

SPACE, SYMBOL AND ARCHETYPES IN THE WORK OF MITRUSH KUTELI AND EDGAR ALLAN POE

Emine SHABANI¹

^{1*} *Department of Albanian Language and Literature, Faculty of Philology, University of Tetova*

^{*}*Corresponding author e-mail: emine.shabani@unite.edu.mk*

Abstract

Mitrush Kuteli's artistic mastery in transforming the folk tale into literary fiction is widely recognized. As he once said, "To transform the folk tale into an artistic story is like trying to put the sun in a dark dome or the spring in a bag." This illustrates the challenge of elevating the folk tale to an authorial artistic level while preserving its core elements such as symbol, space, archetype, time, fable, legend, the arrangement of objects, and detail, all in correlation with narrative structure and the emotional and spiritual dimensions of the work. In Kuteli's stories, national and heroic collective archetypes prevail, whereas in Edgar Allan Poe's works, individual archetypes, such as the archetype of death, anima, animus, persona, shadow, the Great Mother, etc., are more prominent. These archetypes help us explore the psychological and unconscious states of both characters and narrators, blending fragments of reality and drawing parallels with the authors' own lives. The environment depicted in their works reflects not only the atmosphere but also the spiritual, mental, and emotional conditions of the characters and the author-narrator, whether as a passive observer or an active participant.

Keywords: space, symbol, individual, family, collective archetypes, shadow, persona, anima, animus.

Research Methodology

This study employs theoretical and comparative literary analysis, grounded in foundational texts from classical narratology (Barthes, Mieke Bal, Julia Kristeva, Gérard Genette, Umberto Eco, Tzvetan Todorov, etc.) as well as literary criticism and the theory of the art of discourse (Eagleton, J. Culler, M. Solar, etc.). Additionally, psychoanalytic methods based on Freud, Jung, and Marie Bonaparte are used to explore the unconscious and archetypal dimensions of Kuteli's stories.

The following methods were applied in this study: textual analysis (close reading) of Kuteli's stories to interpret symbols, motifs, and literary figures; Intertextual analysis (following Julia Kristeva) to examine the relationships between Kuteli's texts and other sources (folk tales, universal myths, world literature); Comparative analysis, positioning Kuteli alongside authors such as Borges and Poe; Psychoanalytic analysis, based on Jung's theories of the shadow, archetypes, and the individuation process; Cultural and semiotic approaches, to understand the mythological and ethnographic dimensions of Kuteli's narratives.

Introduction

The thematic content and narrative style of Kuteli's work align closely with that of Borges, Dino Buzzati, and Edgar Allan Poe, both in thematic choices and motifs, as well as in

<https://doi.org/10.62792/ut.filologjia.v13.i24-25.p3037>

the integration of fantastic elements into his stories and the elaboration of folk tales that retain mythological and fantastic features. In doing so, he creates a unique personal mythology. Aesthetic elements in Kuteli's prose and poetry are rich and diverse: the fantastic, the sublime, the grotesque, the painful, the charming, the low and ugly. Themes of love and death frequently intertwine in both his prose and poetry. His philosophical orientation lies in the tension between essence and existence.

One distinctive feature of Kuteli's prose is humor, which brings vitality to his stories. His characters confront fear and suffering through laughter. Humor is a dominant theme in works such as *My Village Drinks Raki*, *The Village of Onions*, and *Kokarka*, but it also plays a significant role in his more dramatic stories through subgenres like satire and irony. Kuteli achieved literary immortality, an attribute of artists with powerful imaginative faculties and visionary insight into life. His prose style is rich in phraseology, and his language is consistent with the modernist style of his time, characterized by local colloquialism and "couleur locale."

Kuteli's stories offer fertile ground for psychoanalytic interpretation, just as Edgar Allan Poe's works were studied by Freud and Marie Bonaparte, thanks to their symbolic and allegorical content, rich metaphors, metonymies, and ancient references that convey deep esoteric and scholarly knowledge of the past.

Results and Discussion

Kuteli employs artistic and aesthetic forms to express existential philosophy, allowing the character to walk, speak, act, and ultimately achieve freedom. Through conflict with the environment, the individual, society, and nature, the character emerges from within himself, where he has been imprisoned for a long time, and this emergence is accompanied by fears, complexes, and desires that he must confront, experience, and overcome in order to realize his dream.

The narrator is preoccupied with the virtues and vices of people, those demonic vices found in *Autumn of Xheladin Bey*, or the spiritual development reflected in *Ago Jakupi* during the autumn of his life. In the search for mysterious meanings in Kuteli's stories, we encounter surprising narrative twists: *Ago Jakupi*, *March Night/Qyrana of Todhri*, who kills Aziz Gega in revenge; *Xheladin Bey*, who is ultimately destroyed by his own mistakes; and in *June Night/Marko Arbënashi*, the wealthy Albanian from *Peshkëpia* who sits every evening on a park bench to listen to the songs of Albanian masons. These twists represent the masterful artistic climaxes of Kuteli's storytelling. They carry a strong emotional and psychological charge, especially evident in *June Night*, *Autumn of Xheladin Bey*, and *Ago Jakupi*.

The fairy tale, by contrast, is a dynamic, living portrait that speaks through figures and allegory. If we attempt to remove certain elements from it, we strip away its essence, its symbolism, archetypes, and everything that defines it as a fairy tale. Today, one branch of pedagogy is concerned with sanitizing fairy tales through euphemism, while another tends toward reducing their informational content, both of which harm the essence, originality, and richness of meaning these tales convey to the reader. Hence, Kuteli's statement in *Old Albanian Tales*:

"Trying to turn a song into a story is almost the same as trying to fit the blue sky into a dark bucket or compress the whole spring into a sack." (Kuteli, 1976:10) It is necessary to distinguish between merely retelling fairy tales and constructing literary stories based on them, as Kuteli did, just as Shakespeare created magnificent works from the simple plots of Italian and English fairy tales.

"A literary work should not and cannot be accessible to everyone; it is a secret castle to which the reader must find the key." (Skreb & Štamac, 1986:512) Kuteli's stories are mystical. They can only be truly understood through a deep knowledge of history, mythology, analytical psychology, and the workings of both the collective and individual unconscious, along with

their archetypes. The symbolism of the transcendent, found in characters like Xheladin Bey, Ago Jakupi, and Rinë Katerinëza, conveys the central message of a transcendent metaphysical existence. These stories open the spiritual eye, and only in this way can we access the mystical elements they contain.

In fairy tales, the wild stepmother and the handsome prince are typical characters. In Rina Katerina, we encounter the wild stepmother and the dead prince. Rina believes in her mother's prophetic words, and in order to escape suffering, agrees to marry the deceased Kirilloj. After a moment of prayer and curse at her mother's grave, she receives a revelation: her fate is near. The story takes dramatic turns, Rina marries Kirilloj and gives birth to his child. Kirilloj's mother discovers the truth but, driven by her impatience and desire to see her son again, breaks her vow of silence. As a result, everything is destroyed, the promise is broken, and everyone dies.

According to Jung, Rina's archetypal encounter with Kirilloj represents her confrontation with the shadow, the dark side of the personality present in every individual, consisting of the animus and the anima. (Jung, 2010:61) If we bring this shadow as close to the conscious as possible, the better a person knows himself and is freed from its shackles. The hero-protagonist, who in fairy tales kills the beast, the **dragon**, this represents the defeat of one's own shadow, one's own inner enemy. But it does not always happen like this. The universal category of the spirit/ghost is present in many Albanian and world fairy tales. The essence of this tale seems to be a universal category of fairy tales - anger from the long wait turns into rage from which everyone dies.

Archetypes represent goals well defined by instinct. Such tales represent the prototype of Christ, Constantine, The Dead and the Living, etc. The fact that Kirilloj was dead is shown by the words: "He came when the dawn came, he went out when the rooster crowed - with basil flowers in his hand" But the mother could not bear not to see her only son, so she told the bride that she wanted to see him. His answer was mystical: *"You tell Mother to wait, that in three years and three days I will come to get him, riding on a black horse - a big horse with wooden legs."* (Kuteli, 2004:71)

In ancient beliefs among all peoples, the horse is a chthonic symbol, which represents the power of life, speed and beauty, a symbol of the continuity of life. While the black horse represents death. In Illyrian pagan beliefs and until late in the Middle Ages, the horse is the tombstone that is transformed to carry the dead, who is embodied by the dust of the grave. The tale of Rinë Katerinëza from a cultural perspective and Christian belief is related to the resurrection of Christ, where the resurrection as we emphasized was a very old myth whose origin was unknown, she *"She had a hat with three crowns, like the noble woman she was, she had a cross on her neck... Breasts white as snow, hands washed in silver, hair-yellow-chrysomene"* (Kuteli, 2004:72)

If we were to rely on Freud's theory, which Jung partially accepted, then the explanation would be of an intimate nature, while Jung researched more about these elements and came to the conclusion that first of all one must respect the beliefs, convictions, sacred figures and archetypes of that people. The idea of the resurrection of Cyril (Kirilloj) is a pre-Christian theme, the theme of the *"hero and savior, who was swallowed by a monster and miraculously reappeared after triumphing over it"*. (Tresider, 2001:112). While the cult of the number three is very old among Albanians, associated with luck but also with black magic, almost all of them have an ambivalent meaning.

The offerings of the *Arvals* in ancient Rome were related to the great rite of May, when the ancient Roman priest presided over an annual fertility festival in this month. These elements found in the tale of Rina and Kirilloj are a modified and changed pagan reminiscence, even in the Illyrian and Albanian rites until the Middle Ages. It is an original creation that has deep weight, facts, postulates, mystical narratives, in which the narrator exalts the figure of Rina that

the power of love raises the dead from the grave. While the impatience of Kirilloj's mother ruins everything. The mystical plane of eternity has also been added to the old Albanian tales.

The trap that Kirilloj's mother sets to keep her son in this life has fatal consequences. She cannot wait three years and three days, because her patience is lost and she decides to stop him by force. At daybreak, Kirilloj's mother entered and called, "Kirilloj, my dear!" She took him in her arms. He tried to return her embrace but could not hold on, for Kirilloj turned into a mist and dissolved into nothing. (Kuteli, 2004, p. 78). Without him, Kirilloj's mother collapsed and died on the spot. Not even Rinë Katerinëza rose again.

"At night, Kirilloj arrived with his friends, holding candles in his hand and a hallelujah on his lips. He took them all together to that other world, where there is no pain or sorrow, where May is everlasting, and flowers are never shaken, in the life of lives." (Kuteli, 2004, p. 72). A large part of Kuteli's creative work is rooted in oral literature, rich in mythological elements. In artistic literature, myth functions as a peritext, derived from an ethnotext oral heritage, fairy tales that find their way into written narratives. Orpheus and Napoleon were once paratexts before being transformed into Monteverdi's operas or Tolstoy's novels. In this way, the opera, the novel, Shakespeare's tragedies, the works of Márquez, Borges, and Goethe's Faust all contribute to the growth of mythification and the mythological heritage of literature.

As Mircea Eliade notes, "*The myth tells a sacred tale; it informs us of an event that took place in primordial time, revealing the origin of miraculous phenomena.*" (Eliade, 1949, p. 91) Beauty, in Kuteli's stories, is not an inherent attribute. Justice, humanity, and morality are what constitute beauty. These values are also visible at the linguistic level, particularly in lexemes. Kuteli often uses a cataphoric narrative. Xoxi tells of a treasure hidden in a cave that he cannot carry to the surface because the shadow of a strict king-wearing a helmet and two goat horns prevents him from doing so, even when just a silver coin as thin as an onion peel remains in his pocket. The mysticism of the tale is heightened through a narrative break, continuing with a story within the story, forming an interwoven narrative that holds the tale's secret.

In the story Kapllan Aga of Shaban Shpata, Kuteli paints, on the palm of the Balkans, the anxious lives of Albanians approaching national independence, an uncertain future ahead. Each character in Kuteli's stories carries a personal system of values, an individual axiology. His work offers the reader the freedom to search for answers, form interpretations, and accept diverse visions. Kuteli presents his opposition to foreign invaders in various forms: implicitly, indirectly, through irony, or by assigning mocking titles to characters. For sympathetic figures, he uses affectionate suffixes (e.g., Rinë Katerinëza) or epithets like Old Woman of Bubullima to highlight courage, such as in the case of Qyrana of Thodhry.

At daybreak, Kirilloj's mother entered and called out, "*Kirilloj, my dear!*" She took Kirilloj in her arms, but he could not hold on to her, for Kirilloj turned into mist and vanished into nothingness (Kuteli, 2004, p. 78). Upon realizing this, Kirilloj's mother collapsed dead to the ground. Even Rinë Katerinëza did not rise alive. "*At night, Kirilloj arrived with friends, holding candles in his hands and a hallelujah on his lips, and took them all together to that other world, where there is no pain or sorrow, where May is eternal. The flower is never shaken, in the life of lives*" (Kuteli, 2004, p. 72).

A large part of Kuteli's literary activity is rooted in oral traditions, rich with mythological elements. In artistic literature, myth functions as a peritext that originates from an ethnotext, a legacy of oral heritage, a fairy tale transformed into literature. Figures like Orpheus and Napoleon were initially peritexts before becoming an opera by Monteverdi or a novel by Tolstoy. In this way, operas, novels, Shakespearean tragedies, the works of Márquez, Borges, and Goethe's Faust have contributed to the expansion and mythification of cultural heritage.

According to Mircea Eliade, "*The myth tells a sacred tale; it informs us in detail about an event that occurred in primordial times, at the origins of marvelous acts*" (Eliade, 1949, p. 91). Beauty is not an inherent phenomenon. In Kuteli's stories, beauty lies in justice, humanity,

and morality. These values are also reflected on a linguistic level, in lexemes and narrative structures.

For example, in a cataphoric narrative, Xoxi tells of a treasure found deep within a cave, which he is unable to bring to the surface because the shadow of a stern king, helmeted and bearing two goat horns, prevents him, even when a silver coin as thin as an onion peel remains in his pocket. The mysticism of the tale is intensified through a narrative break that introduces a story-within-a-story, an interwoven narrative that holds the key to its deeper meaning.

In “Kapllan Aga of Shaban Shpata,” the author illustrates, in the palm of the Balkans, the anxious life of Albanians during their march toward national independence, uncertain of the path ahead. Each character in Kuteli’s stories embodies a distinct system of values, a personal axiology. His work grants the reader the freedom to seek answers, form individual interpretations, and adopt differing visions.

Kuteli expresses opposition to foreign invaders in subtle, indirect ways, through irony, or by assigning satirical titles to characters. For sympathetic figures, he employs affectionate suffixes (e.g., Rinë Katerinëza), and epithets like “the Old Woman of Bubullima,” or celebrates the manly courage of Qyrana of Thodri. Through depictions of poverty and personal tragedy, such as the case of Aziz Gega avenging the murder of his son and the destruction of his home, Kuteli’s characters emerge from authentic emotional depths.

The material from which Kuteli builds his prose includes ancient Albanian songs and ballads from across the region, as well as biblical themes, found in stories such as Father Tanush of Bubullima, May Night, The Dead and the Living, June Night, and August Night. The recurring theme of “night” serves as a metaphor for mystical, psychologically charged narratives, offering fertile ground for ethnological and psychoanalytic analysis. “Great art is always impregnated with myths, i.e., with that unconscious process of symbolism which passes through art” (Jung, 2006, p. 149).

The fairy tale as a symbolic structure conveys messages about positive values lost or stolen from the past. Just as a child requests the same story repeatedly to learn how to solve a personal problem, the fairy tale provides a therapeutic function. It teaches children and guides adults, particularly in stories like *Kapllan Aga of Shaban Shpata*, where fantastic elements such as ghosts, *Gjonomadhë*, and *Gjatoninj* appear in settings like *Lower Illyria* or *The Dead and the Living*. The analysis of folk-based narratives requires esoteric, mystical, psychological insight and scholarly erudition. As Jung states: “*Nothing is achieved until the individual himself has changed, but efforts are considered justified only where the masses of the people are concerned*” (Jung, 2006, p. 149).

According to Vladimir Propp, one of the key principles of the fairy tale is that the focus lies in what the characters do, not who they are. Kuteli’s body of work embodies his philosophy, articulated through prose, poetry, literary criticism, and translation. With his original and unique style, he established new models in Albanian literature by artistically and aesthetically reworking ancient Albanian tales. The recurring story titles such as April Night and May Night blend philosophy, mythology, history, and poetic symbolism, depending on their narrative form. “Night” functions metaphorically to evoke the struggles and darkness of Albania’s historical past, shaping the present through metaphor and metonymy.

Edgar Allan Poe and His Gothic Stories

In Freud’s era, literature was viewed as an analogue of the author’s inner fantasy and was treated as a reflection of the writer’s psyche. This approach led to interpretations of literary characters as psychological projections of the author. Freud’s symbolic interpretations treated language as a precise and structured code. Consequently, the relationship between author and text was seen as direct and essential. Marie Bonaparte’s psychoanalytic readings of Edgar Allan

Poe's stories aimed to show how Poe expressed his internal anguish, especially his suffering and resentment toward his mother. She interpreted his characters as imago-hidden psychic images born of trauma and buried in the subconscious, manifested in works such as *The Raven*, *The Black Cat*, and his longer fiction.

In the *Fall of the House of Usher*, the reader may forget the presence of a third character—the narrator—due to the story's intense focus on Roderick and his sister. Since first-person narration is often equated with the author himself, readers may fall into the trap of conflating the narrator with Poe. Poe was a master of the fictional narrative, where the narrator is both character and storyteller. The concept of the “fictional narrator” was articulated by Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, to explain the divide between a narrative's voice and the author's intent. In the introduction to *The Premature Burial* (1844), Poe delivers a chilling account of a twin sister's live burial, preparing the reader psychologically for what follows.

“It is truly terrible [that such events occur], but what is more terrible is that it occurs out of punishment! It may be said, without hesitation, that no event is so terribly well adapted to inspire the supremeness of bodily and mental agony as burial alive” (Poe, 1844). Few readers can remain unaffected by this grim narrative. Both Gothic and horror literature often employ unreliable narrators to evoke suspense, forcing readers to question the narrator's credibility. This is central to many of Poe's stories. In *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the power of the story derives from narrators who are clearly mentally unstable.

The narrator in *The Fall of the House of Usher* is not overtly unreliable but remains distant and enigmatic. We know he was once Roderick's friend, but nothing more. We learn little about his personal life, whether he is married, how he has the freedom to stay for weeks, or what he truly thinks of what he sees. At times, he offers great detail, at others, he skips key moments. This ambiguity enhances the suspense. As Terry Heller notes in *The Delights of Terror*, the narrator never explains why he tells the story, making him more unreliable. The story begins with his arrival and ends with the house's destruction. Some critics argue this is not a story about the Ushers, but the dream of a mad narrator.

Many of Poe's stories feature the motif of the double or doppelgänger, a common Gothic trope. In *William Wilson* (1839), the protagonist meets a double of himself. In *The Cask of Amontillado* (1846), the similarity between Montresor (“to tell fate”) and Fortunato (“fortune”) suggests they may represent two aspects of one identity. In *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Poe uses multiple layers of doubling. The narrator first sees a reflection of the house in the lake, an image that frightens him. In addition to visual doubling, Poe employs verbal and auditory echoes. The family name “Usher” applies both to the lineage and the house, reinforcing the idea that the house and its inhabitants are one. (the family residence), and individual family members (such as Roderick) with the family and the house. And at the climax of the story when the narrator reads from a novel, to calm and distract Roderick, the sound effects in the novel echo the sounds that Madeline makes as she claws her way out of the coffin and her safe.

A third way in which Poe develops the theme of the double is through Roderick and Madeline, who are not only brother and sister, but twins and are particularly close. Poe does not say exactly what the nature of this closeness is. However, some scholars have argued that the twins are incestuous lovers. Readers do not need to go so far as to agree that the two are like halves of a single whole, bound in life and death and mirroring each other. In this story, the first time the narrator mentions eyes is in the “eye-like windows” of the House of Usher.

These two mentions on the first page personify the house: before Roderick suggests that the house has intelligence (it is a living being), the narrator has already done so using imagery. He notes that these eyes are “empty,” which suggests that this intelligence is somehow disturbing. The narrator (Roderick's only friend) comments explicitly and repeatedly on Roderick's eyes. When he first arrives at the house, he finds Roderick's eyes particularly bright, indicating a strong and unique spirit. However, as soon as Madeline dies, the light goes out of

Roderick's eyes. At the very least, this symbolizes a blow to his soul and may be a kind of spiritual death that foreshadows his physical death.

The descriptions of the physical house, which begin in the first paragraph, are of the House of Usher: like the house itself, the family is isolated and melancholic and, perhaps, exists beyond reason. Writing about the archetypal symbolism in this story, or the inclusion of universal characters, symbols, themes, or settings such as the hero or good versus evil, for example, psychology professor Colin Martindale also suggests a second symbolic meaning for the house (and notes that Poe makes this clear in the story as well, through his use of *The Haunted Mansion*): the house represents Roderick's mental state or personality. In this reading, the narrator is trying to help Roderick establish peace in his mind, which includes his twin sister, as an example of the anima, or unconscious. (Martindale, 1981) The decay and collapse of the house symbolize Roderick's madness.

From the beginning of this story to the end, the weather plays a major role. The narrator mentions the weather in the opening lines of the novella, commenting on how low and oppressive the clouds are. They limit his view, and thus limit his understanding of the house and the situation. When the narrator Waking up the night after Madeline's death, Roderick opens the window to discover a strange storm that is almost physically impossible. At the same time, there is a whirlwind blowing intensely and clouds so low that they touch the towers of the house. Poe here touches on the long-standing symbolic connection between the sky and the spiritual realm: the term "heaven" or "heavens" is used for both. The weather seems to reflect the characters' spiritual turmoil.

Throughout the story, but especially when Madeline dies and Roderick enters a state of depression, the weather outside the house reflects the growing chaos inside the house. The distinction between the two fades, and the weather outside merges with the emotional reality inside the house. When the narrator wakes up in the night, he hears sounds during the pauses of the storm. When Madeline finally emerges from the coffin, the weather destroys the house. These powerful emotions overwhelm Roderick, he falls dead, and with the description of the storm the novel concludes.

Based on Immanuel Kant's categories, Plato's Ideas, and Arthur Schopenhauer's prototypes, Carl Jung argued that humanity inherits a combination of thoughts, behaviors, and feelings from ancestors that he called the "collective unconscious." According to Jung, when the unconscious crosses its threshold that is, into consciousness it manifests itself through their interaction with the external world, archetypes emerge as clear forms of their inherited potentials. In order to adapt to the external world and actualize themselves in personality, people must maintain a balance between the "person" they show and the "shadow" they hide in order to prevent their destruction.

The "anima," as defined by Jung, represents the feminine nature in the male subconscious to help humanity achieve a balance between the opposite sex that he carries in both this personal and collective unconscious. Therefore, he constantly sought help and protection from his "anima," which consequently overshadowed his masculine psychic side. Narrator, Doubtless, and the Unconscious in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. In his Gothic tale *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1845), Edgar Allan Poe creates a closed universe, steeped in darkness and illusion, where reality and fantasy blend indistinguishably.

Using an unreliable narrator, a structure rich in double symbolism, and deep subtexts of unconscious psychology, Poe transforms the House of Usher into an arena of psychic turmoil. This paper analyzes how Poe uses these elements to create an atmosphere of anxiety and to address core themes such as identity, madness, and the hidden human consciousness.

The Unreliable Narrator and the Rhetoric of Fiction

From the very beginning, Poe sets an emotionally charged tone, warning the reader of the horrors to come. This approach is consistent with the concept of the unreliable narrator, as first analyzed by Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). The narrator in this story offers neither certainty nor transparency the reader is faced with uncertainty about the accuracy of the descriptions, while reality and subjective perception mix in a destabilizing way. Terry Heller (1987:78) notes that the narrator's lack of clear purpose in telling the story creates the effect of a madman's dream. The narrator's own identity is unclear, we only know that he is an old friend of Roderick Usher. This lack of information, together with the choice of descriptions, adds a dubious and dreamy dimension to the narrative tension, making the story an uncertain reflection of reality.

The symbolism of doubling is one of the fundamental pillars of the story. From the very first paragraphs, the narrator mentions the reflection of the house in the waters of the lake – a reflection that arouses fear and a disturbing sense of the distortion of reality. This symbolism is not only visual, but also extends to the psychological and linguistic structure of the story. The two main characters, Roderick and Madeline Usher, are twins – a perfect form of doubling. They represent two halves of a whole: body and soul, consciousness and unconscious. Colin Martindale (1981:119) argues that Poe emphasizes this doubling through descriptions of the environment and events, where everything seems like a frightening reflection or repetition. Madeline's emergence from the grave and her voices that match the text that the narrator reads reinforce the idea of a reality that repeats itself in a distorted form.

The House as a Symbol of Mental State

The House of Usher is not simply an external environment, but a projection of Roderick Usher's internal psychological state. Poe's descriptions – the house as decaying, dark, isolated – match the symptoms of a disintegrating mind. In this way, the building becomes a metaphor for the human brain. Martindale (1981:78), connects this symbolism to the poem "*The Haunted Palace*" that appears within the story, seeing the house as a reflection of a consciousness that has disintegrated.

The Jungian approach deepens this reading: according to Jung (1968:54), Madeline is the "anima" – the unconscious feminine aspect of the male personality. She represents the repressed and denied part of Roderick's self, which when it returns, does so in a violent and destructive way. The explosion of the anima leads to the destruction of consciousness – and metaphorically – the house itself.

Weather as a reflection of the psyche

The Gothic element of weather is skillfully used by Poe to reflect the internal state of the characters. The fog and heavy clouds that appear at the beginning of the story are metaphors for mental confusion and oppression. While the climax of the story, Madeline's resurrection, is accompanied by a violent storm – a symbol of the emotional explosion and internal crisis that Roderick experiences. Poe thus establishes a parallel between the external environment and the internal psyche, blurring the boundaries between reality and the spirit.

Gothic Elements in Poe and Mitrush Kuteli: A Comparative Approach

The stories of Edgar Allan Poe and those of Mitrush Kuteli, although belonging to different cultural and temporal realities, share some essential elements of the Gothic genre: the

presence of the supernatural, the dark atmosphere, the figure of the dead, psychological shock and existential uncertainty.

1. Atmosphere and the Terrible

In Poe, the “terrible” is often the result of a consciousness that collapses under the weight of madness or the unconscious (as in *The Fall of the House of Usher*). While in Kuteli, fear and the supernatural stem from customs, beliefs and popular mythology. Stories such as *The Uprising for the Ghoul* or *The Ghouls of Our Village* bring a collective fear rooted in traditional Albanian superstition and imagery.

2. The figure of the dead

Poe's dead are figures of shock and catastrophic return (like Madeline Usher), while in Kuteli they follow a different symbolic line: they are often moral, helpful, and act to restore social order and family honor. Kirilloj, for example, in the story *Rinë Katerinëza* and her marriage to Kirilloj, returns from death not to spread horror, but to fulfill a promise.

3. The ghouls as a moral mirror

Unlike in Poe, where madness and mental confusion are internal and individual, in Kuteli the ghouls often have a moralizing function. The Ghouls are those who have done evil in life and continue to cause harm even after death. Here we have a clear division between the “good dead” and the “evil ghouls”, which is absent in Poe, where the boundaries are more blurred.

4. The Influence of Ethnopsychology and Folk Belief

Kuteli powerfully incorporates Albanian myths, historical figures, and ethos such as *besa*, honor, and family devotion into the construction of the narrative. Poe, on the other hand, operates more in the terrain of the individual psychological unconscious, following the trajectory of an internal destruction, as manifested in the incredible narrative structure and tragic endings.

Conclusion

The Fall of the House of Usher is much more than a horror story. It is a profound exploration of the human psyche, built on the foundation of an incredible narrator, a structure filled with symbols of duplication, and a profound Jungian psychological approach. Poe, in this work, presents himself as not only a master of atmosphere and horror, but also as a psychoanalyst of human nature, who uses literature to expose the deepest darkness's of the mind. This family had an 800-year-old house, their first was excommunicated because he had followed a satanic ritual and, in their house, in a secret room, innocent people and children were sacrificed in honor of the devil!!

The house was dark, with paintings of the devil and terrible and frightening statues. In this family, marriages were necessarily made between brothers and sisters. Incest had been a ritual-norm and, this fate should have followed Roderick, but on the other hand he is intellectual, educated and with common sense, although he wants to avoid this perverted ritual, but he cannot. The house is cursed, he is aware that he must die with the house, because he is the last of the Ushers. Their first had not lived more than 37 years. He and his sister, Madeline, still had a few months to reach 37, they were both twins. He tells his friend-narrator that he has buried his sister alive, for whom he feels sorry.

Gothic elements appear everywhere, inside the house, but even after a week, he hears the sound of his sister's attempt to get out of the coffin. The story ends when she gets out of the coffin and pushes Roderick and both fall dead to the floor, from this collision, the walls of the house crack and it completely collapses, in a few minutes.

Similar "gothic" elements are also found in Mitrush Kutel's stories: *The Dead and the Living*, *Rinë Katerinza* and her Marriage with Kirilloj, *The Ghouls of Our Village*, *The Uprising for the Ghoul*, etc. These stories are complex with typical Albanian ethnopsychological elements, superstitious, with historical figures, that the dead are raised from

the grave by faith, honor, promises, that they had given, to the mother, wife, children and, the dead are most often benefactors, helpers (Kirilloj). While the evil-doing ghouls were those who had tormented people, in their lifetime, but also after death like Zef Kanxhallozi, *Tellua* who exhausts springs and wells, (in the story Uprising for the Ghoul), etc.

While Poe represents a more introspective, psychological and philosophical dimension of the Gothic, Kuteli creates an “*Albanian Gothic*”, where fear, the supernatural and the figure of the dead are intertwined with the traditions, beliefs and moral codes of Albanian society. Both authors, each in their own way, use storytelling to explore the limits of the human mind and morality, making the Gothic a powerful narrative tool for different cultural realities.

References

- [1]. Kuteli, Mitrush (2004), *Prozë dhe vargje të zgjedhura*, Mitrush Kuteli, Tiranë.
- [2]. Alan Poe, Edgar, (2004), *Poezi dhe ese*, Plejad, Tiranë.
- [3]. Alan Poe, Edgar, (2004), *Novela*, Plejad, Tiranë.
- [4]. Jung, Carl Gustav (2006), *Psikologjia analitike*, Fan Noli, Tiranë.
- [5]. Tresider, Jack (2001), *Dictionary of symbols*, Izdavacki Centar TRI, Shkup.
- [6]. Tirta, Mark (2004), *Mitologjia ndër shqiptarë*, Mësonjëtorja, Tiranë.
- [7]. Jung, Carl Gustav, (2010), *Ese mbi gjurmimin e pavetëdijes*, Fan Noli, Tiranë.
- [8]. Jung, Carl Gustav, (2010), *Njeriu dhe simbolet e tij*, Fan Noli, Tiranë.
- [9]. Prince, Gerald, (2010), *Dictionary of narratology*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, Nebraska.
- [10]. Kuteli. Mitrush, (1976), *Tregime të mocme shqiptare*, Rilindja, Prishtinë.
- [11]. Guerin, W. L., Labor, E., Morgan, L., Reesman, J. C., & Willingham, J. R. A, (2004), *Handbook of critical approaches to literature*, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [12]. Heller, Terry, (August 1, 1987), *The Delights of Terror*, University of Illinois Press; First Edition.
- [13]. Freud, Sigmund. (Edited by Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, and Ernst Kris), *The origins of psycho-analysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes: 1887-1902*, Published by New York: Basic Books, (1997).
- [14]. Freud, S. (2023), *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Pharos Books, USA.
- [15]. Martindale, Colin (1981), *Cognition and consciousness* (The Dorsey series in psychology), Dorsey Press, USA.
- [16]. Eliade, M. (1949), *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History*, Heaper Torchrooks, Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York.