Revistia

Implications of Literary Reification and the Reifying Reader in Education: A New Epistemological Perspective

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Abstract

Albanian literature has traditionally had a fundamental systemic place in the institutional life of Albanians, expressed particularly through its special relationship with education. This paper aims to explore a relatively overlooked aspect of the relationship between Albanian literature and education, focusing on how national identity is shaped within literary constructs and the resulting dialectical implications. On these premises, methodologically relying on a Hegelian version of Lukács's epistemology and Eco's structuralist model on the interaction of the reader in the construction of the literary text, through the analysis of a textual archetype we have defined as poetics techne for the embodiment of identity, the phenomenon of literary reification and the instrument of the reifying reader. The recognition and functional examination of these tools and their historical, systemic, structural, functional and epistemological implications in education reveal the need for an entirely different perspective in the teaching and interpretation of literature in general. This new corpus should be developed through a dynamic review of the relationship between traditional and constructive pedagogy and literary fiction, to transform the previously passive role of the reader by supporting active cooperative participation.

Keywords: literature education, identity, new perspectives on teaching, sociology of the reader, critical thinking, poetic tools

1. Introduction

Ismail Kadaré's work is a paramount specimen for examining the construction of Albanian cultural and civilisational identity. Bibliographical research (Kryeziu, 2014; Kuçuku, 2015; Sula & Kryeziu, 2016; Kuçuku & Kryeziu, 2020; Kuçuku, 2021) reveals a rich critical catalogue, underscored by debates like that sparked by his essay "European Identity of Albanians" (2006). This prominence invites key questions:

what makes Kadaré a primary exponent of 'Albanian Being'? What mechanism conditions his work's relationship with readers on identity issues? Current critical positions often rely on individual arbitrariness, failing to clarify a meta-explanatory mechanism or engage with the reader, neglecting the self-conscious interpretation ethic noted by Fish (1976).

This work attempts to establish a relationship between this object of critical experience and a meta-explanatory construct on two levels. On the pragmatic level, it involves the poetic norm of the text. On the systemic level, it includes the dialectical implications of Albanian literature's relationship with other institutions, particularly education.

There is a tradition initiated during the Albanian National Renaissance, when, the role that: "in the developed countries of Europe... is played by political organizations…, among the Albanians is played by literature and other forms of spiritual activity..." (Qosja, 2000, p. 49). Education, understood as: "efforts for the writing of the Albanian language..,, for its school... are the most efficient means of the struggle for national independence... of the mobilisation of consciousness and the creation of national unity" (Qosja, 2000, p. 149). Literature serves as a tool for education, while education itself demonstrates the aesthetic strength of the Albanian language, marking the beginning of a dialectical process of relationship.

This dialectic between Albanian literature and education was preserved, in reverse, during socialist realism as a dialectical norm, expressed especially as an educational/ideological function: "... the party has from time to time instructed writers and artists to adopt Marxist-Leninist theory, because without a system of scientific views on society and nature it is difficult for socialist life to be reflected in literary works with truth" (History of Albanian Socialist Realism Literature, I, II" – HASRL, 1975, p. 5), but also as an instruction to interpret literature from a specific point of view: "if we take socialist realism in its essence, we will notice that the feature that distinguishes it from previous literature is the new ideological meaning and assessment of life reflected in the literary work, which stems from the Marxist-Leninist worldview..." (HASRL, 1975, p. 10).

On a pragmatic level, this work aims to build a stance on an implicit norm within identity texts, examining the relationship between text and a 'possible reader' (Xhindi, 2015). It focuses on the result of this relationship presented as the *reification of identity*, aiming to describe and explain this reification as a 'norm of reading'.

The concept of reification, in the sense explored by Lukács in his famous "History and Class Consciousness: Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" (1971), emerged as central problem during the examination of a short-lived phenomenon in early post-communist (1990s) Albanian literature. This period saw a process of construction/reconstruction/deconstruction of Albanian identity (Zllatku, 1995; Koreshi, 1996; Plasari, 2002; Mehmeti, 2004; Starova, 2006; Blushi, 2008), which

appeared as a surprising entity and even an attack on the reader. However, this deconstruction storm quickly subsided. Why?

In attempting to explain this phenomenon, which includes the relative success of Kadare's identity works before the 1990s and the sudden cessation of the 2006 identity debate, a meta-explanatory dimension emerges: the dialectical relationship between Albanian literature and education.

Kadaré's work, as the most significant bibliographical fact on the pragmatic level, is thus analysed to uncover the mechanism producing identity constructs. Explaining Kadaré through the premises of the above implications with education, as factors conditioning the audience, creates the prerequisite to shed light on the success, decline, and failure of literature and on the future of education in relation to it.

From Kadaré's corpus, the novella "The Bringer of Misfortune" (1978)[1] is chosen as a representative object. Its publication context and rich psychological, moral, political, and semiotic implications make it suitable. It is a classic example of the Ottoman history of Albania in Kadaré's opus, where 'cultural belonging' is an almost obsessive condition of his poetics (Sulstarova, 2012). The novella belongs to a typology where Albanian identity develops through opposition/difference with the 'Other', common for Balkan identities where: "one's history and national symbols have become what they are precisely because of the accompanying process of constructing The Other" (Todorova 1999).

In summary, this work seeks to explain the complex mechanism of literary reification as an essential phenomenon for a classical norm of reading in Albanian, the conditioning of this norm by the dialectical relationship of literature with education, and to formulate the principles of some fundamental implications for the future of this relationship.

2. Literature Review

The duality between the norm of literary reification as an object belonging to literature and as a process that goes from the text to the reader and the guided norm of reading from canonical texts as an object belonging to education and as a process that goes from the reader to the text will be examined on a general theoretical level for reification and on a concrete pragmatic level for academic texts, mainly official publications before the 90s.

2.1 Reification: A 'Loose' Term

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[1] The events of the novel take place sometime around the middle of the 17th century and follow the extraordinary journey of Haxhi Mileti, an official of the Ottoman administration who is assigned a special task: to lead a caravan laden with veils to the newly conquered countries of the Balkans. At the instigation of Sheh-Ul-Islam, the sultan has decided to cover the Christian women of that part of the empire. During the journey, as he encounters new cultural and civilisational realities, Haxhi Mileti experiences a profound moral and psychological shock that leads to his tragic end.

Since Lukacs's seminal essay (1971), the term 'reification' has gained significant authority across fields, including literary studies. However, its application in literary discourse remains notably "loose" (Pitkin, 1987, p. 63). This looseness refers to the failure to fully homologate—or structurally align—literary analyses with the complex epistemological and practical implications of Lukács's described process, wherein social relations are transformed into thing-like objects.

While attempts exist to find such structural homologies, like Walter Benjamin's work (Lijster, 2017), consistent applications of Lukácsian reification are rare. Common critical practice associates reification with a loose methodological approach that arises from a persistent mental cliché, which views the reified product as either the materialisation of an abstract body through the literary work or as the literary work itself.

From a phenomenological perspective, every text, every relevant meaning (every experience), and every structural device in the text is reification, although it remains unclear what this construct is, how it is produced through reification, and what its "possible poetics" are. Reification takes for granted the phenomenology of the object, structuralist, and semiotic aspects of production and interpretation.

The core epistemological dilemma is formulated by Pitkin (1987, p. 64): "To reify is to turn something into a *res*. But there the difficulties begin. What sort of something? And how?". This opens problems of methodological homology, typology, and the displacement of the concept into other fields like literature.

The term's vagueness may explain its frequent use. Adorno criticizes Lukács for conflating reification with objectivation, thereby ignoring "the surplus meaning of the object itself" (Lijster, 2017). This confusion is possible because, as Berger and Pullberg (1965, p. 199) note objectivation is the process whereby human subjectivity embodies itself in products of a common world. Reification, in contrast, is a subsequent, distorting step.

The debate's roots lie in the Marx-Hegel divide (Berger & Pullberg, 1965). For Marx (and Lukács), reification is a philosophical state, a conventional mental construct linked to fetishisation across spheres - commodities, power, sexuality, and potentially the literary text itself. For Hegel, reification (though unnamed) is a natural state of being, a lived-through condition where human objectifications are inherently reified.

This Hegelian perspective perhaps underpins the term's liberal use in literary criticism, where it can act as a rhetorical device to pack subjective impressions into an object. For instance, Ben Parker (2014) reads the revelation of Pip's benefactor in "Great Expectations" as a reification of capitalist crisis and disillusion. Such usage often remains peripheral to the text's production mechanics (Jameson, 1979).

Thus, a key question arises: Is reification an inevitable reality of literature?

A Hegelian view might accept its inevitability but struggle to explain how this process forms a conventional rational body. A Lukácsian view is more epistemologically optimistic regarding institutional inquiry but faces the challenge of distinguishing true reification from mere objectification.

We argue that a dynamic logic can reconcile this apparent contradiction. For the systematic 'description' of literary phenomena, the Hegelian version is more justified. For 'poetic' analysis concerning the text's constructive process, the Marxist-Lukácsian version is more pragmatic. The reifying intensity at a systemic level would be determined by concrete features at the poetic level, though this requires separate elaboration.

In conclusion, while "reification is not a household word" (Pitkin, 1987, p. 63), its rhetorical use prevails. We hold that the term is extremely appropriate for certain literary phenomena in both structural and phenomenological senses, yet only symbolically adequate for others. The division hinges on how fundamental aspects of Lukácsian reification are manifested in the reified object itself.

2.2 Socialist Realism – A Reading Guide Catalogue

The 'doctrinal' texts for teaching literature during socialist realism, particularly in higher education, exemplify a phase of 'homogeneity' between literary reification and prescribed reading methods. Key texts like the official 'History of Albanian Socialist Realism Literature, I, II' (HASRL I, II), Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi's 'History of Albanian Literature' (1962), and Koço Bihiku's 'A History of Albanian Literature' (1980) function as reading manuals. For this analysis, the most pertinent is the official HASRL.

In this framework, literature is defined through Socialist Realism, understood as "a creative method and literary direction that responds to the ideological demands of Albanian society on the path to socialism" (HASRL I, 1975, p. 6). Its implementation is presented as a historical necessity, equivalent to the establishment of socialist society itself (Rugova, 1986, p. 171). Literature is treated "as a form of the ideology of the system... guided by partisanship" and "as a means of educating the masses" (Rugova, 1986, p. 174).

The reader is oriented by a Marxist-Leninist worldview, emphasizing realism as a principle of reflecting life, with class struggle as its essence (HASRL I, 1975, p.10). This fosters "communist partisanship" against opposing worldviews (HASRL II, 1975, p.11). National character is a key feature, expressed through the "psychic characteristics of our people" (HASRL II, 1975, p. 12).

The popular masses are central, with texts showcasing "the reciprocal connections of the mass and the individual" (HASRL II, p. 11). The positive hero, "the man capable of acting as an active force on circumstances," is pivotal, embodying triumph and "revolutionary optimism" (HASRL I, 1975, p. 11-12). This often evolves into a unifying collective character.

Major themes affirm national character, avoiding complex modernist structures (Brahimi, 1989, p.105) and upholding proletarian partisanship (Kallulli, 1987, p. 54). Content functions to defeat old forces and establish new social relations (HASRL II, 1975, p. 12). Conflicts represent "struggles on the social level" (HASRL II, 1975, p. 13).

Texts engaging the past address "ideological demands of socialist society" (HASRL I, 1975, p. 10) through "typical characters" that justify the denial and affirmation of aspects of life (HASRL II, 1975, p. 14). Structurally, diversity, unity, and the "poeticisation" of ordinary phenomena are valued (HASRL II, 1975, p. 14). Stylistically, socialist realism is said to elaborate "complex, multifaceted issues" arising from building a new society (HASRL I, 1975, p.15). Criticism valued "innovation" (Rugova, 1986, p. 202) and greater aesthetic autonomy, though always under Marxist-Leninist ideology (Xhindi, 2010).

Thus, the text is read as an educational manual marked by class tendentiousness (Abazi, 1984), a fable for constructing "the new man" (Brahimi, 1989), a special realistic form (Mato, 1989) with "proletarian coherence" (Kallulli, 1987), led by the "positive hero" (Mato, 1989), and based on models from ancient literature and critical realism (Rugova, 1986).

3. Methodology

Having established the "descriptive value" of reification in a systemic sense, we must now examine its dynamics at the level of concrete poetic production. In this productive, non-rhetorical context, the Marxist model offers greater concreteness. The core question is: what is the material content of reification as a process of text production during reading, and can it be expressed through a "poetics of production"?

A bold but epistemologically homologous concept emerges between György Lukács's model of reification (1971) and Umberto Eco's model of reader cooperation in 'Lector in Fabula' (2006). Both models: a) develop interaction through structuralist mechanisms; b) produce a specific object; c) assign this object a verifiable status and function. This homology allows for a mutual theoretical inclusion, where Lukács's model provides a core theoretical mechanism encompassing the theoretical corpus of scholars like Wellek and Warren.

3.1 The Structural Foundations of the Object

Lukács defines reification as a social relationship acquiring "the character of a thing", becoming a phantasmagoric objectivity that obscures its basis in human relations. His analysis begins by defining the object's status within a structured network, akin to how Wellek and Warren define literature within a system of specific relations and functions. For Lukács, the commodity's essence is fully discernible only when it becomes "the universal category of society as a whole", a condition met under modern capitalism. In the same way, literature can be defined within a stable system of specific relationships. This sets up a general structural-functional rule: the identity

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and nature of an object are based on where it fits into a necessary, stable structure of interactions.

3.2 The Subjective and Objective Aspects of Reification

Once the object's identity is structurally defined, reification is explored in its dual nature. Objectively, a reality of things emerges whose internal laws (analogous to genre rules) condition human knowledge and production conventions, operating as 'invisible forces' independent of the producer's will. Subjectively, human activity becomes estranged, turning into a commodity subject to society's non-human laws. This mirrors the phenomenological status of genre rules and the historical emergence of the conscious reader-response, which, like reification, is a late phenomenon (Tompkins, 1980).

3.3 Historical Conditions and the Interaction Process

Reification requires mature historical conditions, just as capitalist abstract labour emerges from the capitalist system. The process of interaction is characterised by a transformation where "time becomes "space" and subjects are fragmented by the division of labour. This clear structuring is analogous to the intensified, structured interaction of the reader in specific historical periods (noted by Wellek & Warren, 1949). The factory's concentrated structure, which embodies 'the whole structure of capitalist society' (Lukács, 1971) serves as an analogy for the literary text, functioning as a microcosm of structured interaction.

3.4 Core Analogies for a Poetics of Production

From this model, key analogies for literary production emerge: (1) reification occurs when the worker's fate represents society's whole, analogous to the holistic, representative function of the author/reader dyad and the textual sign; (2) it occurs when society satisfies all needs via commodity exchange, analogous to advanced literary specialisation and a stratified public; (3) the interactant (worker/reader) is transformed into a commodity, a 'sign of a function' akin to an author or reader becoming a clichéd function within a context; (4) the reified object's qualities depend entirely on social relations, analogous to the text's ontological status as an inevitable bearer of meaning; (5) the reified object reifies its producer's mind, just as authors are products of the structural wholes that influence them; (6) the object exists through equivalence (money as fetish), analogous to mimesis and the text's capacity to produce associative value and seemingly 'finished' realities; (7) this leads to 'determinability': the nature of the reified object determines the functioning of the structure (the reader) that embodies it.

It also implies functional independence: elements reflecting the reified object (like reader responses or professional legal spheres) can develop autonomous, reactive natures, creating functional ambiguity.

3.5 Homology with Eco's Model

Reification, as a structured relationship between a produced object and governing laws, finds clear analogies with Eco's model. The core of his schema directly corresponds to the interactive, productive process described by Lukács, as it states that (Eco, 2006, p. 24-25): "the text is a lazy machine that demands from the reader a proud cooperative effort to fill in the spaces". Both models centralise a cooperative interaction within a structured system that generates a specific object (the commodityform) endowed with objective and subjective reality.

In conclusion, Lukács's analysis of reification provides a convertible theoretical framework for a "poetics of production". It describes a process whereby, under specific historical and structural conditions, interactive participation within a system generates an object that appears as an autonomous, determining thing, thereby obscuring the very relational and human activity that produced it. This process is homologous to the structured cooperation between text and reader that produces the literary work as a verifiable, functional object.

4. Results: A Reification Code

The research results are analysed on two parallel levels. First, a pragmatic norm of reification is offered on a concrete research case, secondly an archetypal, systemic norm, conditioned primarily on the platforms of teaching socialist realism literature.

4.1 Reification and Reader-Response - Structural and Functional Analogies

The analogy between Lukács's reification and Eco's model of textual cooperation is structural and functional in the sense that Wellek & Warren (1949) give the terms. Both models involve an object (commodity/text) materialising from a productive relationship. Our typological comparison identifies four parallels:

1. *Phenomenology of the object:* both concern objects produced by interaction.
2. *Qualities of the object:* both examine the properties of the produced object.
3. *Structure of the productive relationship:* both structure the interaction between production factors.
4. *Function of the object:* both consider the object's effect on its producer-receiver and context.

From a structuralist viewpoint, the core parallels are:

Production by relationship: interaction materialises the object. *Subjective & objective aspects*: in Lukács, subjectivity is collectively suspended, nearing alienation; objectivity comes from automated production. In Eco, engagement is freer. *Objectivity* derives from genre conventions. Literary reification thus involves a 'constraint of subjectivity'. *Object's value and function*: Lukács's object has an immediate "exchange value" bound to context. Eco's operates in a freer semantic space. Literary reification is tied to 'exchangeability' and 'immediacy'. *Temporality*: for Lukács, function is within a limited historical interval; for Eco, it is unpredictable. Literary reification has a

specific "duration of function". *Nature of interaction*: in Lukács, interaction is a systemic obligation; in Eco, a free cooperative act. Literary reification manifests as "forced interaction". In conclusion, while Eco's model describes interactive textual production generally, 'literary reification' is a specific, historically conditioned form. It occurs when interaction is structurally determined, subjectivity is constrained, and the textual object acquires a context-bound exchange value and functional immediacy. Not all interaction is reification, *but reification is a potent form where the text assumes the phantasmagoric autonomy of a commodity*.

4.2 Reifying Techniques through 'Possible Worlds' in the Novel "Bringer of Misfortune"

The question of how reified objects are produced involves the elements constructing 'possible worlds' (Eco). These worlds are sensitive topics, with the reader making isotopic decisions based on their cultural encyclopedia. For the socialist realism reader, *ritual topics* (Xhindi, p. 81, 2010) produce predictable actions, while *alternative topics* (ibid.) yield low-probability ones. A model is feasible here, as this reader is definable; a foreign 'possible reader' can be considered in intercultural terms (Spariosu, 2006).

We will examine if a common reading corpus exists for these two readers and how they construct the fable's 'possible worlds' (Eco, 2006), confirming elements of literary reification. The dynamics are analysed at a "probabilities disjunction point" (Eco, 2006, p. 11), exemplified by Haxhi Mileti's wavering beliefs during his encounter with Christian women. At this disjunction, the construction of possible worlds presents: 1) a cycle of topics marked by opposition and internal conflict, complicating readerly decisions; 2) a psycho-emotional semiotic typology of oscillations tied to Haxhi Mileti's internal proces; 3) basic thematic nodes (duality – journey – oscillations – meeting – apostasy – the end) connected to this semiosis.Textual analysis reveals the reader's semiotic horizon.

In chapters I-IV, ritual topics of duality dominate; alternative topics are rare. The meeting with Christian women intensifies opposition and doubt, forcing the reader to follow without prediction. Chapter V offers interpretive independence - a structural necessity—before later chapters restore strong oppositional codes. From chapter VII, oppositions occur between chapters, mixing ritual and alternative networks.

The novella becomes a structure of oppositions rarely aligning with reader predictions. Consequently, the reader only concretizes topical oppositions and mechanically connects chapters. Their behavior becomes predictable, with non-essential interventions that cease long before the end. Narrative units like Haxhi Mileti's arrest and death occur as arbitrary decisions of the text itself.

4.3 Construction of Possible Worlds at the Disjunction of Probabilities Point

Using Eco's taxonomy, let's examine 'necessary components' (Eco, 2006, p. 135) for possible worlds at the disjunction point:

- A+ Strong religious beliefs of Haxhi Mileti; A- Shakable beliefs.
- B+ Insignificant influence on Haxhi Mileti; B - Significant influence.
- C+ Complications for his mission; C - No complications.

In a Required World of Reference (RWR) for SR, component 'B' (influence, often erotic) may be filtered out or 'narcotised' by the reader's competence. The reader is given limited predictive freedom, then paralysed by insufficient information, reflecting SR's oppositional nature.

A	B	C	Probabilities
+	+	+	1
-	-	-	2
+		-	3
+	-	+	4
-	+	+	5
-	+	-	6

Table 1. 'Possible Worlds' at the disjunction of probabilities created in Albanian

Comparison between the Real World of Reference (R^EWR) and the RWR shows the text structurally 'breaks' the SR reader. Ambiguity and insufficient topical signs make constructive decision-making impossible, forcing the reader to adapt without co-constructing the fable. This is reification: the text educates through automatisation. The reader accepts textual states as facts.

For a foreign reader, the interaction differs, influenced by interculturality (Chin, 1989) and the Occidental complex regarding the Balkans (Todorova, 1994). This reader may use the same components but differently, drawing on ambiguity and identity complexity. For instance, Haxhi Mileti's apostasy, a necessary identification with the 'Other' for the Albanian reader, is not necessary for the Western reader. Changes may concern the narcotised component of "eroticism" or semiotic intensity. Thus, the foreign reader's "possible worlds" become a relativistic "appendix" to the Albanian ones.

We add components for the foreign language reading:

- Haxhi Mileti - (D) erotic concretization / (D') erotic absence.

- Sheh Ul Islam - (E) political purpose / (E') religious purpose.

- Köprülüs - (F) decline / (F') rise to power.

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Haxhi Mileti Eroticism	Sheh'ul Islami Intence/ Political/ Religious'	Köprülüs (Qyprillinjtë) Power	Probabilities
D	E	F	1
D'	E'	F'	2
D	E	F'	3
D	E'	F	4
D'	E	F'	5
D'	E'	F	6

Table 2. 'Possible Worlds' at the disjunction of probabilities created in foreign language

In this version of 'possible worlds', the text carries a great potential which in practice is not realised. The reader remains outside the 'realised world' known as the "fabula," which represents a version of the narrative where the reader's interaction is either unnecessary or disrupted. The fabula remains disconnected from: (1) the concretisation of eroticism, (2) the type of success for Sheh-Ul-Islam, and (3) the political fate of the Köprülüs. The semiotic ambiguity of the topics, added to the limited competence of the foreign reader, makes his interaction dull. The same phenomenon occurs as with the Albanian reader. In a version close (possible) to the reading in Albanian, this reader, in the conditions of cultural relativism, would moreover *narcotise* the "religious identity" of Haxhi Mileti and would privilege a version of psychological or erotic complexity, for which the text does not produce any indication. The continuous shifts from the world of the text (WT) to a real world of reference (R^EWR) - analogies with aspects of Albanian life at the time, from a socialist realism reader point of view - or from the 'world of the text' to a fictional world of reference (FWR) - e.g., 'arkapija' and 'dreams' as main topics in the works of Migjeni or Kadaré - overload the process, make it quite difficult, and drive the reader away from the predictions.

The arrest and death of Haxhi Mileti come as facts the foreign reader must accept but did not co-construct. The inclusion of an Albanian fictional world of reference cannot be processed by the foreign reader. A more active version of the interaction by the foreign reader would be a possible world built on religious components, which is very unlikely in our era. Interculturalism rejects apostasy.

4.4 Reifying Reading as an Attribute of Education

Presented according to Eco's taxonomy (Xhindi, 2010) according to the levels of reader interaction, an archetypal reading model would contain:

1. Topics reduced to their significative value, mainly in a standard circle of themes (*the figure of the communist, the revolution, the working class, the cooperative peasantry, the emancipation of women, the conflict with imperialism*) in the sense of the opposition between progressive and reactionary. The significative value of the topics is clear, unambiguous, and is qualified by the Marxist-Leninist ideological tendentiousness.

2. Discursive isotopies are built on the ideological control of the significative value of the topic. The interactive participation of the reader is low.

3. Narrative isotopies and possible worlds are built on a low order of probabilities – the competence strictly controls any possible alternative direction of the text.

4. The meaning of the text appears as an 'impression' (Fish, 1976) on a monotonous register of cooperative actions. The semantic specificity of the text stems from its structuralist relationship with a limited circle of social-realist norms.

This type of reading is given as a systemic model, a framework, in relation to concrete reifying readings. Reading is a non-individual matter, reading is 'taught', while the individual norm of reading appears in an interval of 'freedom' conditioned by the quality of education. The value of the reified work is defined by the comparison of the experiences created by reading the works 'permitted' by competence.

5. Discussion

5.1 A Reifying Reading Norm

This analysis examines a specific mode of reading Kadaré's novel, characterised by 'literary reification' as a consistent theoretical model. The text operates as a closed, unpredictable system, with the reader's role confined to linking distinct, frequently non-sequential components. The narrative, with its ambiguous topical oppositions and constant new beginnings, nullifies predictive activity, placing the possible world of the text in an unclear interval. The reader encounters semes (like 'dream' and 'arkapija') that enter and exit their competence without definitive signification, creating an oscillating, indecisive interval that makes both interaction and the text's mechanism elusive.

The semiotic implication of this 'reified body' is its production of an ambiguous, 'liquid' state where identity as a sign is interrupted. While using the reader's interaction, the object appears 'on' it, remaining inexplicable and acting merely as a register of incitements for unverified 'other worlds'. Its primary function is thus one of 'incitement' or 'preparation', creating the illusion of signifying 'possible worlds'. Paradoxically, through its ambiguity, it aims to establish clarity across historical, ethical, and social dimensions.

This reified body can be named a 'civilisational sign'. It operates at the limits of a *seme* marking the *clash of civilisations*, dealing with topics of religion and civilisation common in Balkan literature. Its isotopic points are *oscillation*, *collision*, and *adaptation*, leading to 'apostasy' – a core concept here. Haxhi Mileti's discovery of another human dimension produces apostasy, which becomes the standard way of producing identity through the *Other*. The text itself generates this collision; the reader only materialises it.

In terms of value, the reified body signifies a state of crisis, disappointment, and revealed apostasy. It takes its place within a rigid system – including Socialist Realism – that qualifies identity through confrontation with the *Other*. The key semiotic implication is precisely this apostasy: a state built on collision and ambiguity. For the socialist realism reader, it may be an unarticulated anti-religious explosion, but it simultaneously becomes a platform for civilised belonging through difference. Thus, reification produces a closed body with civilised and ideological content, continuing a romantic tradition.

A crucial reason for this textual closure is the exclusion of the Albanian reader*, particularly those with Islamic or alternative religious consciousness*, who cannot be included in the text's construction. The reified body, built without their participation, acquires a function of processing or even creating the reader. This very distance makes the sign assimilable for the foreign reader, as it lacks the specific identity consciousness of the Albanian reader. The text thereby constructs a sign independent of Albania's contaminated cultural diversity, while also fabricating a fundamentalist Albanian reader position.

Ultimately, producing this *solid body* as a sign shows a special cultural determination and authority, attempting to provide solutions in the absence of references in the reader's encyclopedia. This process operates on an ideological premise and serves a typical function of socialist realism, though it does so in a unique manner. This deliberate closure and reifying profile are distinctive features of Kadaré's work, creating a structuralist construct that prevents readers from forging organic communication with foreign audiences, thereby distinguishing his work from that of other authors.

5.2 Relevant Implications in Education

A possible typology of the educational implications of literary reification and the function of the reifying reader includes: *Historical implication* – the historical transformations following the fall of the Iron Curtain have created a new relationship between the inherited norm of reifying reading - which is influenced by education - and literature. The dialectical relationship between the inherited norm of reifying reading and a new typology of texts has been interrupted. The facts show that education has not yet managed to support an effective reading norm. *Systemic implication* – literature and education now operate within a different systemic post-socio-realist context. This determines different, independent dynamics. *Functional implication* – literature and education are not defined on a common ideological doctrine, which assigns in a canonical and conditioning, external way the 'service' that literature must fulfil as a projection of a defined educational norm. *Structural implication* – the reconstruction of the worldview is reflected in the platforms, methodologies, tools, and concepts of educational platforms that relate to literature. *Epistemological implication* – in the conditions of a new institutional relationship, it is necessary to reconsider the relationship between traditional and

constructive/progressive pedagogy. Today, despite the burdensome institutional structure of QSHA, ASCAP; ASCAL, AKAP, the platforms and models used, the relationship between education and literature remains problematic. The ranking of Albanian students in PISA (2022) is perhaps indicative.

Conclusions

The explanation of the poetic mechanism on which the Albanian identity is constructed in the work of Ismail Kadare and of a 'norm of success' in its reading, makes it necessary to research on a meta-explanatory platform what it implies for the specificity of Albanian literature and the dialectic of its institutional conditioning, in particular, its relationship with education.

In this way, the poetic norm on which every object of experience is realised in the reading of literary works is subject to this dialectic, initiated during Romanticism and canonised during Socialist Realism – education is initially a function of literature for reasons of the nationalist order, while later literature is a function of education for ideological reasons.

Literary reification, a version of the reader's complete control over the text, is the mechanism that underlies the object of experience – in our case, 'identity' - but we can speculate, any other object. It is interesting to note that despite the change in stylistic formations and the transformations in the education system until the early 1990s, reification over some definable worldview dominant remains a collective norm for reading communities.

The interactive actions of the reifying reader – in the case of socialist realism – are conditioned by a systemic, doctrinal norm of reading, materialised in education, in addition to the concrete conditionings that produce particular works.

There are reasons to assert that the fall of the Iron Curtain interrupted the dialectic of the traditional conditioning of literature with education. The sudden interruption of identity literature in the early 1990s and the conceptual and methodological cacophony during the famous debate on the European identity of Albanians are indicative.

Based on these data, *reification* as a historical function implies the necessity of a non-radical epistemology shift in education, which aims to change the still active status of the reifying reader through a balanced relationship with literature. Today, despite the diversity of models and experiences in teaching literature, a stable and functional platform that unites traditional and progressive pedagogy is missing. This effort aims to initiate a novel perspective.

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