

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALBANIAN DRAMA IN KOSOVO: A STUDY OF
PHILOSOPHICAL AND AESTHETIC ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS OF MEHMET
KRAJA, EKREM KRYEZIU AND HAQIF MULLIQI**

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the challenges surrounding drama in Kosovo, with a particular focus on the complexities of language in both writing and stage performance. Drama is often perceived solely as a literary text, representing personal and national experiences, which tends to be overlooked in the staging or animation process. This neglect is compounded by the prejudiced tendencies of some directors, who underestimate the level and quality of local playwrights. However, our research contradicts this notion, revealing a rich theatrical tradition. Playwrights, within their creative limits, bring to life the physical embodiment of human experiences, with actors striving to portray both real and imaginary roles envisioned by the dramatist. These roles reflect the playwright’s own reality, manifesting across all characters. This paper specifically analyzes the works of Mehmet Kraja, Haqif Mulliqi, and Ekrem Kryeziu, two of the most esteemed playwrights in Kosovo and beyond. The dramas examined here have also been brought to life on stage. The focus is particularly on the language employed – both written and spoken – within these texts. The research questions the suitability of the written language compared to the colloquial language used in everyday life. It is important to recognize the significant divide between spoken and theatrical language; where standard language is used in writing, regional dialects dominate in spoken forms.

KEYWORDS: drama, literature, language, performance, art, conflict, role

1. Introduction

The issue of drama and theatrical performances presents a vast and largely unexplored horizon in Kosovo, particularly from the perspectives of criticism, theory, and research within this niche art form. However, this research demonstrates that Kosovar drama is quite advanced in theoretical terms as a literary genre. Playwrights, within their creative boundaries, breathe life into human characters, with male and female actors endeavoring to embody the roles – whether real or imagined – that the playwright envisions. The playwright’s reality permeates every character. This project delves into a universal idea, as interpreted through an existentialist lens, that does not confine a person to a fixed identity, but rather allows them to discover themselves within the narrative. In this paper, the contemporary dramas of M. Kraja and E. Kryeziu are analyzed, focusing on the construction of acts, scenes, dialogues, conflicts, character development, their secrets, biographies, actions, and stage movements. The research also examines the overall layout of the text, starting from the scenographic elements, costume design, lighting, and music. There is always a path to understanding even the most contradictory characters, such as a child or an outcast. Sartre posits that sufficient knowledge of these characters allows us to identify with them, at least momentarily, thereby achieving a universal understanding of humanity and reawakening memories during moments of shared experience (Sartre, 1997, p.8). When the playwright constructs the universal, they first confront their own identity, thereby comprehending the essence of every other character. This process involves distancing themselves from the text, creating a fragmented reflection of their own identity. Here, the absolute nature of self-identity does not negate temporal relativity; rather, the freedom of creative engagement becomes more inherent, allowing the character to reach a state of completeness. The core strength of drama lies in its language – where emotion transforms into words, complicating the fulfillment of narrative elements. Thus, drama or dialogue is enriched with mimicry, gestures, and actions. Emotional expression is transferred to imagined characters, with the playwright remaining the central figure. Characters are grouped in conflict, propelled by a chain of events. The characters depicted in the text may not exist as real individuals; they are brought to life through direction, yet even the best direction cannot fully capture the unique identity of the playwright, who breathes life into the text. The playwright’s spirit begins to emerge through the director’s interpretation, though it remains a mere shadow of the original text and character. To portray a living person on stage, the essence of the character is transferred to the actor, who can only offer as much as their own experience allows, ultimately becoming a faint reflection of the character’s shadow. However, when a playwright captures the spontaneity of real dialogue and remains attentive to contemporary situations, they can reconstruct characters, dialogues, conflicts, intrigue, the turning point, development, climax, and resolution. Shakespeare famously refers to conflict as a “turbulent sea of poison” (Muharremi, 2016, p.70) through Hamlet. According to Aristotle, the plot or intrigue follows a cause-

and-effect sequence. “The king died, and then the queen died” (Muharremi, 2016, p.358) are two chronological events, but when we say, “The king died, and the queen died of grief,” (Muharremi, 2016, p.358) it introduces intrigue, capturing the audience’s interest. Intrigue reveals the plot through two elements: action and conflict. The dramatic text marks the moment when the conflict begins, triggered by an incident that inevitably occurs within the narrative. As the conflict unfolds, the story accelerates towards its peak crisis, driven by the playwright’s deep engagement with their real and imagined characters. These characters navigate a series of obstacles, complications, discoveries, and rediscoveries that challenge both internal and external dynamics. At the climax, the conflicts reach their highest intensity, while other pivotal moments, with lesser force, guide the drama towards its resolution. At this juncture, the problems within the narrative begin to resolve, and this resolution drives further development. However, even after the resolution, a question often arises, akin to the final brushstroke on a painting – indicating that the ending of a drama serves as a reference to the event, the characters, and the entire world crafted by the author, who remains engaged in the pursuit of deeper truths. Drama emphasizes dialogue as the fundamental formal basis of action, with dialogue being the natural vehicle of expression. It serves as the verbal foundation of the characters, but when a character speaks to a divine entity – whether visible or not – this interaction involves addressing the divine with imagined words. Such exchanges, though grounded in reality, can be accepted in the context of mysticism or fantasy, where the response may seem disconnected from any directed course. Direction only truly occurs when both parties are rooted in reality. The playwright constructs both dialogue and action, which Pirandello terms “verbal action” (Muharremi, 2016, p.381). From this, it follows that protagonists engage in verbal-acting powers, guiding the audience through the transformative illusions of the dramatic world that originates from the playwright’s vision. As the narrative unfolds, the playwright recalls the speech, which consequently dictates the continuation and further development of the plot. The deeper the rejection, complication, and masking of the problem, the greater the audience’s curiosity becomes.

Classical tragedy adhered to symbolic action, following the cause-and-effect principle, while naturalistic dramaturgy emerges from situations and psycho-social moments. In this context, weaving verbal games and dialogue becomes the sole action of the work. The interplay between the ego (self) and the alert ego (the other) facilitates a transformation from one state to another, which the playwright manipulates, thereby complicating the truth – a truth that, if left untouched, fades into silence. Dialogue, therefore, cannot simply end, as it elicits a response from the listener, developing into a verbal conclusion that necessitates further contextual response, continuing indefinitely or until the drama reaches its final act.

Life itself is constructed through words, yet the vitality of the soul can be diminished in this process. The attempt to expand the universal within the confines of the self often fails, trapping the creator-playwright within a prison of self-integration. The playwright may seek to distance themselves from this by adhering closely to reality, which is presented aesthetically without compromise. The most profound dialogue occurs when one accidentally hears the truth with full attention, as every question originates from the resolution, only to be challenged in the effort to understand it. What does humanity create? It imitates and copies a world that remains fundamentally alien. While humanity may love the world and be reluctant to leave it, suffering from an insatiable desire to stay, the playwright, in a sense, becomes an emigrant in their homeland. If they succeed in feeling truly alienated, the work gains a unique allure. From this rejection of reality, however, does not stem outright denial.

2. The Problem in the Dramatic Work “Paper Moon” by Mehmet Kraja

2.1 The First Act

As the scene opens, the stage is illuminated, revealing three masks sitting in stillness, exuding a profound sense of numbness. The author introduces five characters, each with an epithet of “mask,” creating an atmosphere dominated by deep loneliness at the outset of the dialogues. Mask I, apparently yearning for the call of crows, goes so far as to imitate them on stage. Aside from the words exchanged between Mask I, Mask II, and Mask III, the scene remains devoid of other sounds. Initially, a touch of comedy emerges, which is justified by Mask II’s entrance into the realm of ravens. The author introduces these masks deliberately, assigning them the purpose of ending a particular conflict. However, the nature and details of this war remain unclear, leaving the reader to question its significance and scope. The author does not immediately disclose this, nor does he specify a time, leaving the audience and readers to ponder the nature of the conflict. This deliberate enigma is meant to keep us questioning the war’s

true nature throughout the narrative. The author consistently obscures the characters' identities and the reasons for their presence in this undefined location. The setting remains ambiguous, shrouded in abstract and symbolic moments. Through a dream recounted by Mask II, readers gain insight into forewarnings of the play's future events. In the dream, Mask II describes consuming rotten meat, leading to a swollen stomach and subsequent vomiting of large and small snakes – black and white – which fill the square and begin to devour him. What does this signify?

Through metaphors and symbolism, the author foreshadows the appearance of snakes that will threaten to consume the characters, representing the looming dangers. The entire scenario evokes a sense of unsettling, perpetual tranquility, where a seemingly serene atmosphere is tinged with an ominous undercurrent. But did these masks arrive with frightening dreams, or did they encounter these nightmares where they are? The dialogue between Mask II and Mask I suggest that these dreams were encountered here, in this desolate, fear-ridden environment. “Mask II: ‘What about the scary dreams?’ / Mask I: ‘We had them with us.’ / Mask II: ‘No! I found them here, in this endless desert of loneliness’” (Kraja, 2008, 30).

Through careful reading, one begins to uncover the underlying fear. While the author attempts to downplay the fear of death, he intensifies the fear of loneliness and forgetfulness, introducing us to the philosophy of fear and its concept. Where does fear originate? Is it from the unknown? “Mask I: ‘Where does this fear come from, you say? From that war, which we do not conduct properly’” (Kraja, 2008, p. 93).

A deeper analysis reveals that a conflict is underway against those who oppose the masks' power. The characters of the masks gradually unveil their true nature. These masks harbor a thirst for blood, for enslavement, and for the subjugation of soldiers, yet they are also plagued by fear – a constant presence. Through concise dialogues, metaphors, and occasional humor, the author skillfully showcases the beauty of language. He places more emphasis on the poetic quality of the words than on the tension of the situation. Here, the author seems more like a poet, adept at weaving beautiful verses, rather than a playwright focused on creating conflict from nothing. The monotony of the play is disrupted with the introduction of Masks IV and V, as Masks I, II, and III eagerly await communication from these new figures. This marks a shift in the stage dynamics, breaking the previous monotony. The intrigue deepens when Mask I inquires whether Mask IV has seen anything significant, to which Mask V responds that they encountered a man with a stick who had crossed the road. This man, walking barefoot, inscribed something in the dust with his stick. The author intentionally omits what the man wrote, leaving it as a mystery to stimulate the reader's imagination and maintain a metaphorical rather than concrete question mark. In every dialogue, metaphor becomes a dominant element, interwoven with themes of existentialism and absurdity. All the masks exhibit curiosity, but why did Masks IV and V refrain from approaching the man and asking him directly what he wrote? In reality, one might expect them to do so, but in Kraja's work, they do not. This moment represents a potential oversight by the author, as the traces left by the man become critically important – so much so that Mask V declares: “When I saw those traces, I said to myself: our great war has begun!” (Kraja, 2008, p. 95). Mask I then asks: “What else did you think at that moment?” (Kraja, 2008, p. 95). To which Mask V replies: “Next (...) I don't know. Maybe I thought about death” (Kraja, 2008, p. 95).

The play also delves into philosophical territory, particularly concerning death. The author attempts to ascribe meaning to death, as highlighted in Mask III's line: “But all deaths have a name” (Kraja, 2008, p. 99). Here, the absurdity of the situation is palpable, a recurring theme throughout the work. The absurdity escalates when Mask I, facing the threat of death, declares: “Hey! I know now! My death is better than your life. I will listen to you, see what you do, and listen to what you say” (Kraja, 2008, p. 99).

This absurd moment suggests that the author possesses a mystical belief in life after death, implying that the living maintain constant relationships with the dead, and that in death, we are resurrected and become observers of the living. The moment becomes more poignant when Mask III inserts his fingers into Mask I's throat, killing him. The significance of death is emphasized by Mask II, who drags Mask I's body to the front of the stage, turning his face toward the audience: “Here... Remember! This is death!... There is such a view... This is death, from which we seek salvation!” (Kraja, 2008, p. 100). Masks IV and V emerge as somewhat inhuman characters, driven by a thirst for murder and a desire for flesh and blood. Their true nature is revealed through the murder of Mask I and their

subsequent actions. Mask IV remarks, “The dead are some strange parasites. They immediately ask for some services” (Kraja, 2008, p. 101).

In a monologue delivered by Mask III, we gain insight into the instructions directed at the other two masks – to go around the house and bring out innocent people to answer for crimes they did not commit. The masks, it seems, seek not peace but violence. Masks IV and V soon bring forward five individuals: the Astrologer, the Maestro, the Chronicler, the Poet, and the Head of Local Government.

2.2 The Second Act

The second act begins with the Astrologer, Poet, Maestro, Chronicler, and Head of Local Government, who resemble shipwreck survivors washed ashore by the sea. Their clothes are torn, and their bodies bear deep marks and scars from torture. Their expressions convey that they are on the verge of physical and emotional collapse. This act highlights the violence inflicted upon the individual, portraying the characters as extremely vulnerable to the masks, whose fates are now controlled by the bloodthirsty hands of their captors.

The masks are depicted as merciless killers, acting without cause or reason, driven solely by revenge. This suggests the inevitability of violence and domination, where there is always someone who seeks to enslave and conquer. The first questions are directed at the Head of Local Government, who is asked about a murder. He hesitantly responds: “These! I saw them with my own eyes! Oh, yes, it was a horror to see them clothed alive” (Kraja, 2008, p. 105). This moment is tinged with absurdity, as Mask II forces the Head to recount the murder, only to dismiss his account by saying: “Shut up, you have not seen anything. Only I have seen what I should not have witnessed” (Kraja, 2008, p. 106). This scene resembles ruthless torture, and the Head’s character is portrayed as somewhat reciprocal, as he implies that he will reveal more if the masks remain in power.

Madness is epitomized in Mask IV’s monologue, where he is consumed by a mysterious loneliness. His insatiable desire for war and victory is evident, even as murder fails to satisfy him. He threatens the Astrologer by placing a knife to his throat, warning that if any sweat forms on his forehead or if his lips tremble, he will kill him. This character embodies a killer who despises fear, though fear itself may be his deepest driving force. For Kraja, fear is a central theme, omnipresent in the play. The Astrologer, however, appears indifferent to fear, presenting himself as a character who is emotionally detached from life, having lost its meaning.

Throughout this act, the conflict between the masks and the hostages is ever-present, yet the hostages, despite their dire situation, speak with conviction. They are constructed as characters who gradually reveal the biographies of others. Each character is distinct, possessing unique traits. The author also strives to differentiate the masks from one another. The interaction between the hostages and the masks resembles a gladiatorial arena, where death is a constant companion, and the characters speak from their most sincere emotions without fear.

3. Analysis of the First Scene: “Paper Devils” in Mehmet Kraja's *Paper Moon*

3.1 Introduction to “Paper Devils”

The first scene of *Paper Moon* introduces “Paper Devils,” a surreal and deeply absurd scenario where these devils surround the Poet, oscillating through the air, advancing and retreating in response to the Poet’s words. Kraja presents the paper devils as manifestations of the Poet’s thoughts, blurring the line between the real and the surreal. This scene, steeped in aesthetic and existential absurdity, reveals the Poet’s internal conflict with the very entities he has created.

The Poet’s inner turmoil is vividly expressed in his brief monologue, where he admits that creating these devils was an excruciating process, during which he “ate his nails” (Kraja, 2008, p. 109). This admission introduces the theme of profound absurdity, as the devils – creations of the Poet’s imagination – prejudice their creator, asserting their dominance over him. One paper devil declares: “We gathered the pieces of your body, gathered them into a thousand places, and brought them here, to make this grave. We created you dead! We invented it tonight for your death” (Kraja, 2008, p. 110). This raises an intriguing philosophical question: Who created whom? Did the Poet create the hallucinations, or did the hallucinations create the Poet? The reality, of course, is that the Poet is the creator of his hallucinations. However, these figments of his imagination are so vivid that they invert the power dynamic, claiming to have created him – and not as a living being, but as one already dead. This scenario epitomizes a state of severe psychological disarray.

3.2 Conflict and Ego

This scene also touches on themes of revenge. The devils, though mere hallucinations, possess the potential to fulfill all the Poet's desires, including the resurrection of a deceased friend and serving as instruments of vengeance. Despite their offers, the Poet rejects them, indicating a deeper internal conflict. Kraja explores the duality of the ego – where the self contends with itself, seeking explanations and making offers to itself. This concept is deeply rooted in human psychology. As Terri F. Pettijohn notes in *Psychology* (2004), schizophrenia often involves delusions and difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy: “Many people with schizophrenia experience delusions or believe in things that are not based on reality. Also, they have difficulty separating reality from fantasy” (Pettijohn, 2004, p. 473). Kraja's Poet can be interpreted as a figure suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, engaged in a battle with his own mind.

Despite his apparent mental disorder, the Poet remains a powerful character, rejecting any form of dominion that is easily attained. The devils themselves seem to have a purpose, which is elucidated through a devil's monologue: “We are the invisible army of your overthrown will, of your disgusting kindness, of your insulted dignity! We are your killers and saviors. We love your life as much as it gives shine to our tan. When we no longer need you, we leave you in the hands of those who have begun to break down the door (...)” (Kraja, 2008, p. 111). This scene is metaphorical, with Kraja employing metaphors and symbols to deepen the narrative. The Poet's ego, unable to escape the madness within, battles with both good and evil, represented by the devils. A closer analysis reveals that the Poet is aware of his communication with these devils, through whom he perceives other characters such as the President and Mask IV.

3.3 Intermediate Scene: “Paper Moon”

The intermediate scene, titled “Paper Moon,” shifts to a night setting with the Drunken Astrologer alone on stage. A paper moon hangs above his head, symbolizing his inner conflict. The scene begins with the Astrologer's conflict with the moon, as he urinates in the middle of the road and mocks it, saying: “It is a sin that you are not down, to throw this pee in the face” (Kraja, 2012, p. 105). The Astrologer's hostility toward the moon, which he insults and calls a “bitch who has slept with everyone,” (Kraja, 2021, p. 106) is symbolic. In his drunken state, the Astrologer reveals truths that he might not otherwise express. Kraja justifies this portrayal through the character's intoxication, as alcohol often liberates repressed thoughts.

The Astrologer's continued drunkenness invites ridicule from passers-by, who spit or urinate on him, underscoring his degradation and defenselessness. Yet, he remains unmoved by these actions, instead directing his anger and big words at the moon, which serves as his primary metaphor. This conflict symbolizes the broader struggle between human existence and the moon, which, though silent, becomes the target of the Astrologer's frustrations. The scene, with its chaotic energy, resembles a lunatic asylum, with Mask II also showing interest in the moon. Here, the moon emerges as a central metaphorical element.

3.4 The President and the Chronicle

The President enters the scene as a character constructed with traits reminiscent of a spy, aligning himself with the masks, particularly the Slavic masks, who hold power. Meanwhile, the Chronicle appears as a character who dreams of writing the sacred book of history but has lost his notebooks. The Chronicle labels the President as “Judas,” (Kraja, 2008, p. 117) a reference to the historical figure who betrayed Jesus Christ, symbolizing the President's role as a traitor in the narrative. This reference indicates that every society harbors a “Judas,” a genius, or a madman – figures essential for the existence of conflict and meaning. Kraja masterfully constructs characters in opposition to one another, creating a dynamic interplay between them. As the Chronicle and the Speaker quarrel, Mask III indulges in their folly, laughing at both.

3.5 Intermediate Scene: “Frozen Shadows Carnival”

The intermediate scene titled “Frozen Shadows Carnival” begins with the Chronicle, who is initially alone but soon finds himself interacting with frozen shadows. This scene delves into the theme of human loneliness, exploring the complex relationship between the individual and solitude. The

shadows themselves are not just spectral figures but represent a collective force that stands in opposition to the Chronicle's individuality. The dialogue between the shadows hint at a pervasive suspicion of loners:

- First Shadow: "Mascara! Did you not know that loners are suspicious?!" (Kraja, 2008, p. 119).
- Second Shadow: "Even those who stay awake at night!" (Kraja, 2008, p. 119).

Here, Kraja subtly introduces a conflict between the individual and the collective – a recurring theme in his work. The shadows mock the Chronicle, emphasizing their numerical superiority and the futility of his attempts to possess or control them. This scene symbolizes the struggle of the individual against the collective force, illustrating how the collective will often overpower and oppress the individual.

The Chronicle, overwhelmed by this collective mockery, laments his helplessness, holding his head in despair and uttering: "O God, until when?" (Kraja, 2008, p. 120). The scene evokes the atmosphere of a carnival of shadows, where the mocking laughter of the shadows creates a grotesque, carnival-like environment. The dialogue is rich in metaphor and symbolism, steeped in the absurd. The absurdity reaches its peak when, at the prospect of the Chronicle's death, Mask III declares, "Grab there. We put it back-to-back. When you give a little death to one, you give it to the other" (Kraja, 2021, p.121). The Chronicle is then dragged to the pillar where the desolate Astrologer is tied, further emphasizing the tragic and absurd nature of their predicament.

In this scene, Kraja also touches on the philosophy of the soul, presenting it as something inherently free and inviolable. The Maestro proclaims: "Here you were wrong. Souls are not whipped. No death humiliates me. I love them all equally" (Kraja, 2008, p. 122). This statement reinforces the idea that while the physical body can be tormented, the soul remains untouchable and beyond the reach of external forces.

3.6 Intermediate Scene: "Funeral March"

The subsequent scene, "Funeral March," begins with a chaotic gathering of passers-by, who incessantly ask questions without receiving answers. A noose with a hook is ominously displayed on a roadside pole, and the Maestro, seated in a crate, is the focal point of the passers-by's mockery. The Maestro, portrayed as a somewhat mad character, remains indifferent to the mocking questions, highlighting his disconnection from the reality around him. This scene underscores the absurdity of the situation, with the Maestro's indifference serving as a poignant contrast to the chaos surrounding him.

3.7 Analysis: Third Act

The third act of *Paper Moon* opens with a somber funeral march, where the masks stand motionless, their expressions vacant. The Mayor, displaying signs of concern, murmurs to himself and makes gestures, reflecting his inner turmoil. In this act, the masks are liberated, while the Poet, the Astrologer, the Chronicle, and the Maestro remain bound. Mask IV announces the liberation of the masks, a decision that greatly unsettles the President, who is deeply troubled by this turn of events. The President insists on maintaining the status quo, urging the masks to remain, but they are indifferent to his plight. Here, Kraja portrays the President as a figure who is only needed for as long as he serves a purpose, after which he is abandoned—reflecting the transient and utilitarian nature of power.

The Mayor's growing anxiety is evident as he fears that the other characters will turn on him. His eyes reveal his deep-seated fear and insecurity. The President, meanwhile, regrets the premature end of the conflict, lamenting that had he known it would conclude so swiftly, he would not have become a spy but would have allied himself with the Poet and the Astrologer. Mask III, however, mockingly dismisses the President's concerns, stating: "This was not a war. It was just a provocation of mind and soul" (Kraja, 2008, p. 126).

3.8 Purpose of the Masks

The ultimate purpose of the masks, as suggested by the narrative, is to sow discord and hatred among the people – a goal they achieve at a great cost. Kraja masterfully manipulates dialogues to maintain suspense and gradually unmask the characters, revealing their true intentions and the

underlying truths of the story. The play constantly oscillates between themes of life and death, with the Maestro depicted as dead, while the Poet, despite his suffering, remains alive, aware of his existence through the pain he endures.

As the act progresses, a new power struggle emerges when three new characters enter the scene. They discover the discarded masks left by the Slavic masks and begin to discuss their potential roles. One character claims that a mask was made especially for him, while another agrees, leading to a debate about who will wield the whip, the knife, and who will give the orders. One of them raises a critical point: “But one thing is difficult to know: who should deal with the whip, who the knife and who should be the one who orders?” (Kraja, 2008, p. 128). This question encapsulates the theme of power dynamics and the constant struggle for control. Kraja uses the image of the whip as a metaphor for authority, suggesting that violence and domination are often seen as the most effective means of asserting power.

The Chairman, in a bid to secure his position, orders the three men to kill the Astrologer and the Chronicle, fearing that they might seek revenge. As the Astrologer and the Chronicle regain consciousness, they manage to break free from the pillar to which they are tied but are left in a state of panic, uncertain of their next move. This newfound freedom, hard-earned through great effort, becomes a source of confusion and fear. The Astrologer and the Chronicle curse the freedom they have gained, questioning its value and purpose.

Their desire for revenge against the President is palpable, yet they hesitate. The Astrologer expresses doubt, stating: “I do not know... How he looks to me, as if he is as unfortunate as we are. He wanted freedom, but he did not know how to do it” (Kraja, 2008, p. 134). This line suggests that the President, despite his manipulations and deceptions, is just as trapped and miserable as the others, bound by his own limitations and the complex web of power he has woven. Ultimately, the Astrologer and the Chronicle recognize that freedom, while desired, is not easily attained or wielded, and that the President’s struggle is a reflection of their own.

In the final moments of *Paper Moon*, the Chronicle and the Astrologer face a critical choice – they refuse to take up the whip, stained with their own blood. This decision aligns with the author’s intent to conclude the narrative not with violence, but with reason. Mehmet Kraja avoids a bloody resolution, favoring the triumph of intellect and morality over brute force. The scene culminates with the Mayor entering the stage, donning a mask discarded on the ground, and seizing the whip. He confesses: “Everyone who came here, I begged them to kill you. I did not know that no one could do this better than me!” (Kraja, 2008, p. 134). This final revelation emphasizes the bitter truth that one’s greatest enemy may well be the neighbor who knows them best. The Mayor’s act of taking the whip underscores the theme that intimate knowledge can lead to the most profound betrayals, encapsulating the play’s exploration of power, trust, and the human condition.

This interplay of power and betrayal is not unique to Kraja’s “Hëna prej letre” but reflects broader themes of myth and human vulnerability. As Esmeralda Selita notes in her work “*Myth and Hidden Truths*,” Kraja employs mythologizing structures and imaginative fictional realities, skillfully constructing his narratives through the mechanisms of mythic literary production. She notes how Kraja’s works present mythologizing structures and imaginative fictional realities constructed through the mechanism of mythic literary production. This creates a hypnotic effect on the reader and heightens the artistic expressiveness of the works. Through the creation of phantasmagoric realities, with strange characters and beings, dreams, delirium, hallucinations, and visions become tools for realizing the mythical figure, thus creating an oneiric reality (see Selita, 2015, p.6).

4. Analysis of Haqif Mulliqi's Four Epaulets

Haqif Mulliqi's play, *Four Epaulets*, directed by the author himself, with assistant director Penesta Mulliqi, and performances by Ismet Azemi, Basri Lushtaku, and Adem Zhitopotoku, presents a compelling examination of power, fear, and the absurdity of war. The production begins in a dimly lit space, with the audience shrouded in darkness, as the intensity and tonality of light gradually focus on the stage. The play introduces us to General Alfador (Basri Lushtaku) and General Betador (Ismet Azemi), two figures deeply entrenched in inner and outer conflicts. These generals, veterans of war, struggle with the fear of the unknown – death – an inevitable fate that they cannot escape.

This exchange ignites a sense of black humor within the dialogue, where the absurdity of their situation becomes evident. The humor arises from the contrast between the generals' grim reality and the darkly comedic manner in which they discuss their impending doom. This interplay of dialogue and

subtext creates a comedic image on paper, but it is when the actors embody these lines with sincerity and depth that the true essence of comedy emerges. The performance activates the audience's laughter, breaking down the metaphorical “fourth wall” and achieving catharsis, a hallmark of Stanislavski's theatrical theory.

The two generals, depicted as war-hardened characters, carry with them a history of battles, curses, and murders, their sensational careers now coming back to haunt them like a boomerang. Despite their past glories, they are ultimately confronted with the inevitability of death and the shattering of their hopes. As viewers, we are drawn into their absurd dialogues – short questions met with simple answers, a chronology of words that convey the tension and futility of their existence. The actors capture the essence of their characters with precision, making the audience feel the weight of their internal conflicts.

General Alfador, portrayed by Basri Lushtaku, embodies the psychological and physical traits of his character with remarkable authenticity. Lushtaku's performance is a seamless blend of action and text, utilizing the *mise-en-scène* to create a balanced aesthetic on stage. His portrayal of Alfador is both controlled and deeply emotional, especially in moments of fear, where his theatrical mimicry and interaction with the lighting and stage space amplify the character's vulnerability. Lushtaku's ability to convey fear through subtle gestures, silences, and expressions leaves a lasting impression on the audience, capturing the essence of Alfador's tragic fate.

General Betador, played by Ismet Azemi, complements Lushtaku's performance with a portrayal that is equally rich in detail. Azemi brings Betador to life through precise physicality – every movement, from a hand gesture to a pause in his speech, is infused with the character's essence. Betador's slow, deliberate steps and sudden stops are performed with such conviction that the character feels entirely real. Azemi's ability to listen and respond to his partner's lines during pauses creates a dynamic interaction that draws the audience into the world of the play. His portrayal highlights the narrow line between the actor and the character, as Betador becomes a reflection of Azemi's deep stage experience and dedication to his craft.

The relationship between the two generals is one of mutual dependence and opposition. They mock each other, yet their shared fear of death forges a bond between them. This fear, which looms over them like an umbrella of death, pushes them to cooperate, despite their differences. Mulliqi skillfully explores the psychological dimensions of these characters, stripping them of all merits, ranks, and pedestals, and returning them to the zero point – the raw, existential reality of death. In doing so, the play offers a profound meditation on the human condition, revealing that in the face of death, all are equal, and all pretensions are ultimately meaningless.

In Haqif Mulliqi's *Four Epaulets*, the enigmatic figure of the blind Grajeti (played by Adem Zhitopotoku) introduces a layer of absurdity and mystery to the play's exploration of power and fear. Grajeti enters the scene not as a ghostly apparition but as a man – a visitor whose presence embodies death for the two generals. His arrival on stage from the right, standing alone and facing the audience with a stick in hand, creates an atmosphere of unease. The generals, torn between fear and false bravery, oscillate in their reactions to him. They fear him when they recognize his presence, yet they attempt to assert dominance when they uncover his blindness. This duality reflects their internal conflicts and the play's exploration of human vulnerability.

The interaction between the generals and Grajeti is tinged with dark humor, as they comically direct him to go this way or that, despite their underlying terror. Their attempts to control him reveal their desperation and the futility of their power. The situation is laced with irony – Grajeti, the supposed harbinger of death, seeks to lead them out of the ruin they have created, yet they are destined to remain trapped in the abyss of their own making. The absurdity of this scene is further heightened by the actors' performances, which draw laughter from the audience through their honest, unembellished delivery of lines.

The show, enriched by its aesthetic and thematic layers, leaves a lasting impression that extends beyond the play's conclusion. Mulliqi's text is skillfully constructed, avoiding clichés while maintaining a direct purpose. The play's postmodern structure, characterized by short, sharp dialogues and moments of silence, effectively conveys the absurdity of war and the cyclical nature of human folly. The interaction between the characters, particularly the generals' interplay with Grajeti, serves as a critique of leadership and power. The play's setting, with its dim lighting and darkened stage, enhances the existential mood, drawing the audience into the bleak reality of the characters' lives. The aesthetic

choices made in the direction and performance create a haunting experience that lingers in the viewer's mind, making *Four Epaulets* a profound meditation on the human condition.

Building on this thematic and aesthetic richness, Emin Z. Emini, in his study “*For 'Katër epoletat and Other Dramas' by Haqif Mulliqi,*” identifies another key dimension of Mulliqi's work: the aspect of temporality. According to Emini, Mulliqi's dramaturgy integrates temporal references into the narrative structure, often eschewing chronological homogeneity to reflect the fragmented and poetic nature of time in his plays. This temporal element, as indicated by Emini, is not merely philosophical or semiological, as is often the case in mimetic literature. Instead, Emini, highlights that it integrates temporal references within the structure of the work, sometimes even excluding the presence of chronological homogeneity in the drama. In doing so, the author presents time according to the logic of an event's chronology, creating the impression of a causal link between compressed and successive events. By adhering to the principle of eliminating temporal gaps, Emini simultaneously negates referential time to construct a “shorthand” of dramaturgical temporality, based on the principle of fragmenting the time unit or recreating it with poetic referential elements. According to Emini, this ultimately achieves a dialectic of dramaturgical and scenic time (see Emini, 2021, p.2).

5. Analysis of *Illyrian Conspiracy* by Ekrem Kryeziu

Ekrem Kryeziu's *Illyrian Conspiracy* opens with a powerful and symbolic first scene titled “Birth.” Under the shadow of a large wheel dominating the stage, bathed in mystical light, the characters Agron and Astrit push a broken chariot's wheel – a visual metaphor reminiscent of Sisyphus's eternal struggle. The scene's imagery is deeply symbolic, with snakes crawling around the wheel, evoking themes of insidiousness and the cyclical nature of existence. At the heart of this scene is the Army's profound monologue, which introduces the audience to a world born from serpents and volcanic lava. The Army's words – “The snake. The Illyrians. Snakes. Illyria” (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 127) – suggest that the world, like a snake, is treacherous and ever-revolving. The snake serves as a central symbol, representing both danger and regeneration. The Illyrians, identified with the snake, are depicted as a people whose existence and identity are entwined with the serpent's cunning and resilience.

As the scene progresses, the interplay between the “New Snake” and the dancers embodies the theme of rebirth and transformation. The new snake, shedding its skin, climbs onto the wheel in a gesture of victory, symbolizing renewal and the continuity of the Illyrian legacy. This ritualistic act is accompanied by a chorus of snake dancers who speak fragmented yet meaningful lines. Their rhythmic speech, oscillating between choral harmony and whispers, transforms the text into a melodic experience that transcends mere words. The surreal quality of this scene, rich in symbolic metaphors, draws the audience into a mythical past where the birth of a people is rooted in the primal force of the serpent.

Kryeziu's text, deeply embedded in antiquity, uses the snake as a symbol to explore the origins and identity of the Illyrians. The play continually references the Illyrian heritage – its tribes, forts, language, costumes, and culture – connecting the ancient past to the present. This thematic exploration serves as a reflection on the enduring legacy of the Illyrians and their place in history. The play's structure, with its use of symbolism and mythological references, creates a rich tapestry that invites the audience to reflect on the nature of identity, history, and the cyclical forces that shape human destiny.

5.1 Second Scene: “Holy Mountain”

In the second scene, titled “Holy Mountain,” the focus shifts to the characters Agron and Armati. Agron is portrayed as a strong, stable, and fearless character, embodying the essence of a victorious king. In contrast, Armati is depicted as a voice of reason, cautioning against the horrors of war and suggesting that victory in battle is often less satisfying than anticipated. Armati's perspective challenges the glorification of war, highlighting its devastating consequences. He suddenly appears to Agron, almost as a master or divine figure, leading to a confrontation between the two. Agron's defiant question: “Who are you to come in front of me?” (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 130), sets the tone for their interaction, where Armati assumes the role of a god-like advisor, reminding Agron of the Illyrians' divine origins as beings of both darkness and light, born from the earth and serpents.

Through Armati's monologues, the audience learns that the Illyrians, despite their strength, rarely considered their own well-being, a theme that runs throughout the play. Agron is depicted as a fearless conqueror who, having triumphed at the Battle of Medion and vanquished the Greeks, is nonetheless criticized by Armati. The latter provocatively labels Agron as a murderer and the

“unfortunate king of the Ardians,” (Kryeziu, 2008, p.130) a ruler who has never fully accomplished his goals. According to Armati, Agron’s victories are hollow, marked by an accumulation of deaths rather than true success. This scene delves into Agron’s history and biography, with Armati acting as a persistent critic, embodying a godly figure who seeks to guide Agron toward a deeper understanding of his own flaws and limitations.

The dialogue between Agron and Armati explores the concept that there is always a higher power – a god over God, a father over father – implying the infinite nature of authority and responsibility. Agron, however, remains resolute, refusing to kneel or submit, asserting his identity as “the king of the people, king! Great Agron!” (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 131). The exchanges between these two characters reveal the philosophical underpinnings of the play, with Armati’s monologues emphasizing the transient nature of empires and the inevitable downfall that follows hubris. The poetic and antique quality of the dialogue adds weight to each sentence, imbuing it with philosophical depth.

5.2 Third Scene: “Mëndesha”

The third scene, “Mëndesha,” introduces a monologue from the character Mendesha, who invokes ancient elements such as the earth, sky, moon, and sun (see Kryeziu, 2008, p. 135). This scene, rooted in the traditions of antiquity, centers on Mendesha’s plea for help to restore Queen Teuta, once celebrated as the “Beauty of the Earth,” but now reduced to misery. Mendesha’s monologue, though brief, provides significant insight into Teuta’s story and her past aspirations. The scene is emblematic of the play’s exploration of loss, redemption, and the enduring impact of history on the present.

5.3 Fourth Scene: “Agron's Dream”

In the fourth scene, “Agron’s Dream,” the intensity of the narrative escalates as Teuta furiously enters the stage, grasping a spear. Her anger is directed at Agron, whom she accuses of loving her not as a goddess, but merely as a woman. This scene delves into the complexities of love and power, with Teuta’s accusations highlighting Agron’s inability to transcend his human desires. Armati, Agron’s chief accuser, enters the scene, assuming the roles of judge and executioner. The conflict between Agron and Armati is both philosophical and existential, resembling a divine trial where Agron is continuously judged.

Armati criticizes Agron for valuing his life more than the name of his people, portraying Agron as a deeply human character capable of love, yet also driven by a relentless desire for victory in war. This portrayal creates a paradox – Agron is depicted as a leader who, despite his love for Teuta, is ultimately consumed by his passion for battle. Armati’s skepticism toward Agron’s motivations reflects a broader critique of the futility of war, where victories are rendered meaningless by the loss and destruction they entail.

5.4 Fifth Scene: “Tuma Valley”

In the fifth scene, “Tuma Valley,” Armati continues to address the Illyrians as “sons of the serpent, gods of darkness and light,” (Kryeziu, 2008, p.132) emphasizing the duality of their nature. Despite their military successes, the Illyrians, and Agron in particular, are haunted by the shadow of their past deeds, symbolized by the slain serpent Kadami. Agron’s skepticism toward the gods is met with Armati’s insistence that he must believe in a higher power, reflecting the play’s ongoing exploration of faith, power, and the consequences of hubris.

5.5 Sixth Scene: “The Lottery and Teuta”

The sixth scene, “The Lottery and Teuta,” features Teuta kneeling in the center of the stage, holding a torch. The fortune teller, who performs a ritualistic dance around her, embodies the theme of fate and the uncertainty of the future. The scene resembles a prayer or invocation, with Teuta joining in, expressing her anguish and pleading for divine intervention. Her cries, “Let the holy grace of our burnt ones hear my cries” (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 147), are filled with metaphors and symbols, reflecting the play’s exploration of suffering, fate, and the search for redemption. Teuta’s monologues in this scene convey a sense of curse and longing, as she seeks answers to the source of her misery, embodying the play’s themes of existential angst and the absurdity of human existence.

5.6 Scene Seven: “The Plot”

In this scene, we witness violent sword exercises between Armati, Agron, and Astrit. Armati persistently tries to convince Agron that they are alike, but Agron firmly rejects this notion with profound and thoughtful responses. The dialogue gradually builds towards a philosophical-aesthetic climax, interspersed with moments of absurdity. Through their extended conversation, it becomes clear that the Illyrians believed they had rightful ownership over everything—from the sea to the land's resources – and no one should use these without their permission. However, history did not unfold in their favor, despite these beliefs.

Queen Teuta is also present in this scene, being prepared for a bath by her maids. The scene transitions from romantic moments to sudden, threatening exchanges, illustrating the author's deliberate creation of stark contrasts and breaks. Teuta, under the trance-like influence of Mendesha, is advised to flee the Tuma Valley and escape the Fortune Teller. The sea is depicted as a positive symbol, absorbing all evil, while Teuta begins to communicate with her growing madness, feeling rain that does not exist in a clear sky. Her monologue, filled with absurdity, reflects her descent into this madness: “Teuta: It is falling on me like the smell of the sea. O gods of wind, rain, sea. Save me from this great wave of salt that covered me. Where is his masculine step? My bedrooms beg him” (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 155).

Agron's ghostly presence on stage adds to the hallucinatory atmosphere. He first seeks to bow before Teuta's feet and then before the gods, though only Teuta perceives this event. The author aims to elevate Teuta, showing her as more powerful than the gods, thus highlighting her antiquity, culture, and strength. Through intoxication and madness, Teuta and Agron communicate, revealing deep emotions. Agron expresses his passionate love for Teuta, displaying a vulnerability that love often brings. Teuta challenges Agron about the girl he abandoned her for, contrasting her forgiveness of their son with Agron's failure. Agron's response is both tender and fervent: “Agron: You forgave my heart, body, earth under my feet, strength in my hands. Your breasts have no milk for children, but a flame for love” (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 160). The scene is a powerful exploration of love, submission, and mutual enslavement to one another's feelings, making it profoundly meaningful and emotionally charged.

5.7 Scene Eight: “Shadows”

Armati narrates the tireless patience of the Illyrian kings, who, with the blood of their sons, destroyed cities and sank enemy ships while enduring the constant burden of deaths. The author vividly captures the harsh realities of antiquity, using metaphors and poetic language to evoke the ancient world. The law becomes crucial in this scene, as Agron and Astrit demand what is rightfully theirs, yet Armati consistently upholds only the law of the gods. The dialogue incorporates a clever play on numbers, as Armati declares they no longer wish to be mere numbers – “zero to infinity – but rather one before zero,” (Kryeziu, 2008, p.161) and everyone cheers for the number one. This dialogue is laden with symbolism and absurdity, creating a zigzagging interplay of ideas.

Agron is depicted as a cunning serpent, who pretends to be asleep. The conspirators plot to kill him, recognizing that killing Agron is no easy task. They fear the repercussions from Agron's allies if the murder is not handled discreetly. Agoni declares that they must first eliminate Agron's friends, but Armati, always strategic, refuses to support any decision lightly. Armati emerges as a character who has toppled many kings, understanding that to overthrow someone, one must know them intimately – their instincts, weaknesses, and desires. This scene underscores the theme that kings have more enemies than friends, as the conspirators decide to kill Agron by driving a spear into the ground.

5.8 Scene Nine: “Thana Shrine”

This scene begins with a painful monologue by Teuta, in which she pleads for help from Thana, depicted as a nurturing goddess. Thana is shown to have taught Teuta to love and trust people, emphasizing the sacred friendship among the Illyrians – something no one dared violate. Thana raised Teuta and fed her with her breast, symbolizing a deep bond. Armati overhears the end of this dialogue, revealing his presence as a looming threat.

5.9 Scene Ten: “Armati and Thana”

Armati enters the scene, holding Thana's clothing as a symbol of his control. He instructs Thana not to heed Teuta's prayers, threatening her with death if she does. This scene resembles a fantastical confrontation, justified by the ghost of Pleurat, who attempts to convince Armati not to fight against the dead. The ghost, portrayed as an Illyrian king, is willing to take on the curses meant for the living,

revealing the dead's lingering attachment to the living. Armati's character continues to be portrayed as invincible and just, while the ghost frames death as a divine will, echoing Nietzsche's concept of death as the greatest celebration for humanity – a concept misunderstood and feared by most people. The author suggests that the world is governed by divine laws, a notion that contrasts with Sartre's existentialist philosophy, which rejects the idea of a predetermined future.

5.10 Scene Eleven: “The Army and the Fortune Teller”

In this scene, Teuta approaches Thana's shrine while praying, unaware that Armati is hiding behind the shrine's wheel to eavesdrop on her prayers. Teuta's monologue reveals her sinking hopes and despair. She no longer wishes to live, having lost everything, including her ships. Armati, somewhat disguised, inquires about the happenings at the palace. The Fortune Teller in this scene is depicted as a character who harbors feelings for Armati.

5.11 Scene Twelve: “Fortune Teller and Teuta”

Teuta's prayers remain tangible, filled with desperation. Analyzing her situation, it becomes evident that she is surrounded by ruin, causing her immense pain. Typically, people in such despair enter a phase of numbness, as some psychologists describe – a stage where a person feels no more pain after losing everything. However, Teuta still feels pain, driven by a few lingering hopes buried deep in her subconscious. The Fortune Teller encourages Teuta to become seductive for Agron, suggesting that sexual attraction could win him over, but Teuta desires more than just physical connection. She longs to conquer Agron's heart, not just his body. Despite appearing hopeless, Teuta's character, when analyzed deeply, reveals an underlying strength and determination. This scene, rich in feminine incitement, emphasizes the power of sexual allure, which can soften even the hardest egos, presenting it as a miraculous force capable of ensnaring a person entirely.

5.12 Scene Thirteen: “Before the Murder”

Agron enters, and the fortune teller arranges the bed. The fortune teller then withdraws. Agron enters the scene with a happy demeanor, almost as if he's attending a celebration, and requests wine from the fortune teller. His joy is so profound that he seems ready to drink an entire sea of wine. However, Teuta takes the wine cup, telling him they will drink together. Agron's endurance, stability, and bravery are evident throughout the play, bearing a resemblance to the legendary Skanderbeg. He lifts Teuta as if she were as light as a feather, his love for her shining in his eyes and evident in his gentle touch. The author masterfully crafts these two historical characters, or perhaps legends, that continue to be analyzed by scholars worldwide. The underlying message here is that love always triumphs, whether it's in Shakespeare's *Othello* or elsewhere; love is a guiding force with its own set of laws. In this scene, Agron wishes for the night to be the longest of his life, as though he senses it might be his last. Teuta pulls Agron toward the bed, removes her harness, and hands it to the fortune teller. She advises Agron to forget about war, reminding him that a woman is a soldier's refuge. Agron, full of affection, calls her the mistress and warrior of his bed, viewing war as a cure for all evil. Here, Agron is portrayed as a highly combative figure, akin to Napoleon, yet even braver.

The tension escalates when Teuta reminds him that a man can be killed in battle, to which Agron, with foreboding, replies that a man can also be killed in bed. He seems to foresee his own murder and recalls that even the gods have risen against him. The author deepens the narrative with philosophical reflections on laws and deities. Teuta urges him to hold on to her body, and the scene reveals a deep, childlike love between them, as though they own the entire world. They drink wine, and a drunken Agron repeats, “Queen of the bed, lie here. I'll drink a sea with you. I have fire for you, more fire than the volcano. I want you to burn me, to melt me, to turn me into ashes, and then to revive me again” (Kryeziu, 2008, p.167). This monologue is profound, illustrating that in a state of drunkenness, one often speaks the truth. Agron's philosophy here alludes to an eternal cycle, suggesting that life, in its deepest sense, is an ongoing return to oneself.

5.13 Scene Fourteen: “The Murder”

Armati enters the scene, but only Teuta can see him, leaving Agron bewildered and seemingly insane. The scene oscillates between absurdity and madness, often shifting into expressions of deeper meaning. Teuta pleads with Agron to dismiss the guard, for he does not want his guard in the room. The

author deliberately introduces this character to disrupt the love between Agron and Teuta. The scene becomes a battleground of contrasts, with good and evil clashing like two gladiators, always creating something new.

Armati tells Teuta not to provoke him because her beauty amazes him. Agron, holding Teuta in his arms, remains unaware of Armati's presence and asks, somewhat crazily, who she is talking to. The tension peaks when Teuta calls for the guards, while the intoxicated Agron shouts, "Guard, I want wine, nothing else" (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 170). The "guards" enter, throw a net over Agron, and slaughter him with swords. Teuta desperately calls upon Thana for help. Agron dies drunk and unafraid, as if welcoming death as a grand celebration. Armati warns Teuta not to pray, as she has always prayed incorrectly, and the gods are tired of her cries.

Armati then presents Teuta with a choice: either she reigns or she dies. Teuta tries to stand and resist, but Armati holds her hand, the same one she had wanted to use to shoot him, and grips her tightly below the knees. In this heartbreaking scene, Armati warns Teuta to forget Thana, for if Thana had truly decided her fate, she would have answered her prayers. Agron's corpse is dragged away by the killers, leaving Teuta alone to deliver a poignant monologue that fully reveals her character and secrets: "No! Where are you, Thana? Who will prove my innocence? Who? Was my love to blame? Did I want to dethrone him? The gods wanted it that way. You wanted it that way! What did I do to deserve this punishment? What did I do? What did I do? What?" (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 171). She wraps herself in a bloodied sheet, mourning the brief love affair between her and Agron, a love like iron to a magnet—two beings drawn to each other, bound by lust, yet never physically united. Their love remains an illusion, a psychic connection that is never fulfilled, as Agron is killed just as they are about to consummate their love. The author's deliberate choice to leave their love unfulfilled adds to the tragedy, reminiscent of ancient monologues from Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus. The beauty of the language often softens the conflict, with metaphors so deep that one must sometimes read the lines twice to grasp their full meaning.

As Armati exits the stage, the wheel begins to turn, revealing Thana behind it. The play ends tragically, like any ancient work, steeped in profound pessimism. The final question from Teuta, asking how long the night will last, remains unanswered. Armati coldly responds, "Glory will fly with me in time and without time" (Kryeziu, 2008, p. 173).

This drama, based on an anthropological analysis, much like the author's other work "Komploti ilir," not only deconstructs ancient Albanian and Balkan myths but also reveals our mythical and historical heritage. This heritage becomes the foundation of an ongoing process that appears never to fully conclude. Such an unresolved process inevitably creates concerns for the reader, future audiences of the play, and even the playwright himself. As playwright and professor Haqi Mulliqi discusses in his study, "Ekrem Kryeziu, Author of Reactive Utopia Dramas," each of Ekrem Kryeziu's dramas offers something uniquely its own, derived from the same spirit and existential anxiety, reminding us that we, past and present Albanians, share the same essence (Mulliqi, 2022, p.11).

6. Conclusion

Undertaking this analysis was both a challenge and an inner calling, an attempt to demonstrate that our drama, performances, and words hold weight on the international stage. The main focus of my research was on the expressive elements of absurdity and madness as treated in dramatic texts. The playwright writes to confront unsolvable issues, highlighting the lack of purpose in life. When conflicts remain unresolved, the playwright introduces the absurd. Ultimately, the playwright stands before themselves, always leaving something unspoken that neither the reader nor the viewer can fully grasp. Humanity is isolated, born into loneliness, interpreting reality by personal choice. Everything that springs from the world and existence holds a possible truth. If we consider dramaturgical interconnections, the self becomes separated, and everything gains meaning through it.

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