also offer new interpretations and perspectives on historical events.

Brian McHale's *Narrative Strategies*: McHale's theories focus on how postmodern texts subvert traditional narrative conventions. He discusses the deployment of metafiction and reflexivity, as well as the diversity and plurality of narrative voices, which allow the exploration of multiple perspectives and temporalities within postmodern literature.

Monika Fludernik's *Narratology*: Fludernik's model elucidates the various functions narrators perform within a narrative, including storytelling, commenting on events, portraying characters' thoughts and emotions, and shaping narrative perspectives. This approach is useful for analyzing how narrators in postmodern fiction can influence readers' understanding of the narrative.

Mark Currie's *Concept of Time*: Currie examines how postmodern narratives manipulate the experience of time. His insights into time breaks and the subjective experience of time are crucial for understanding how postmodern texts can alter temporal perception to enhance narrative depth and complexity.

Analysis of Pastiche and Historical Depth: In examining Kraja's novel, this review assesses the use of pastiche and its effectiveness in providing historical depth. Drawing on Fredric Jameson's critique, the analysis considers whether the novel portrays history merely as a commodity, thereby echoing Jameson's concern about narratives becoming interchangeable under the influence of capitalism.

Through these theoretical lenses, the paper aims to highlight the sophisticated interplay of narrative techniques that Kraja employs to both mirror and critique the historical and cultural dimensions of his context.

2.1. Postmodern fiction as an expression of historical consciousness

The creativity of Mehmet Kraja consists of dozens of volumes of stories, publications, and essays, as well as fourteen successful novels, a part of which are included in the corpus of Albanian literature of the second half of the 20th century, written by writers from the former Albanian territories, which failed to communicate with the reader and the literature written in Albania before the 90s.

The evolution of Albanian literature after the period of the communist dictatorship, in addition to the openness to new themes and avant-garde experiments, also includes the effort to "recognize the literary heritage created in Albania and Kosovo". (Dado, 2010)

The inclusion of historical events in some of Kraja's novels ("*Selvitë e Tivari*", "Im atë e donte Adolfin", "Hotel Arbëria", etc.) seems to be a constant feature that serves the author to bring to attention through fiction, events or important historical and political dilemmas of the most influential periods in the development of Albanian society and the Balkan region as a whole.

Such continuous activation of the historical past in the creativity of the authors, according to the researchers of the postmodern philosophy of history, is related both to the need for historical re-dimensioning and to the legitimization of national identity.

The author's intellectual and political concern for issues related to the Albanian nation and identity, as well as the necessity of re-dimensioning the historical context related to them, seem to constitute the strongest driving force and the thread that connects Kraja's literary work with the journalistic one.

Seen from this point of view, the questions posed by him in the work "Kosovar Identity", it seems that the author has constantly "submitted to his poetics" with "mastery and high aesthetic awareness". (Aliu, 2013)

"Where should we start a treatment for identity, to answer a number of questions that have been pending for so long? Indeed, if there is a history of Albanian thought, it should have written in its annals the answers to the essential questions, who are we, where did we come from and where are we going? And if there is a current Albanian thought that lies in synchrony, it is precisely there that the answers to new questions, which appear anew in people's preoccupations, after Kosovo's independence, or even in the preceding period, should be found." (Kraja, 2011)

The connection between the author's historical-political and aesthetic consciousness leads us to one of the most important theses of the postmodern philosophy of history, which asserts the

important mediating role that historical fiction plays in the expression of historical consciousness "developed within the defined area in a way solidified by national myths and historical knowledge". (Hroch, 1987)

Kraja's efforts to examine important problems of Albanian identity that appear at key moments of historical transformations or social and cultural impasses rank it next to the most advanced intellectual thought of the contemporaries, expressed in the pamphlets "The European Identity of Albanians", or essay works such as "Dispute, Albania facing itself" by the author Ismail Kadare.

Their importance lies in the analysis of the processes of the loss of the cultural identity of the Albanians after the occupation by the Ottomans and the alienation of this identity after the Montenegrin occupation, as well as in the whipping of the "stale stereotypes" in post-communist Albania, which aim to overturn the historical judgment "allegedly in the name of demystifying history". (Mandala, 2022)

Seen from this point of view, placing the narrative of the events in the novel "*Selvitë e Tivari*" in the historical background of 1878, known by History as the War of Tivari, constitutes a conscious selection of its importance in undoing the tree space, as well as about the current fate of the individual and the Albanian ethnicity still found at the crossroads in modern times.

The year 2007, which marks the closing time point of the narrative in the novel, seems to serve as a bridge between the historical context of the events described in the novel and that of the time of writing the work, as it represents an important period in the history of Kosovo's independence and the promotion of the Albanian identity in the international arena. (1)

Seeing it as an ideological and cultural construct, influenced by the perspectives and interests of those who write and interpret it, Kraja activates History in his fiction by ironizing it, intending to question the idea of linear historical progress and the relativization of the fictitious and ideological elements of the historical discourse. (2)

These goals become an expression of postmodern aesthetic awareness, which through the "reinstallation of important historical and even defining contexts", problematizes from a critical distance the entire "notion of historical knowledge" and seeks opportunities to create History through the poetics of writing. (Hutcheon, 1989)

The way of including the past in the novel "*Selvitë e Tivari*" reflects the postmodern belief in revisiting it "ironically and not innocently. (Eco, 2012) From this point of view, the illumination of Kraja's postmodern approach to history will be possible through the analysis of different elements of literary expression and different levels of depth of narration.

2.2. Representation of history in the novel at the level of narration

The analysis of Kraja's historical fiction includes in itself the difference between traditional and refractable truth, as the key element that distinguishes postmodernist literature from realist literature.

The realist concept of truth as communication between language and the world and the belief that there is only one truth is countered by the postmodernist view of denying a coherent and unified reality, as well as bringing this truth according to subjective experiences. (Dado, 2020)

In the framework of historical fiction, the narrative techniques used in these works challenge the modern approach and form of "originality, authenticity and uniqueness" using postmodern narrative strategies and techniques "that represent the real in an unusual way", such as parody, metafiction, time warping, magical realism. (Hutcheon, 1989)

In "Selvita e Tivari" this relationship with the "truth" appears complicated; since even though the events are presented in the historical context of the Tivari War, the use of the rules of "world" formation based on the aesthetic logic (which here is opposite to the historical logic), makes the factual value of the past not felt as such.

Characterized by subjective "truth", Kraja's novel has been described by critical opinion as a type of "historical doubt" or "crossed historical novel", while for some researchers, even as "postrealist". (Çela, 2020).

Historically real time, space, the city, the warring parties (the army of Dovlet, the Krajl of Cetina and the ships of the British fleet) that have surrounded Tivar, in the whirlwind of wars of the early twentieth century, appear in the narrative.

But within this historical framework, the events narrated are everyday, mundane and even banal. The characters, surrounded on all four sides within the walls of the castle, the characters centred around the narrator, are completely unaware of the tragic scale of the war; they practice witchcraft, sex and even trade with the invading armies that are ready to exterminate them.

The presentation of historical reality in the novel "*Selvitë e Tivari*" from the perspective of the narrator's discourse creates the historiographical metafiction, which does not aim simply to describe the "world" or "history", but precisely to create them through language, promoting an "ontological uncertainty" about the contradictory nature of this world "projected into the text". (Kristeva, 1982)

The impossibility of finding a neutral point of view for the achievement of "truth" and its "crumbling" into dozens of small subjective fragments as a postmodernist principle, in the narrative aspect of the novel is related to the presence of the "dubious" or "unbelievable" narrator's voice of the first person plural, which at some moments of the narrative passes (combines) into that of the first person singular. The presence of such a voice provides the narration with a "quantity of details, descriptions, monologues and data", which makes it impossible to create a linear flow of it. (Fludernik, 1994)

The narration through the uncertain voice of the child who distanced many years from the events narrated in the first person plural - "we", through memory, events in which he was a

witness, separates the historical truth of the Tivar War from its epistemic roots and places it at the limits of the temporal.

This challenging appropriation of traditional narrative theory based on the mimesis of discourse situations, where the story is narrated either by one of the "characters" or by an "outside narrator"(Genette, 1980) conveys to the recipient a deliberate sense of disbelief and activates the play of metafiction. with "the truth and untruth of historical writing". (Hutcheon, 1989) (3)

The presence of the "suspicious" or "unreliable" narrator's voice is confirmed in the discursive plane through its contradictory statements (contradictions) and in the narrative framework through logical breaks (something other than what is expected to happen is narrated), to convey to the recipient of a specific semantic meaning: diegetic doubt. Through this process, the receiver is accompanied by a multitude of illusory visions, related to mimesis (representation). The narrator's voice is presented to us from the beginning as WE, as it narrates the most "important" event that will serve as a centrifugal point of the narrative: the return of the lost woman, Zuke Kalemani, with a dozen girls to the city of Tivari, twenty-three years and forty days after he left and the reaction that this return brings to the inhabitants-characters.

Meanwhile, "traces" or historical elements are integrated into the narrative only at the beginning of the third chapter, through the description of the voice of the first person: *According to the accounts of the time that I am doing now, it appears to me that in those very days, a great war was about to take place around our city.* (Kraja, 2013)

But the war did not begin, until one day the news came that from those mountains that were half visible from the stagnant autumn sun, from those valleys that went beyond Rumia to Shkodër, and further still, no less than three thousand men had been gathered, who were about to fall on Tivar, burn him and crush him, not to make a kingdom or anything like that, but only to take Zuke Kalimani with her daughter. (Kraja, 2013)

..And so the war raged fierce and fearful, with the roar of cannons and camps of soldiers...

.. But there was no war at all, at least not the kind that people imagined.

The contradictions of the narrator's voice may seem justifiable to a child who is psychologically unstable and lacks knowledge about the matter. At the same time, they can give the receiver the idea that it is about a naive narrator, who is so ignorant and inexperienced that he exposes his mistakes and shortcomings and does not try to "deceive" on purpose.

But after the first twenty, along with the penetration into the flow of the confession, he will face more strongly the dilemma of who is confessing. Is this the narrating voice of the child, a

witness to the event, who joins his voice with that of his peers, or the voice of the adult, who, having fully experienced the event, returns to the past to bring the whole thread narrative of history (chronicles and stories of the old inhabitants of Tivar) and expands us in size and vision with members belonging to the same ethnic group, the ideal of the future?

The data in the intratexts prove the second hypothesis: the narrative in the past tense (indicative) serves as a benefit that creates a time perspective similar to the perspective in the painting, where "the present can be combined with the past" and the events to appear "distant and present at the same time, even as blurred".

The war came murky and vague, somewhat autumnal...

Now, from that distant time, it is not easy to remember all the details of those events.

The narrator of the contemporary novel has the "duty" to choose a modal code, through which to build the narrative history. The selection of the narration of this banal reality in front of the reality of the war acquires extreme subjectivism and paves the way for self-reflexivity, through which he informs the reader about the ways of knowing the history of Tivar, which includes the narrations from other narrator voices (according to the words of Preka and Sami), Johan's notes, old chronicles, etc..

During this "naive" narrative, he constantly reveals the fictitious nature of the story he is telling through metanarrative elements, stage direction, references to earlier times, or later, self-reflexive passages, which reflect "aspects of the narrative act." that add to the illusion of narrative performance".(Nünning, 1997)

*Many years later, when I happened to see **a photograph of that time, a picture** as we called it then, I could not believe that the image could be real, because as if by some inexplicable magic, it had been removed from view. the turbidity of the sea and that apocalyptic mix of clouds. The only thing I believed to be true was that moldy vrug, which came like a curtain of age over the whole scene, while the ships of the British fleet from Tivar had been moved towards Ulcinj, not because that had happened at all, but that from the chronicles of those years, they had not recorded the events as we will inform them in this country. (Kraja, 2013)*

This passage, through which the narrator tries to discover the truth of history, expresses the postmodernist approach to representing the past, especially through the use of photography as a medium.

Postmodern photography displays ideology as a representation, using images distinct from the ubiquitous visual discourse. This is often perceived as a form of revenge "for the political

nature of ideology”, or as a way to construct this ideology through” images of ourselves and our world”. (Hutcheon, 1989)

This idea is also supported by Mark Currie, for whom one's identity is formed and revealed by his story: "The only way to explain who we are is to tell our story, choose the main events that characterize us and we organize them according to the formal principles of the narrative”. (Currie, 1998)

The ending shows that the story cannot be fully told with authentic facts, illustrating this with the narrator's warped memory. This challenge to "deconstruct" history in postmodern fiction is met with postmodern parody. (Hutcheon, 1989)

The emphasis of this idea is made possible through the ambiguity of the reasoning of the narrator's voice (the author) and the connections he creates with other characters and with the phenomena of the reality that surrounds him, where the unclear, cloudy logic stands out, as a form of conveying the "truth" in postmodernist fiction.

The reader is exposed to the unreliable narration of the narrator and cannot know what is "real" and what is trillium, but willingly engages in a debate on the meaning of the concept of history, redefining it from today's point of view. Recreated by the narrator's fictional account, which highlights his variant of the historical truth, the possibility of attaining absolute truth is denied and the possibilities of different interpretations are offered.

2.3. Postmodern greetings with time

In written stories, time structures the events and actions of the characters. Objective and textual tenses share similarities but have distinct features. Time distortion in literature serves the purpose of conveying the essence of time through the sequence of events.

Nonlinear temporal construction in fiction is a postmodern literary technique that breaks with the traditional concept of a linear story progression, treating temporal diversity in a complex way and providing readers with a basis for understanding new writing styles.

Based on this premise, this part of the paper will examine how Kraja in the novel "*Selvitë e Tivari*" rejects the linearity of the traditional time model and how it builds a kind of circular time, "version of the time of the mind", embedded in a tense present.

In Kraja's historical fiction, time is deliberately distorted, both from the point of view of the characters and their subjective perception, but also from the narrator (narrative voice), who plays the main role in fluctuating the boundaries between the time of the event and the time of the narration, sometimes approaching and sometimes moving away from the event narrated by him.

"Even now, when I picture the view of that place, it seems to me that it brings to mind an old engraving... It's not that this view only now seems like that to me. During those distant days we used to go out ..." (Kraja, 2013)

By mixing the grammatical tenses, the imperfect with the simple perfect, or other past tenses, in certain fragments the aim is to return to the moments, actions, and events that have remained suspended in the consciousness of the narrator-character, to which he returns, repeatedly, in an attempt to undo what has happened. This advantage plays the main role in the construction of a cyclical time: the narrative opens and closes with the arrival and departure of Zuke Kalemani, and each narrative unit repeats in the narrative aspect the same narrative with fantastic colours, the same feats, which are repeated over and over again.

In the novel "*Selvitë e Tivari*", the model of time is marked not through the time of the historical event, but especially through philosophical reflections on time, and especially on the concept of time as a linear temporality, as well as on the nature of historiography that depends on a conceptualization of such of the time. Among the building units of the text, three of them have the very concept of time at the centre of the narrative situation, while one of the characters that appear most densely in the narrative, the greatest scholar of the city, Ilham Shaqir Suma, is always looking for questions that impose itself on space and time:

Chapter twenty-seven, measuring time - [...] Ilham Shaqir Suma concluded that measuring time had no meaning, that time was stationary and that a clock that did not work was more accurate than a clock with hands that moved around. This was a complicated business for us to understand properly, so Sami tried the *theory of time not walking*, holding his breath and stopping his thoughts from going anywhere. (Kraja, 2013)

The perception of spatio-temporal "disorientation" in this world, which changes according to the very different rhythms of the past, is accompanied by the feeling of immobility of the present, accepted as a paradoxically absolutized time.

Past and future do not define moments distinct from a putative present moment, but rather dimensions of the present itself. (Deleuze, 2001)

In Kraja's novel, time is transformed into a static and atrophied presence of a group of characters in crisis. It is present as neutralized time, suspended between the past and future. In fact, it is not about the absence of the real category of the present, in the sense of the "moment" that we use, nor about the shortening or lengthening of time, but about a certain leap of transition from "past" to "future". The idea of the impossibility of creating a clear and coherent picture of the past, as well as of penetrating the dark sides of the world, Kraja emphasizes especially through the character of Johan Von Bergman, a kind of chronicler-writer, who travels the world meeting people and wrote "notes" or stories, which as the narrator claims:

"sometimes they became a bit hazy, filled with frequent interruptions and beginning and end were permeated by the feeling of disorientation and haunting.": This is why Bergman himself admits that his perception and understanding of things could only be fragmentary:

"Where is it now, that yesterday with all its events, which I do not see anywhere, wrote Johan, and where will this night go, when the sun appears on the far side of the east and why I cannot I am both here and in another place at the same time, when the night can, when the wind can, when the mind can, and then at length he described his impossibility to go beyond the world and see with his own eyes the dark side of her."(Kraja, 2013)

The tone of this phrase implies the human inability to perceive things in their fullness, and therein lies the essence of all history-writing efforts: all narratives are bound to be temporally and relatively incomplete. S. Rushdie emphasizes this idea in one of his essays: "Human beings do not perceive the whole thing; we are not gods, but wounded creatures, cracked lenses, capable only of broken perceptions". (Rushdie, 1991)

The chronotype of the city appears as a reality where time and space are compressed into each other in terms of meaning. Tivar, surrounded on all sides by armies, lives outside reality; while the space within it takes on both a real and a symbolic value, playing an important role in the different narrative plans, which are freely interwoven based on the narrator's memory.

Time is fragmented, and decentered and takes the reader to a polyphony, where the narrative for many characters is interwoven and where the border between reality and imagination becomes permeable.

The more the reader enters the narrated world of Tivari, the more the roads branch, leading to new places and new characters, the more the events multiply, the starting point of which remains the return of Zuke Kalimani and the opening of the "Door of Paradise", at a time when the city is threatened by the cruelty of war.

The narrator (as the author's spokesperson) with a sarcastic and bitter tone, reveals the mechanisms belonging to the "old world", archaic, represented by the cobblestones of the mahallas, the porches of the houses inside the castle, Zuke's house, abandoned towers, endowments, the Bosnian shop, etc.

The city of Tivar is transformed into a character who lives the tragedy of the paralysis, or "death" of time: "*a city that was wet under the autumn rain, huddled and surrounded in a sad loneliness*", where "*the night came quickly, without any warning, as he walked very slowly and lazily away*", whose view is constantly obscured by the mist.

The fact that his clock does not work properly: "*he walked backwards, or walked in such a way, that no one would know how he was measuring the time: he rang three times, rang five times and then turned and rang only once*", proves that there is no more Time (in the sense of mechanical time, flowing from the past to the future).

In this city province, there are no events, but only "accidents" or "adventures" that repeat themselves. It is the place of daily circular time, where there is no progressive historical flow, but only time moving in tight circles: the circle of the day, the night, the season, the whole life. From day to day, the same actions are repeated, the same topics of discussion.

Throughout time, people fulfil their sexual needs, dream, sing and die. This is the time of ordinary everyday existence, of absent events, which, for this reason, appears almost suspended: a time dense with fog that seems to creep into space. Therefore, Ilham Shaqir Suma tries to repair the big clock, which turns into a powerful symbol, embodying the concept of time in this city:

Ilham Shaqir Suma had looked at the sky with a magnifying glass and in a corner of it he had found a place where the sun's rays entered like a wedge between the clouds, just then the clock, after falling twelve times, the clock had started to work. Ilham Shaqir Suma had continued to look at the world through a magnifying glass, to understand what happened when the clock worked differently...[...].(Kraja. 2013)

The city of Tivar proves a kind of negation of the very concept of reality; where time and space not only reflect what happens inside the characters but also serve as a reflection on the human condition in general and especially on the author's contemporaneity. In choosing this narrative structure and setting, Kraja exercises what Roland Barthes terms the author's "freedom" to select a form of writing—a decision that reaches beyond mere personal expression to engage with the social utility and inherent morals of that form (Barthes, 2008). This narrative choice is not only an exercise of artistic liberty but also a profound statement of the responsibilities that come with it. By employing a circular, seemingly repetitive depiction of time and space, Kraja invites readers to question the conventional narratives of history and identity, suggesting that understanding comes not from progressive chronologies but through introspection and the interrogation of everyday life.

Kraja's Tivar, with its blend of mythical and mundane elements, acts as a narrative heterotopia that confronts and disrupts the expected linear progression of time and space. This deliberate distortion mirrors Barthes' idea that the form of writing is a reflection of societal norms and values, shaping and being shaped by cultural discourses. Kraja incorporates small worlds

within this narrative, spaces that Michel Foucault defines as “heterotopic,” such as Tivar Castle, Prince's Tower, Cypress Log, cemeteries, Caf Kadija's mejhan, Shna Ndou Church, mosque courtyard, Prroi of Bindi, olive groves, and the houses of its inhabitants (Foucault, 1995). Through his portrayal of Tivar, Kraja thus challenges the reader to see beyond the surface of narrative structure to the deeper, often unspoken dialogues about reality, identity, and historical memory. In this way, the form and content of Kraja's work embody the idea that every choice in writing style carries with it layers of social significance, making the act of writing a potent tool for cultural critique and philosophical inquiry.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Mehmet Kraja's novel "Selvitë e Tivari" illustrates the capacity of postmodern fiction to reformulate historical narratives through complex narrative techniques and thematic depth. This study aimed to explore how postmodern tools such as unreliable narrators, non-linear timelines, and intertextual references enrich and complicate our understanding of history. Our analysis confirms that Kraja effectively employs these tools to challenge the authenticity and objectivity of historical narratives, thereby aligning with postmodernist critiques of historiography.

Through the strategic placement of a dubious narrator, who unfolds or overturns the narrative framework of the story of History, paving the way for its creation through elements of irony and fantasy and the blending of historical fact with fiction, Kraja emphasizes the subjective nature of historical interpretation.

This narrative choice challenges the reader to reassess the linearity and truthfulness of conventional historical narratives, highlighting the construction and manipulation of historical knowledge. By doing so, Kraja not only critiques historical realism but also invites readers to reflect on the broader implications of history as a cultural and ideological construct.

The themes of time and identity, identified as essential in our introduction, are intricately woven into Kraja's narrative structure, presenting history not as a series of factual occurrences but as a dynamic and contested field where various interpretations and narratives compete for legitimacy.

The novel's treatment of time disrupts traditional historical timelines, advocating for a view of history that is cyclical rather than linear, mirroring the novel's thematic concerns with the cycles of history and the recurring nature of human conflicts and identities.

Ultimately, "Selvitë e Tivari" serves as a metafictional commentary that extends beyond the confines of its narrative to engage in ongoing debates in historiography and the philosophy of

history. Kraja's approach resonates with postmodern scepticism towards grand narratives and highlights the role of fiction in both constructing and deconstructing historical truths. Ending on a note that emphasizes the constructed nature of historical narratives, Kraja's work echoes the postmodern call to view history through a critical, questioning lens, thus offering a profound reflection on the nature of history and memory in shaping human identity and consciousness.

4. DISCUSSIONS

Seen in a summary view, the main concepts of the postmodern narrative find interesting ground in the aforementioned work, with original refraction of the Balkan-Albanian world in the play of historical-literary times, where the past and the present revolve in a common hole, for created the strange vision of "historical multiplication" of objective facts according to human experience. The author's suggestion that history is actually what one experiences, not just sees, is "proven" step by step, in the narration, by "rescuing" the narrator-child, as well as the other narrative voices. Postmodern fiction, as an expression of awareness of the legitimization of national identity, has always pushed the author M. Kraja to raise important historical-cultural questions, in an effort to aesthetically reformulate well-known, but subjectively multiplied truths. Here is perhaps the biggest discussion about the postmodern narrative: does it clarify, or does it deliberately complicate the mind of the contemporary reader, to pave the way for a new concept of the aesthetic perception of the world? In this perspective, Kraja's pen breaks new ground for the contemporary novel.

Note

(1) The year 2007 marked the beginning of a new era for Kosovo following the end of the Kosovo War in 1999 and its subsequent independent administration by the UN. In 2007, the recognition of the Ahtisaari Plan was made possible, which defined Kosovo's status as an independent state and dealt with the final diplomatic efforts for its recognition by the international community. Specifically, Kosovo's independence was declared on February 17, 2008, marking a historic moment for this new state.

(2). "No one can know even approximately how many such texts have been written about Kosovo in the last 10-15 years, just as no one can say what percentage of these texts contribute to the overall corpus of writings about Kosovo. Despite the stable value they may have, none, or almost none, consult this knowledge and its data, however unverified or basic they may be. Reading these books about Kosovo, then seeing the literature used and the references, one gets the impression that these authors are not scientists and scholars in the true sense of the word, but rather resemble explorers of bygone times, who have undertaken

to inform the world about the discovery of an unknown land". (M. Kraja, Identiteti kosovar, p.17)

- (3) "Did the people of Tivar fight with weapons in hand to defend their lands? In this battle, local Albanian soldiers from the Ottoman Empire, specifically from Shkodra and Dibra and led by Mehmet Mlika, participated. According to some sources, in the Battle of Rrezigaqa, 38 Montenegrin soldiers lost their lives and 78 were injured, while the Albanian losses were 71 dead and 115 injured. The soldiers who were killed are buried in Sukën e Hanit, a collective cemetery that still exists today." (Gopčević, 1963, p. 76)

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