

THE PREDESTINATION FUNCTIONS IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE DREAM IN MITRUSH KUTELI'S OPUS

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ABSTRACT

Aim. Dreams are usually understood as a mechanism to transform thoughts into images. We use the lexeme mechanism, because the way this happens is not always identifiable or decipherable, and the level of difficulty depends on the density of the symbols that need to be decoded. Dream is said to be a sequence of images, a vision or a close connection with the reality. Having in consideration these statements this paper, aims to unravel and understand the dream and function of the predestination in the long narrative “Great is the horror of Sin, *Tat Tanushi of Bubëtima*”, by 30’s Albanian writer Mitrush Kuteli (2011).

Methods. The methods to sort out the aim are the text analysis, interpretive and comparative ones. The text analysis will involve content analysis, thematic analysis, and discourse analysis.

Results. The link between life and death, as depicted through the shifts from dreams to the afterlife, offers a distinct outlook on the world. In Mitrush Kuteli’s prose, the rich transformations both mock the long-standing fear of death and invite the living to keep enjoying life’s pleasures even beyond death.

Conclusions. We have made efforts to assert our thesis that in “Great is the horror of sin, *Tatë Tanushi of Bubëtima*” (2011) the dream has a warning function as well as a fantastic biblical one. The conclusion is both philosophical and fantastical biblical.
Keywords: dream, predestination, biblical, prediction, castigation, Mitrush Kuteli

INTRODUCTION

Mitrush Kuteli was an Albanian author born in Pogradec in the Southeast of Albania. He was educated in Hungary where he took his degree in Economics. He was an excellent student. He was offered a job in Bucharest but he refused the offer and turned back to Albania.

Dhimitër Pasko, also known as Dimitrie Pascu in Romanian, was a renowned economist, expert in economics and literature. He used the pen name Kuteli in Albanian literature, where he gained recognition as a translator, literary critic and a writer of short prose. He, along with Ernest Koliqi, is credited for laying the foundation of modern Albanian prose. Pasko was born on September 13th, 1907 in Pogradec and passed away on May 4th, 1967 in Tirana.

He took a stand in 1947 by resigning from his position as Director of the Albanian National Bank. He disagreed with the authorities’ decision on how to report currency conversion between the Yugoslav Dinar and the Lek. Kuteli demonstrated his unwavering commitment to his moral values by refusing to blindly follow orders and compromising his professional dignity and integrity.

Notably, Kuteli completed his most famous work of the second period of his creative career, *the legend or Great is the horror of sin* three months prior to his arrest in February 1947. The work has three titles: *Great is the horror of sin*, *Tat Tanushi*, *Confessions from the Blue Lake*.

The three titles have nothing to do with the time of publication, since the work was published after half a century, with the first title. In the manuscripts, works and reworks, it is sometimes titled with one title, sometimes with another. The second title *Tat Tanushi* introduces us to the story of a handsome Illyrian in his forties, who fell in love foolishly, not accepting to know that eternally great loves are destined to die.

It appears that Kuteli has openly rebelled against reality and totalitarian morality through the symbolism of Tat Tanushi and Kalia’s love. However, Tata seems to have overlooked the severe consequences of the communist dictatorship, which deprived him of his writing rights and had almost demonic effects.

The title *Great is the horror of sin* appears to be referencing a biblical story. The subject matter is a linear and culminating tale that explores a mythical legend with both fantastic and authentic elements. The story is centred on a human rebellion against God, and the eternal punishment that comes as a result of breaking divine rules and codes. The author serves as a mediator between the story he has heard and the one

being read, elevating the narrative style to a rare and artistic level that is not often seen in Albanian literature.

Kuteli's writing and storytelling style has been compared to that of Marquez, due to its unique and fantastical nature. Many of the elements found in Kuteli's work have earned him the title of a representative of magical realism in Albania.

The priest named Tat Tanushi violated three important taboos:

- He chose to love his wife more as a man than as a religious figure;
- He did not have faith in the afterlife or resurrection, and even attempted to retrieve his wife's body from the graveyard;
- He committed sins of the flesh within the church.

As a result, he was condemned to eternal punishment.

His sin is redeemed from an indefinite mythical time being put in a real time. The author brings them back to a measurable and real time during their burial at Saint Naum's diocese. The narrator of the legend seems to be the last to tell the story to the writer and draws the reader's attention to this character.

The story was told through the use of a narrative tool, in this case, Tat Tanushi's dream, which is often seen in fairy-tale from the region where the legend originated. The dream served as a warning and pushed the events forward, setting the stage for breaking the Taboo. The dream acted as a bridge, transporting the characters to the other side of the river.

THE DREAM, THE DIVINE AND BIBLICAL PREDICTION

Dreaming is a shared human experience that has been considered important by cultures across different times and places. As Robert David Schweitzer (1983, 51) discusses in his thesis "*A Phenomenological Explication of Dream Interpretation among Rural and Urban Nguni People*", the challenge of interpreting dreams dates back to nearly 2000 B.C. In ancient Near Eastern societies, dreams or "visions of the night" were thought to originate from supernatural forces. Their content and interpretation were highly valued, as shown by the creation of "dream books" in Mesopotamia and Egypt. While ordinary people's frightening and nightmarish dreams were often attributed to sorcery and evil spirits, dreams experienced by kings or priests were believed to be messages from the Gods.

The dream from the psychoanalytical juncture of outlook is constantly conceived as refraction of inner establishments from actuality, as recompense for the banned or even of cloistered solicitations in reality. But when it comes to divine dreams, these semantics are reversed, to take a theological elucidative approach, with a dense structure of symbols, which take on a figurative meaning.

According to Schweitzer (1983), Carl Gustav Jung viewed dreams as natural, spontaneous, and creative manifestations of the unconscious mind. His perspective on symbols was distinct, as his theory was forward-looking and grounded in the belief that psychological processes and dreams are driven by a sense of purpose, or what he called “finality,” referring to the mind’s pursuit of a goal. On the other hand, Adam Kuper (1979), in his work “a structural approach to dream”, argues that in modern times, the anthropological study of dreams has largely been influenced by Freudian theory, even though most anthropologists have moved away from Freud’s efforts to apply dream theory to the analysis of myths and folk tales.

Kuteli (2011) in fact confesses that “Great is the horror of sin” (p. 11) is a legend he heard in the outskirts of his homeland Pogradec and *Mali i Thatë (Dry Mountain)*. He emphasises this fact in the book’s introduction. This gives us the right to analyse the dream with Freud’s perspective too. Following Kuper’s argument, this paper will explore the impact of the dream in an Albanian legend from the past, in the anthropologic way as in Freudian outlook.

The dreams where fantastic and biblical elements are interwoven have a more pronounced predestine / fortune function of people and should be taken seriously. We encounter a blessed inspiration example in the case of the dreams sent to Joseph.

A similar experience runs into Tat Tanushi the protagonist in “Great is the horror of Sin”. He was an Orthodox priest, who was allowed to marry a woman brought from very far away. After being together for almost a year, he foresaw (through a dream) his wife’s death (Kalia’s death).

In the dream, Kalia’s burial ceremony is held. Jesus Christ presides over the ceremony as a symbol of peace and human goodness, marking her departure from the human world. Tat Tanushi also participates in the ceremony, sharing in the experience of spiritual suffering. Notably, the woman’s body undergoes an imaginative transformation into a skeleton, accompanied by grotesque imagery, which stands in stark contrast to Tat Tanushi’s previous commentary on her physical beauty. This image sent as a sign was faced by Tat Tanushi in his dream.

For Jung in the book *Two essays of Analytical Psychology* (1966), the symbol is not a sign that disguises something generally known. Its meaning resides in the fact that it is an attempt to elucidate, by a more or less apt analogy, something that is still entirely unknown or still in the process of formation. If we reduce this by analysis to something that is generally known, we destroy the true value of the symbol; but to attribute hermeneutic significance to it is consistent with its value and meaning.

In both cases, Tat Tanushi’s dream was a sign and a symbol. The object is clearly understood and it is his wife and the symbol sends us toward her death. Both of them are taught and understood by the priest.

There may be ideas that God can reveal to us everything in the dream, so dreams are means of revelation and they may be the central way God has chosen to communicate

with us. Through them He can reveal to us the plans of our destiny, the destiny of our family, our nation and our career.

If we were to refer to the scholar Kupid Pawa in his article “*A Dream Interpretation of Franz Kafka’s “Metamorphosis”* (2000), the compulsion which was felt by Tat Tanushi, corresponds to Freud’s hypothesis of a destructive drive, which we try constantly to control or conceal. This would explain his apparent divided loyalties and the prevailing feelings of helplessness before what life thrusts upon him.

The dream embedded in the textual network seeks to display a predestine function, marking the message of Kalia’s death.

He cries loudly so that the whole church resounded”. Then the voice of the altar desisted, the candles lowered their light, and Kalia was no longer in his arms; she become a skeleton. Her beautiful eyes become two dark holes, and her thin lips a sunken cavity and her hard nipples yellow clouds. It smelled of soil and death, like the smell of graves when they’re opened (Kuteli. M, 2011, p. 25)

We notice that the dream plays also an awakening sensation, synthesised with the imagination, which foretells the catchy psychological state of the protagonist. Freud in the book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1976/2010) argued that the meaning behind every dream is the “fulfillment of a wish” and that the seemingly random or strange nature of dreams is actually rooted in the individual’s own mental processes. Tat Tanushi recognises the angel of death/archangel as the one who removes Kalia’s soul from her body. Tat Tanushi regards this act as cruel, inexcusable, and unstoppable. There is also the concept of slowing down time, which causes depressing suffering and undermines earthly happiness. In the chapter *Revelation*, this thought is combined with the climacteric vision of the Angel of Death. As a result, nature undergoes a metamorphosis in relation to this vision.

It appeared to him as if, Tat Tanushi of Bubutima *was the black angel thrown from heaven to hell. This was the pain. The flaming blade of the archangels followed him behind. The smell of the grave poisoned the breath.”* I was wrong - he said I was wrong with God. (Kuteli, 2011, p. 26)

He tumbled down the grades, through the night, where his eyes flashed beyond - how far, how far. - a dim light glowed with candlelight. He tried to go towards the light but he couldn’t walk. Everything - light, time, and he were frozen like pillars of a tombstone and didn’t move. But his heart was still alive. And it was suffering. (Kuteli, 2011, p. 26)

The dream predicts Kalia’s death instead of his, which symbolises a significant exchange between life and death. This exchange is represented by love as a metaphor for life and death, reflecting the on-going conflict between Eros and Thanatos in Freudian theory. According to Greek mythology, Eros was the God of love, fertility, and passion, while Thanatos represented the human manifestation of death.

According to Schweitzer (1983), within the Judeo-Christian tradition, dreams were considered important, as reflected in the Bible. The Old Testament records that dreams were a legitimate means by which God communicated His will to selected individuals, such as kings and prophets, who often sought divine guidance in interpreting these dreams.

Tat Tanushi was a priest and the dream may be taken as an intermediate between him and the God. But, Tat Tanushi denies understanding and decodes the dream's sign which ends up being a symbol. He consciously rejects Thatanos.

The Albanian researcher Nysret Krasniqi (2008) in his book *Udha Kratilike*, states that the structure of the dream in "Great is the horror of sin" symbolises the two basic philosophical conceptions that absorb man in his inner voice and in man's life with the supernatural unknown, which always appear as inhabitation. When referring to the interplay of the blessed and supernatural, the bewitchments of the fantastic create effects of fear and shock in the psyche of the character, stronger than the psychoanalytic refraction of reality.

Moreover, according to Freud (as cited in Schweitzer, 1983), dreams are legitimate and potentially comprehensible. He believed that, like any other mental process, dreams can be traced back to their origins. By analysing dreams and uncovering the underlying thoughts or latent content, Freud proposed that they form logical and essential components of a person's mental life.

DEATH AS THE CAUSE OF THE SIN AND THE CASTIGATION

The prophecy of Kalia's death, revealed in a divine dream, has come true. This tragic event occurred in the springtime, as evidenced by the presence of almond trees in full bloom, suggesting a premature departure.

Her death serves as a warning to her husband. Tat Tanushi was a priest, but, contrary to expectations, Tat Tanushi, drowned by despair, demonstrates an imbalance between body and soul. He refused to accept his fate, and contrary to what he had been taught and instructed, he began to carve icons with his wife's face, contradicting the concept of worshipping God and even committing blasphemy. The desire to die close to her and take her to the grave is recognised as an unforgivable sin, violating the blessed law of the rule between life and death.

Tat Tanushi didn't obey to theodicy [Greek – *theo* God and – *dike* – justice).

We would associate this fragment with Solomon's *Song of Songs*. We consider it as a form of commemoration of the love that connected Tatë Tanushi with his Kalia, but showing disrespect for religious books.

Her commemoration tells clearly of a pronounced psychological imbalance. So, according to Mary T. Browne (2005) this non-liberation means an overloading from earthly desires, which affects the individual from inner peace. This condition also

pushes Tat Tanushi to sin of the flesh. A stunning woman arrives in the city claiming to be there to purchase icons, but it seems she may be a symbolic representation of something fantastic. Based on her description, she could be interpreted as the devil taking on a female guise and attempting to lead others into sin. She is seen as a symbol of temptation and corruption.

We dare to agree this thesis according to Freud's conclusion. Freud (as cited in Schweitzer, 1983) asserts that symbols in dreams represent repressed content from the unconscious mind and play a key role in the processes of distortion and disguise that occur during dream formation. The selection of these symbols typically emerges from the individual's unconscious material, serving to reinforce the mechanisms of censorship and disguise. Here we may outline Solomon's idea that the devil exists with a girl's face:

So the devil, who had taken the face and body to throw him into hell, returned to her house, leaving thirty pieces of silver coins for the carved icons she took. They were the price of his loss, so he threw them to the ground. (Kuteli, 2011, p. 37)

As he takes his turn, a warning from the Angel of Death causes him to stray from God's guidance. Though the Angel of Death is not physically present, his authority is felt through subtle signals, such as Tat Tanushi lowering his voice out of recognition of his own unworthiness to perform religious services or speak holy words. According to Juan Eduardo Cirlot (2001), the appearance of a dove flapping its wings is a biblical symbol of the Holy Spirit, which commands the appearance of an Angel.

Tat Tanushi's boastful declaration of righteousness angered the divine being, leading to the establishment of clear boundaries of immorality throughout time and space. Despite this, Tat Tanushi remains convinced of his own purity and insists on performing the usual mass. He asked three *Āksios* [Am I meritorious to stay here in front of God?] and there were three *Anāksios* [No you aren't! You are not meritorious to stay in front of God!] and everything vanished!

Tat Tanushi's unreasonable behaviour has peaked as he fails to react appropriately, consumed by his overwhelming emotions. He is unable to distinguish who he is trading with and disregards the severity of curses. Upon attending Kalia's burial, he finally realises the magnitude of his physical limitations, which can only be compared to biblical proportions. His constant questioning, fuelled by his distrust of the supernatural, only serves to highlight his lack of understanding.

The flapping of the dove's wings and the voice of death's angel disappeared abruptly and completely.

THE ETERNAL - PRESENCE OF DIVINE INTERACTION

According to divine ordinances, the Angel of Death has placed a curse on Tat Tanushi, which is a bold decision. While nature continues its philosophical cycle, following the Heraclitus notion of time, the protagonist's time of death has come to a halt. This is represented through the symbolism of a river that flows continuously without stopping.

Only he wasn't touched by the time he remained unchanged, just like as he was on the day of the last mass. Not a single white thread fell from his head, not a new wrinkle appeared on his face. He took the monk's stick in his hand and went to all the monasteries for penance. (Kuteli, 2011, p. 41)

The absence of death transforms time into a painful reminder, imbued with the weight of loss. Despite insulting God deeply, Tat Tanushi yearned for a mortal end. However, he chose to defy the natural order and cling to life through any possible means. His efforts were both meaningless and obscene, leading him down a path to nowhere.

He begun a strange life, falling into the waters and not drowned, entered the fire and didn't burn, went through the war and wasn't killed. And neither the earthquake, nor the cutter, nor the wild beasts, nor the conditions could take away his life. The death left him untouched, even when he took other monks' names Theodor, Theodot, Theofan, Theofil, Theohar, and Timothe." (Kuteli, 2011, p. 42)

Even though the blessed object cannot be physically located, its power is manifested in the curse's ability to prevent death and halt time. According to researcher Elidon Gjika (2013), in his essay *Prania si mungese dhe prania dhe prania si mungese* (Presence as absence and absence as presence) in these circumstances, the idea of absence becomes a tangible and undeniable presence that dominates Tat Tanushi's thoughts.

The individual under scrutiny exhibits genuine remorse for his actions, which were motivated by his inner desires and led him to engage in infidelity with an unknown woman. He is presently undergoing a spiritual purification process resembling biblical purgatory, where he will remain until he is fully cleansed. This extended stay on Earth will facilitate his confrontation and ultimate triumph over his pain. The overall imagery contains allusions to the wandering Jew, Ahasuerus, but is not in any way related to Jesus Christ. The backdrop showcases a cyclical cycle of nature, further enhanced by the concept of beauty. According to Albanian researcher Luan Topçiu (2010) in his book *The modern tradition in Albanian literature* the eternal root conflict stems from the sacred he sacred is imagined as a dual value, as authoritative and destructive force, presenting some dark aspects. These sacred dramatics, expressed through the light/dark type opposition, for mythic thought represents the source of the cosmic movement. The conflict between two opposite principles, which shape the entire universe's essence: life/death, love/hate, good/bad, calm/disturbed, beautiful/ugly, etc."

Depending on this concept, Tat Tanushi begins to live an ascetic life, enclosed in a cave, like the prophets known in the history of mankind, lonely but filled with the God's glory, awaiting the prophetic fulfilment of death, which will give him the required peace of mind and soul.

According to Devaleena Kundu in the chapter "the paradox of mortality: death and perpetual denial" (2015), death is an ultimate experience that cannot be fully shared or understood by others. A complete understanding of it is possible only for the dying person, if at all. Those who survive are merely observers with limited access to the true nature of the event. This divide between the reality of the living and the possible reality of the dead gives rise to a symbolic order that helps the living cope with the existential fear of death. Tat Tanushi waited patiently his devoted end!

THE STORY OF ANANIAS - AN ALLEGORY | FOR TAT TANUSHI

One night, Tat Tanushi is awakened by an invisible voice urging him to search for Father Nicanor, as his days are numbered and death may be approaching as a possible release from a curse. It is unclear whether Tat was dreaming or fully conscious when he heard someone calling his name.

Upon hearing a voice, the bishop immediately followed it and discovered that Father Nicanor and eleven other priests had sought refuge in the cave where he resided. Without hesitation, the bishop recounted a story that demonstrated the undeniable power of God's grace. It is possible that this story was artistically manipulated to draw parallels with Tat Tanushi's character, but the message remains the same. The tale involved a bishop named Ananias (*previously known as Anastas*) who, unfortunately, succumbed to greed. Ananias gave in to the temptation of a king, allowing his desire for power to overpower his sense of mercy.

This scenario was reminiscent of Christ's temptation by Satan, but with a crucial difference: Christ resisted the temptation, whereas Ananias gave in completely to his thirst for power. This serves as a stark reminder that we must remain steadfast in our faith and resist the allure of power at all costs.

According to the Bible, Satan brought Jesus to a high mountain and displayed all the kingdoms of the world with their splendour. Satan tempted Jesus by offering him all of it if he would kneel and worship him, but Jesus responded by rebuking Satan and quoting scripture saying, "*Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him!*" Satan then departed, and angels came to minister to Jesus. (Matthew 4:8-11)

The following quotes suggest a persuasive argument to abandon one's previous religion and embrace a new one. The speaker promises power, wealth, and control over others as incentives. Additionally, the speaker offers a ring as a symbol of loyalty and partnership in ruling the world together.

LITERARY SOURCE

“What kind of profit do you have from the old religion? Throw it all away and embrace my religion. In the place of the stick you will have a sword, in the place of the bark: power over a person.”

“I show you white palaces surrounded by walls and gardens: - They will all be yours!” He came closer to and spoke to him: - You will have hundreds of women for your desires.”

“Take this ring.” What you have sealed will be sealed by me. You will be my right hand and we will rule the world together!

[The examples are taken from: Kuteli, Mitrush, *Great is the horror of Sin*, Tirana 2011, pg. 48. We note here that Ananias is mentioned in the Bible as a man who dies suddenly, because when he decides to sell his land, he does not listen to the word of God, but to his wife. Three days after the burial, his wife died of shock and they buried her as well. (Acts 5:1-11)]

The narrative’s final scene is shocking, as it portrays the death of Ananias and seeks to emphasise morality. Ananias’ satirical prayers, meant to make the king laugh, are a grave insult to God, and he deserves to die. The appearance of the Angel of Death, symbolised by flames and doves around Ananias’ head, is a part of his metaphysical presence, similar to Tat Tanushi’s. Cutting Ananias’ head with a sword is a part of the mystical action plan related to death.

We agree with Krasniqi’s opinion in (2008, p. 203) that Ananias and Tat Tanushi’s destinies are intertwined, adding to their suffering as punishment from the Universe. Their anti-religious mentality has turned fantasy into a potential, hyperbolic force that turns against them.

THE CURSE’S SOLUTION - THE DIVINE MIRACLE BENEFIT

After the story narrated by Father Nicanor about the figure of Ananias, Tat Tanushi begins to confess his sins, his curse in the form of immortality, and possible attempts to kill himself, to find death.

In the framework of Robert David Hughes, as presented in his book *Beloved Dust: Tides of the Spirit in the Christian Life* (2008), confessing faith is essential to conversion to Christ, while confessing sin is essential to turning away from sin. Together, these acts serve as evidence of a true conversion brought about by the Holy Spirit. Father Nicanor realises that the wrath of the Angel of Death, who has tied him to life in the earthly world, weighs on him:

- My son, with your grace you have kept the angel of God in your heart and he keeps you connected to life. Because the power of the word is great: it paves the way through the waters, it stops the winds from blowing, and it keeps the time. (Kuteli. M, 2011, p. 55)

But he promises to help him together with the other priests, through prayers dedicated to God because he sees the sincerity of Tat Tanushi and his deep repentance; the prayer will take place on Blind Sunday, to bring it back to normal: towards death. The night before, he notices doves around the water of a spring, as a sign of divine interaction; but also the white shadow of Kalia, as a fan that warns of his taking to the world of the dead. The appearance of a previously deceased loved one, for Browne (2005) has an accompanying function, to remove the feeling of abandonment in the expected arrival in the metaphysical world.

Tat Tanushi sacrificed everything he had and the one he was! According to Daniel K. Falk in *Scriptural Inspiration for Penitential Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2007), the legitimacy of sacrifice is acknowledged, but Falk suggests that the absence of sacrifice, as reflected in other prayers, is likely connected to the conditions of the Exile, during which Temple sacrifices were not possible. He notes that under these circumstances, confession and humbling oneself before God could be accepted as atonement in place of a physical sacrifice (pp. 138-139). Tat Tanushi deeply regretted his actions and was utterly humiliated. He pleaded and prayed for death, giving up everything he had. Only after fulfilling his penance did he realise the miraculous nature of his redemption. The death was a miracle for him!

In the article “An enquiry concerning human understanding” David Hume (2011) argues that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. Since these laws are based on firm and unchanging experience, the evidence against the occurrence of a miracle, by its very nature, is as strong as any argument that can be derived from it. In this context we may clearly emphasise that Tat Tanushi believed his death was imminent, as he had heard a mystical voice in a cave warning him that his time was running out. The miracle of the forgiveness he acquired from God was out of natural laws. It was unnatural and outstanding to live for 200 years and waiting to die.

Although the presence of the Angel of Death was not physically visible, it was suggested. To break the curse, Tat Tanushi had to visit the location where he was punished and Kalia was buried. He humbly asked God for forgiveness. For Cirlot (2001), the Angel of Death, reappeared through a symbolic performance involving doves and spoke with a powerful message that led to a confrontation with Tat Tanushi's past. He sought forgiveness and was granted it by the Angel of Death, who emphasised the biblical concept of light leading to immortality. This light was also present at dinner, before Tat Tanushi saw the white shadow of Kalia.

Many people desire death as a journey to heaven, but what we find notable is that it's not an immediate disintegration, but rather a transformative metamorphosis. The physical appearance changes first, reflecting centuries of time and resembling that of a prophet, as seen in the likeness of Saint Elias carved into the icon (as Kalia pointed out). Then, the body turns from an old man into dust.

Research into Egyptian funerary language supports their concerns about death. In their work, “the art and culture of ancient Egypt: studies in honour” of Dorothy

Arnold, researchers Adela Oppenheim and Ogden Goelet (2015) highlight that the term used for funerary workshops in Egypt was *Per Ankh*, meaning “The House of Life.” This choice of euphemism suggests a deeper significance: avoiding mention of death was not just a matter of respect for the deceased, but rather a way to prevent acknowledging death’s dominion over them.

As soon as Tatë Tanushi from Bubutima spoke the word that shattered the curse, a pure white dove emerged from the altar. He stood tall at the altar, but then his chin dropped and his eyebrows furrowed. His long beard could wrap around the altar three times. Tat Tanushi vanished, leaving behind only ashes on the threshold. The eleven priests and Father Nicanor praised and worshipped God with great reverence. (Kuteli, 2011, pp. 61-62)

It is important to note that the light carries the power of love and the concentration of cosmic and spiritual energy from God. This light has illuminated the mind of Tat Tanush and allowed him to awaken as a prophet, embracing the concept of submission to the divine and forgiveness.

His second encounter with the Angel of Death was even more dramatic than the first, but he found peace through his faith. His transformation was truly miraculous and serves as a powerful lesson on human repentance and faith in God. In this case, light is synonymous with the divine and represents an undeniable omnipresence.

SYNTHESIS OF THE PERCEPTION OF THE FANTASTIC IN THE LIFE-DEATH RELATIONSHIP

The novel’s central theme revolves around sin, which takes on different meanings depending on the character of Tat Tanushi. He sins as a husband, a blasphemer, a mortal man, and an immoral being. The death of his wife Kalia plunges him into despair, causing him to commit unforgivable sins in the eyes of God. These sins lead him to confront the Angel of Death in a dramatic encounter, which ultimately transforms into a divine mediation from above.

It seems that there is no denying that time experiences a powerful vertical force that can freeze or extend one of its dimensions due to the curse in “Great is the horror of sin”. Moreover, there exists another force that causes time to flow rapidly and passively over the character who confronts the flow of time in a real manner.

Tat Tanushi faces a powerful inner conflict between his faith in God and his love for Kalia, which creates existential dilemmas. The relationship between life and death is explored through the use of fantastic elements and divine synthesis. Tat Tanushi embarks on a journey towards physical eternity, beginning after his sinning and ending with his death, as he desires to reach heavenly eternity. We can scrutinise that this journey is motivated by the process of metamorphosis that sets the mechanism in motion, as the character strives to find meaning in both his physical and spiritual existence.

Tat Tanushi explores the complex relationship between accepting or rejecting divine power and the idea of submitting to it. The use of fantasy in this context serves as a way to cleanse and elevate the human spirit, harmonising it with the miraculous.

Table 1

Biblical fiction interaction schemes

The sky (God)	The Sky (God)	The Sky (God)	The Sky (God)
↑			
The man (Tat Tanushi)	The Man (Tat Tanushi)	The Man (Tat Tanushi)	The Man (Tat Tanushi)
↓			
The earth (Kalia)	The earth	The earth (Kalia)	The earth
The initial position (The balance)	Tat Tanushi's dilemma	The position which breaks the balance	The last reconciliation position
The scheme 1	The scheme 2	The scheme 3	The scheme 4

Source. Adapted from Shala, K., 2003, pp. 75-77.

This statement encapsulates a profound reflection on the themes of transience and mortality within literary tradition. Kundu (2015) posits that literature serves as a canvas for exploring and confronting the inevitable passage of time and the reality of death. By aestheticising the implications of mortality—what could be described as the “pathological” aspects of death denial—literature creates a unique space that can be seen as a forensic field, examining the human condition and its existential anxieties.

Continuing Kundu's discussion (2015), the concept of immortality must be viewed from a dialectical perspective, influenced by both the individual and the collective. The texts, written in the early years of the twentieth century and published in the early twenty-first century (with “*Great is the Horror of Sin*” written in 1947 and released in 1993), reinforced the enduring human fascination with denying death and emphasised the relevant desire for immortality.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this paper, we explore how Kuteli's use of layering the fantastic creates a dynamic interaction with the human world. Throughout our analysis, we focus on three strategic plans: folkloric fiction, philosophical fiction, and biblical fiction.

We find out that the connection between life and death, as portrayed through transitions from dreams to the afterlife, creates a unique perspective on the world. The dense metamorphoses in Kuteli's prose serve both parody the fear complex that has developed over centuries and to welcome the world of the living to continue enjoying their joys even after death.

When it comes to philosophical fantasy, it explores the artistic twists of human dilemmas in interacting with the world of the dead, and vice versa. This allows them to experience a dimension beyond time in the life-death relationship, which can lead to eternal life and immortality, even breaking the limits of physics. It also raises questions about what happens after death, which is the physical undoing of biological life.

However, this topic goes beyond the abstract transitions offered by fantasy. The philosophical element gives a universal understanding of human problems that transcends time. It examines oppositions like man nature, man death, and the antinomy of rulership against the passing of time. The idea of imminent death can bring an end to power in the human world.

Kuteli demonstrates exceptional creative skills by introducing the concept of the fantastic, which allows for the manipulation of time and space as integral elements of the textual structure. This concept is also reflected in the characters' perspectives on life and death. The relativity of time and space creates a rich background that renews traditional oral and Albanian literary models.

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