




# Unveiling Religious Paradigm and Postmodern Deconstruction in Dramatic Works from The Balkan Countries of the 20th And Early 21st Centuries: A Study of Sabri Hamiti's Drama

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## Abstract

The article investigated the religious paradigm and postmodern deconstruction in the dramatic works of Balkan playwrights, focusing on Kosovar writer Sabri Hamiti, exploring the role of religious and mythological narratives in his plays and their deconstruction through postmodernist techniques. The research analysed how Hamiti incorporates biblical, Qur'anic, and mythological symbols to question traditional moral frameworks, offering new interpretations of sin, redemption, and moral responsibility. Using a comparative literary approach and textual analysis, the study identified key postmodern principles such as multiplicity of meanings, temporal disruptions, and deconstruction of fixed structures in Hamiti's works. The results demonstrate that Hamiti's dramas challenge the stability of religious and moral concepts, while simultaneously utilizing them as cultural artifacts that contribute to the national identity of the Balkans. His plays reveal a complex interaction between the sacred and the profane, highlighting the role of religion in shaping both individual and collective consciousness. The findings underscore the enduring significance of religious symbols in contemporary Balkan drama and the profound impact of postmodernist tendencies on the cultural and theatrical development of the region.

**Keywords:** mythology, symbolism, theatre, tragedy, anthropology, interpretation, narrative, semiotics.

## Introduction

The study of the religious paradigm and its influence on the development of dramaturgy is not only important for understanding cultural heritage and the literary process. It is also significant for comprehending how societies and nations articulate their historical experiences and evolving identities. As religious and mythological symbols serve as foundational elements in many cultural narratives, their continued relevance in contemporary dramaturgy reflects their enduring power to shape both collective and individual identity. In the context of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, a period marked by significant political, social, and technological changes, these elements have taken on new meanings and interpretations. Particularly in regions such as the Balkans, where historical and cultural intersections are highly complex.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that religious and mythological elements in the Balkans have often been used as a means of addressing national and ethnic conflicts. Social transformations,



and the negotiation of identity in post-communist and post-Yugoslav states. By examining how postmodern deconstruction enables a rethinking of these symbols, this research highlights the ways in which contemporary Balkan playwrights engage with their cultural past while addressing present-day realities. The exploration of religious paradigms in dramaturgy offers insight into the broader cultural processes of myth-making and nation-building, revealing how the reinterpretation of sacred symbols can facilitate dialogue on historical memory, trauma, and identity. Additionally, the academic significance of this research extends to its contribution to the global understanding of how religion and mythology are adapted in modern literature to respond to contemporary social and political conditions, while much attention has been given to the religious dimensions of literature in Western Europe and North America. However, the unique historical and cultural context of the Balkan region, with its diverse religious traditions and complex historical trajectory, provides a rich field for new scholarly inquiry.

In the article by Bekalp (2024), author explored the concepts of “weak theology” and “religion without religion,” critically analysing how religion and theology fit into postmodern thought, particularly through the lens of John Caputo's postmodern approach. Caputo develops a hermeneutical theology that avoids relativism and asserts that although life is always interpreted differently, it still holds a religious aspect, highlighting the plurality and locality of contemporary religious understandings. Research by Lamcja (2021) analysed the works of Balkan writers to identify common themes and elements in their literature, reflecting cultural Balkanism. The analysis shows that there is a connection between the cultures, folklore, and mythology of the different countries of the peninsula, confirming the development of the concept of Balkanism in modern literature. Price (2021) examined the historical context of postmodernism, its methodological approaches, and its implications for writing history, evaluating its epistemology and theorization. Doçe and Halili (2021) emphasized religious paradigms and postmodern deconstruction, bringing to light the conflicts between personal experience and general history, which is characteristic of Balkan theatre in the 20th and 21st centuries. Righter (2024) highlighted how mythological elements and religious symbols form deep thematic layers in plays, reflecting cultural and social contexts. Analysing “deconstructive” novels, Gvozden (2020) emphasized the complexity of representing metanarratives in literature and explored identity and social boundaries, using religious symbols and narratives for a critical understanding of modernity.

By addressing the lack of comprehensive studies on the interaction between religious paradigms and postmodern dramaturgy in the Balkans, this research not only advances academic discourse. It also opens up new pathways for understanding how literature and drama serve as vehicles for cultural negotiation and transformation in this region. Despite significant contributions by scholars to the study of religious symbols, the interaction between religious and mythological symbols in the dramaturgy of the Balkan region remains underexplored. In particular, little attention has been paid to how postmodern deconstruction reinterprets these symbols in the context of national identity and contemporary cultural transformations. Moreover, the study of the influence of the religious paradigm on the dramatic works of Sabri Hamiti (1990; 1997; 2023) and his role in shaping Albania’s cultural consciousness has not been sufficiently addressed in academic literature. The research aims to study postmodern approaches to the interpretation of religious symbols, as well as their impact on the process of national self-identification and the cultural development of Albania.

## **Materials and Methods**

The methodological foundation of this research is based on the integration of theoretical, critical, analytical, and comparative approaches to the study of religious and mythological aspects in the dramaturgy of Sabri Hamiti: “Futa” (1990), “Mission” (1997) and “Passion” (2023). Particularly through the lens of postmodern deconstruction and the cultural-anthropological context. At the core of this research lies theory of deconstruction by Derrida (2016), which allows for the questioning of stable categories and meanings traditionally attributed to religious and mythological symbols. This approach was applied to the study of Sabri Hamiti’s plays, where religious and mythological narratives undergo new interpretations, and their meanings are transformed in the context of contemporary social realities. Using a deconstructionist methodology, the study examined how S.



Hamiti reinterprets religious symbols and myths in the context of national identity and cultural changes in the Balkans.

The critical analysis in this study is aimed at uncovering the cultural-anthropological foundations of Sabri Hamiti's works. Mythological and religious narratives were examined not only as literary phenomena but also as cultural artefacts reflecting the evolution of Albanian national identity. The method of cultural criticism was applied to study the impact of religious heritage on the formation of national discourse and literary tradition in Albanian dramaturgy. Particular attention was paid to how religious symbols in Hamiti's works are transformed into tools of social and political critique.

The analytical method allowed for a detailed exploration of the textual and symbolic aspects of Hamiti's dramaturgy. Within this approach, the texts were analysed at the level of structural elements – from the general composition to specific religious and mythological imagery. The analytical method was also used to examine intertextuality and metatextuality in Hamiti's works, where religious and mythological elements intertwine with contemporary themes and issues.

The deconstructionist approach was employed to analyse the ruptures and contradictions in the religious and mythological symbols presented in Hamiti's dramaturgy. It provided the opportunity to uncover multiple meanings and different interpretative layers of the text. This approach also revealed how the postmodern treatment of religious elements reshapes traditional notions of national identity and cultural heritage. The interpretation of the cultural-anthropological aspects of Hamiti's dramaturgy was based on the study of mythological and religious symbols as cultural artefacts. Cultural anthropology methods were used to explore how these symbols are employed in contemporary texts to create new national and social narratives. For a comprehensive analysis of Hamiti's dramatic works, the synthesis of various approaches was also employed. The combination of textual analysis with cultural and anthropological research allowed for a deeper understanding of the multi-layered symbols and motifs in the author's works, particularly the religious and mythological ones.

## Results

### Religious paradigm and myth in Sabri Hamiti's dramatic works

Biblical motifs play a central role in Sabri Hamiti's works, where religious imagery is intertwined with the national and cultural specifics of Albania. These motifs are adapted to the modern social context, allowing the author to reflect and reinterpret religious values through local traditions and challenges. Hamiti's plays often centre on moral dilemmas that explore themes of sin, redemption, and responsibility, making religious motifs integral to dramatic conflict rather than mere decorative elements. His characters' struggles mirror broader societal issues, blending the local with the universal. Through this, Hamiti creates a metafictional narrative that questions established notions of truth and knowledge, transforming dramaturgy into a form of epistemological inquiry that challenges traditional perceptions of truth in religion, culture, and life.

Sabri Hamiti combines elements of both Christian and Islamic symbolism in his plays, reflecting the complex religious structure of the Balkans, particularly in Albania, where both religions coexist. This synthesis of symbols creates a unique cultural context for Hamiti's dramatic works, where religious symbols become tools for constructing the narrative and moral conflicts. For example, the cross, as the central symbol of Christianity, in all Hamiti's works may transform into a symbol of internal spiritual conflict. Islamic motifs, such as submission and faith, are often used to emphasize the human struggle with their weaknesses. This interreligious dialogue in Hamiti's plays not only reflects the specificity of Albanian culture but also raises universal questions about the coexistence of different religious worldviews within one society. The influence of Christian and Islamic symbols in his works allows for a deeper exploration of themes of moral choice, self-awareness, and the search for spiritual meaning in a world where religious traditions intersect and interact.



In antiquity, free people gathered to listen to leaders' discussions, sometimes making important decisions. Over time, the agora came to signify the gathering of small groups within the state. However, its meaning extends beyond the economic function; it also serves as the moral and sacred centre of the city. People gather in the agora during festivals, which typically mark the beginning of solemn processions. This definition, taken from the Italian encyclopaedia "Treccani," reflects the significance and spread of this urban term over time. The agora has three dimensions – economic, moral, and sacred – that form a connection to the theme and dramatic text of Sabri Hamiti's works. The significance of the agora as a space for decision-making and the gathering of free people mirrors the social and political dynamics within Hamiti's dramas, where public and familial interactions are central to the plot. Just as the agora served as a place for societal discourse, Hamiti's plays often unfold within the framework of the "oikos" (οἶκος) – the nuclear family of the "polis" (πόλις), often associated with the agora – reflecting both the individual and collective moral questions present in the public sphere.

The author consciously chooses family units and public squares for constructing his dramatic plots, relying on the reader's beliefs, which become the foundation for the dramatic narrative. Thus, the agoric tradition in his plays not only provides a space for political and social interactions but also reflects a place of moral and spiritual struggle. In both literary and cultural contexts, the Flood and the Desert can be seen as intertexts. These symbols encompass themes of catastrophe and chaos (the Flood), as well as the quest for renewal, public spaces, and community (the Agora). They also touch on ideological debates and conflicts, loneliness and isolation, trials and transformation (the Desert). In Hamiti's plays, these symbols transform into themes and aesthetics that embody new values and meanings. Paratexts, according to Gérard Genette's concept, complement these interpretations, providing evidence of their innovativeness and creating coexistence and genealogical connections between various cultural layers (Piégay-Gros, 2011).

The dramatic events in Sabri Hamiti's works are complex, oscillating between fictional and real worlds, where individuals face ethical dilemmas. Symbolic elements and intertextual references add depth to the narrative, with public discourse playing a key role, often represented in urbanistic and philosophical conversations held in spaces resembling ancient agoras. For instance, scenes like Isa and Besa on the hotel terrace or the procession at the Kopshtele cemeteries intertwine private and public spheres, reflecting broader moral issues. The "Desert," emerging after the Year Zero and the Flood, becomes a metaphor for chaos and cyclical decay, emphasizing existential emptiness and the repeated rethinking of moral and spiritual values in a world struggling to regenerate (Hamiti, 1990; 2023).

History in Sabri Hamiti's dramaturgy has a clear dramatic arc, creating a kind of installation play. It spans several timelines, corresponding to Gérard Genette's concept of time flow and narrative structure. Similar to Marcel Proust, the structure of Hamiti's work reflects a close connection between the author and his time and the history he tells. This layering of time introduces multiple moments of simultaneity, where scenes resemble Noah's Ark, about to explode, underscoring the importance of the author's theses and reinforcing his narrative. Anachronism in the work acts as a distinctive sign of existence, as also discussed by Genette (2017). This interpretation of time and space allows the author to inscribe his narrative into the broader context of human history, where different eras interact and intertwine. The story of the Great Flood, presented in the Book of Genesis (chapters 6-9), also finds its reflection in New Testament texts. Specifically, in 1 Peter 3:20, the flood symbolizes salvation, reaffirming the religious subtext of the narrative (Interconfessional Albanian Bible, 2020). The Apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 2:5, refers to Noah as a preacher of righteousness and uses the Flood as an example of God's judgment upon sinners. Jesus Himself, in the Gospels of Matthew (24:37-39) and Luke (17:26-27), mentions the days of Noah and the Flood as a comparison to the time of His second coming. This biblical episode emphasizes the suddenness of His return, which has an apocalyptic nature. In the play "Passion", this metaphor is used to depict a world descending into anarchy and unpredictability, leading to an apocalyptic scenario (Hamiti, 2023). Such a plot carries elements of counterculture, shifting the focus of action toward post-existentialism, where dehumanization and fragmentation of human nature take place. This also pushes toward a new futurism, exploring future transformations of society and culture (Bertens, 2022).



Sabri Hamiti's latest dramatic work is a unique experiment that presents a new text and structure by combining two fundamental types of human knowledge: myth and religion. This includes references to both the Bible and the Qur'an, allowing for an analysis of the Albanian epic Muja-Muisi through the lens of dramatic art. At the core of this interpretation lies the idea that every myth contains universal truths, reflecting ancient events that have metaphysical and theological significance. As Tolkien (1972) notes in his work *The Lord of the Rings*, myths may be imperfect, but they contain a kernel of truth – the very “spark of light.” According to Savini (2020), these truths reveal aspects of reality that can only be understood through the symbolic form inherent in myths.

In Sabri Hamiti's plays, objects on stage not only change shape but also acquire new symbolic meanings. One of the most popular objects is tables, which in different contexts carry various semantic loads. For instance, in the play “*Passion*”, the table transforms into a banquet table; in “*Mission*”, into a round table; and in “*Futa*”, into a square one. These changes are not random; they emphasize the metaphorical richness of the dramatic texts and serve as a forewarning about the development of the plot and themes of the performance, echoing classical Platonic philosophy (Mintz, 2021). In this case, ideas are combined to form a sign as a code, which the viewer or reader must decipher, aligning with Greimas' theory of generative semiotics (Traini, 2022).

In allegorical and alchemical ideography, the circle symbolizes wholeness, as does the square. They are deeply rooted in the concepts of creation, where the circle represents the sky, and the square represents the earth, human life, and social space, particularly the agora. The interaction of these geometric figures expresses a transcendent process while embodying the anti-dynamism of the moment of creative stasis, where the circle symbolizes movement, and its endpoint takes on an angular shape. These symbols have ancient significance in various cultures. For example, in the Jewish tradition, the circle, square, and the number four are often associated with the Tetragrammaton – YHWH, the four letters of God's name, Yahweh, which is considered a symbol of perfection. This vision originates from Ezekiel's prophecies in the Old Testament and is linked to the four evangelists and their tetramorphs: Mark – the humble servant, Matthew – the lion, Luke – the son of man, and John – the eagle. Similarly, in the Upper Church of St. Francis, the elements of earth, fire, water, and air are present, which also have biblical significance (Interconfessional Albanian Bible, 2020).

The author appears to recognize this semiotic and ideographic pattern, expanding the metalanguage that links the structures of discourse to the text. These structures include time, space, metaphor, and actors, while the text itself is manifested through semantic layers and emotions. For example, in the play “*Mission*”, the action unfolds in four different time periods, symbolizing the development of events intersecting through the lens of mythological and religious imagery, creating a multidimensional narrative. At a key moment, the author uses symbols more explicitly. He transforms the table into a banquet table. One of the characters breaks the legs of the table and chairs, which gives a new clue: myth, banquet, and chairs. The last word has many meanings, demonstrating the richness of interpretation and the puzzle of the dramatic game. This symbolizes the infinity of meaning, corresponding to Peirce's concept of the fact, object, and interpreter. This transformation also reflects ritual and ceremonies, which have a cathartic effect and are useful in the context of dramaturgy (Mambrol, 2018).

Experimental elements are present in all three of Sabri Hamiti's dramas: “*Futa*”, “*Mission*”, and “*Passion*”. These experiments can be both textual and structural, allowing the author to delve into the depths of mythological and biblical symbols, using them as catalysts for cultural reflections. The mythological and biblical signs that appear in the works are provocative, as their cultural references challenge established knowledge and worldview norms, simultaneously undermining them and returning them to the audience in new, reinterpreted forms. Sabri Hamiti uses deconstruction of ancient themes and characters, including metatheatrical techniques that often reveal to the audience the very process of creating the narrative and dramatic reality. Through a combination of political and social commentary, the playwright pushes the boundaries of his art, addressing deep cultural and moral conflicts inherent not only to his native region but to human nature as a whole. As a result, his plays become stylistically complex works, intertwining different levels of time and space, which

include biblical symbols, a mythic agora, and a desert symbolizing the “blood-flowers of evil” that bloom in a socially fractured society.

### Postmodern deconstruction in the work of Sabri Hamiti

The theory of deconstruction, developed by the French philosopher Derrida (2016), is an important concept in postmodernism. It emphasizes the impermanence and multiplicity of meanings of texts. Deconstruction calls into question traditional notions of the meaning, logic, and structure of a text, revealing their internal contradictions and aporias. The theory of deconstruction has significantly impacted various disciplines, such as literary studies, philosophy, theology, and sociology, by transforming approaches to interpreting cultural texts. It emphasizes the impermanence of value, the disclosure of aporias, and critiques traditional binary oppositions, suggesting that the meaning of a text is not fixed but changes depending on context and interpretation. Additionally, deconstruction reveals logical breaks and contradictions within texts, ultimately questioning their authority. The scheme presents the main aspects of the theory of deconstruction in Figure 1.

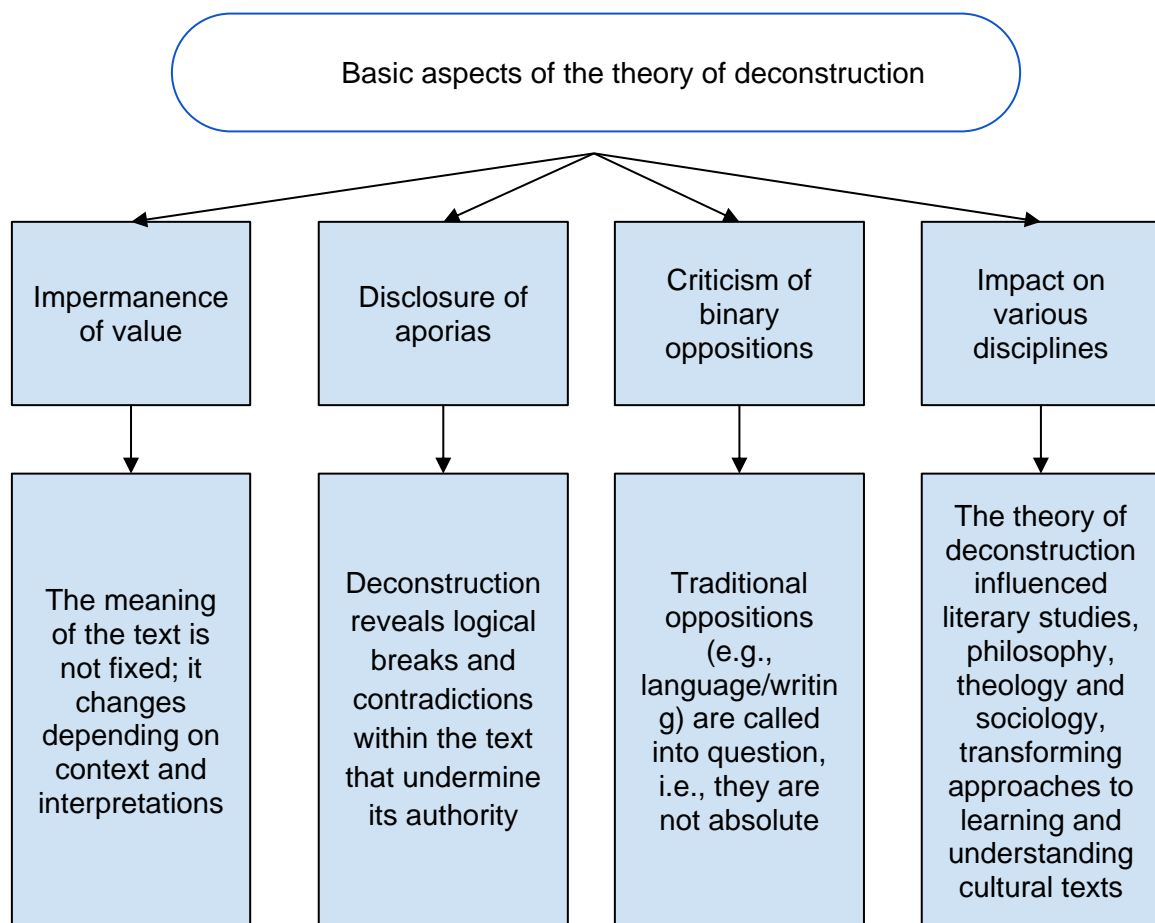


Figure 1: Main aspects of the theory of deconstruction  
Source: compiled by the authors based on Jabeen and ul Ain (2021).

Deconstruction theory has become one of the key concepts of postmodernism, especially in literature and philosophy. Deconstruction seeks to reveal the fluidity and multiplicity of meanings within a text, undermining traditional notions of a single interpretation. A deconstructive approach in postmodernist drama requires a careful analysis of the text’s structure to uncover hidden contradictions, ambiguities, and aporias that challenge logical systems and commonly accepted meanings. In his plays, Sabri Hamiti employs these principles to create texts that challenge traditional genre and conceptual norms, provoking the audience into new reflections.



In Hamiti's dramaturgy, deconstruction manifests in his undermining of narrative linearity, breaking the plot into fragments and playing with temporal structures. His works, such as "Futa" and "Mission", demonstrate the subversion of classical forms and a shift of focus toward marginal elements of the text, which aligns with the deconstructionist vision of the instability of meaning. For example, in "Mission", the temporal frames are not clearly defined, and shifts in temporal horizons blur the boundaries between past, present, and future, opening the text to multiple interpretations. This poststructuralist treatment of time upends its stability and enhances the dialectic between the past, present, and future. It questions fixed temporal structures, serving the ideological aims of the author, which extend beyond the dramatic context to literary and aesthetic realms. In this sense, the plays use paradox as a tool for the free play of structure, which, according to Derrida, shifts the centre of thought and attempts to fill the segmented play.

Paradox in Hamiti's plays creates new thoughts and signs that surpass other signifiers and form new cycles of thought and conclusions. This process leads to the creation of difference, which perfectly corresponds to a semiotic reading of the triangle Flood-Agora-Desert. According to concept of Heidegger (1989), these elements create a tableau of moment-time that includes the individual as a unit within this time and communicates with the surrounding reality. This also represents a call to avoid the repetition of mistakes, injustices, and sins. Thus, "Futa" and "Mission" embody poststructuralist ideas in theatrical form, using time as a flexible element to explore the author's ideological and aesthetic goals. Specifically, in Hamiti's plays, the concepts of paradox and temporality serve as tools for exploring metaphysical and social themes. They allow the complex structures of identity, memory, and human existence, which are crucial for understanding the aesthetics and ideology of the author's work, to be revealed. Such an interpretation of time and paradox offers new perspectives for analyzing dramaturgy, where structure and meanings are constantly shifting and intertwining. Therefore, "Futa" and "Mission" not only demonstrate innovative approaches to structuring time but also make a significant contribution to expanding the understanding of how dramaturgy can use temporal and semiotic concepts to achieve new literary and philosophical goals.

One of the key aspects of deconstruction is the dismantling of binary oppositions such as good and evil, centre and periphery, reality and fiction. In Hamiti's works, these oppositions often blur, turning into complex contrasts that lack clear resolution. For example, in the play "Passion", the characters cannot be unambiguously defined as positive or negative; their moral responsibility and sin exist in the context of uncertainty and constant revision of values. In this way, Hamiti undermines the idea of a clear moral code, leaving room for multilayered and open interpretation. This also applies to religious and mythological motifs, which in his plays undergo deconstruction. For instance, in "Futa", traditional images of salvation and retribution are questioned, and attempts to resolve moral dilemmas only emphasize their irresolvability. Here, the author uses the concept of "différance", which emphasizes that meaning can never be definitively fixed but constantly defers in the process of interpretation.

Another important element of postmodern deconstruction in Sabri Hamiti's work is the use of intertextuality and metatext. His plays are rich with references to classical literary, religious, and mythological texts, transforming them into a field for intellectual play with the reader or viewer. In "Mission", the author actively plays with religious and philosophical symbols, using them to create a multilayered narrative that demands deep analysis. This postmodern technique allows for the deconstruction of established interpretations of the text and the generation of new meanings. The metatextuality in Hamiti's plays is evident in his frequent focus on the very nature of theatre as a construction. In this context, the plays are characterized by self-awareness, not hiding their artificial nature. This is a hallmark of postmodernism, where the boundaries between reality and artistic fiction become blurred, and the art itself presents itself as a process. In "Futa", the characters often engage in a reflective dialogue with the audience, questioning the very nature of the stage action and text.

The biblical motifs used by Hamiti also reflect the postmodernist tendency to deconstruct religious narratives, opening new perspectives for interpreting classical religious texts. Thus, biblical plots, traditionally perceived as symbols of salvation and divine justice, become tools for exploring



contemporary existential questions such as moral dilemmas, loss of faith, or the search for meaning in the face of cultural and spiritual crisis. In his works, Hamiti portrays society as a unified whole but often fragmented and torn apart by internal conflicts and crises. The use of mixed styles and techniques helps the playwright create metaphorical spaces where religious and mythological symbols not only form part of the artistic structure but also serve as tools for understanding contemporary social and political realities.

One of the central themes of postmodern deconstruction is the rejection of metanarratives, the large, universal stories that give meaning to all aspects of human life. Hamiti consciously rejects these metanarratives, instead focusing on fragmented, localized stories that reflect individual experiences. In his works, there is no single idea of salvation or moral repentance; instead, the characters seek their own answers amid uncertainty and chaos. This is especially evident in "Passion", where the central conflict has no clear resolution, and the religious themes of salvation and sin provide no definitive answer. Hamiti thus demonstrates a characteristic postmodern rejection of established truths and a search for new forms of expressing human experience, consistent with the deconstructive approach to literature and theatre.

In Sabri Hamiti's dramas, the chorus and referential subtext are key elements of public discourse, connected to the concept of the agora and present throughout his works. The chorus not only highlights the theatrical form but also transforms the text through subtexts, which evolve into intertexts and eventually metatexts. In "Mission", the play ends with two lines that provoke confusion, employing abstraction and irony. The names Sofo and Jus evoke associations with Joseph, while also suggesting "wisdom" (σοφός) and "law" (Jus), carrying ironic subtext beyond their primary meanings (Lagerwall, 2024). The chorus creates a non-linear discourse, allowing the narrative to remain open and infinite, continuing beyond classical dramatic structures. Hamiti's use of abstraction and irony in "Mission" demonstrates that even the finale is part of an ongoing process of reinterpretation and transformation. As Genette and Prieto suggest, his dramaturgy resists closure, with the curtain symbolizing an endless cycle of actions and interpretations.

Sabri Hamiti's dramatic works, such as "Misioni" and "Pasioni", play a significant role in shaping Albanian national self-identification and cultural development by intertwining religious symbols, mythological references, and historical narratives with the socio-political realities of modern Albania. In "Misioni", Hamiti uses Christian imagery of messianic sacrifice to explore themes of faith, moral duty, and national responsibility, portraying a character tasked with redeeming his community, which mirrors Albania's struggle to reconcile its historical and religious heritage with modern challenges. Similarly, in "Pasioni", Hamiti delves into the complexities of suffering and redemption, blending Christian, Albanian, and Islamic traditions to reflect the moral dilemmas faced by Albanians during post-communist transitions. Through these plays, Hamiti critiques the compromises between preserving cultural values and adapting to modernity, illustrating the ongoing tension between tradition and change in the process of national self-definition.

Hamiti's use of religious imagery in "Futa" highlights the moral and ethical dimensions of the Albanian national character. The character of Futa, much like the protagonists in "Misioni" and "Pasioni", is caught between tradition and modernity, faith and reason, personal ambition and collective responsibility. Through his journey, the play explores the ways in which Albanians must balance their rich cultural heritage with the demands of the present. The play's conclusion, where Futa ultimately chooses to embrace his cultural identity, serves as a powerful statement on the importance of preserving national values in the face of global change. His plays challenge audiences to reflect on their own identities, both as individuals and as members of a larger national community. By incorporating religious and mythological motifs into his narratives, Hamiti provides a framework through which Albanians can understand their own history and place in the world. His works act as cultural texts that engage with questions of morality, ethics, and national responsibility, encouraging Albanians to consider how their past informs their present and future.

In the context of national self-identification, Hamiti's plays contribute to the ongoing dialogue about what it means to be Albanian in a rapidly changing world. His reworking of religious symbols allows





for a re-examination of traditional values, while his focus on moral and ethical dilemmas speaks to the challenges of navigating modernity. Through his characters' struggles and his use of symbolic spaces, such as the agora and the desert, Hamiti invites Albanians to reflect on their own role in shaping their nation's future. Through his use of religious symbols, mythological narratives, and ethical dilemmas, Hamiti engages with the complexities of Albanian identity, offering a rich and nuanced exploration of the nation's past, present, and future. His plays serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, providing a space for reflection on what it means to be Albanian in an ever-evolving global landscape.

Postmodern deconstruction in Sabri Hamiti's works also reveals itself through aesthetic and ethical uncertainty. Hamiti's texts do not offer the reader or viewer clear moral guidelines, rejecting traditional morality and forcing the audience to independently interpret the actions of the characters. This creates an atmosphere of constant uncertainty, where each act is perceived through the prism of doubt and the possibility of multiple interpretations.

## Discussion

This study analysed the religious paradigm and postmodern deconstruction in Albanian dramaturgy, specifically in the works of Sabri Hamiti. The results indicate that religious and mythological elements play a central role in constructing narratives that address issues of society, identity, and culture. These religious motifs are used not only to reflect traditional notions of morality and ethics but also to deconstruct them within postmodern approaches. The research revealed that Albanian dramaturgy, particularly Hamiti's works, integrates elements of religious pluralism, utilizing them as tools to enhance artistic expression and develop narrative structures.

The findings of this study align with those of other scholars exploring religious elements in world dramaturgy. For instance, Maloku-Morina and Rahimi (2024) focused on how biblical and Quranic texts shape literary traditions and influence cultural perceptions. The study examined how religious motifs and symbols penetrate Hamiti's dramaturgy, revealing the religious and cultural influences on contemporary Albanian literature. Similarly, another study emphasizes the role of biblical and Quranic texts as sources of literary inspiration, illustrating how their archetypes are integrated into literary works. These studies share a common emphasis on the deep religious and cultural aspects shaping literary narratives and reflecting cultural heritage. However, while one study focuses on Hamiti's dramaturgy, the other covers the broader influence of biblical and Quranic texts on Albanian literature. Therefore, this research complements the understanding of the cultural and religious context of Albanian literature through the lens of Hamiti's work, contributing new perspectives to the analysis of the interconnections between religious texts and literary traditions.

The study of religious and mythological archetypes in Sabri Hamiti's works is closely related to the theme of religious identities and their impact on ethnic conflicts in the Western Balkans. This is particularly true in Kosovo, Metohija, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as explored by Lazović and Stanković (2024). This reflects the role of religious identities in shaping ethnic conflicts in the Western Balkans, considering historical events and the relationships between religious groups influenced by major powers. By examining how religious and mythological motifs become symbols and metaphors on stage, the study compares them with historical conflicts and religious stereotypes that shape contemporary interethnic relations in the region.

Study by Çitaku (2023) on the influence of the Bible on Albanian literature also focuses on the impact of religious texts on literary works, though with different emphases. Both studies share a focus on the influence of religious texts, particularly the Bible, on Albanian literature, shaping themes, motifs, and symbols. However, the present research devotes particular attention to the structural and metatheatrical aspects of Hamiti's dramaturgy. The other study focuses on the reinterpretation of biblical stories and symbols in Albanian literature, pointing to their adaptation and transformation in a new cultural context. Both approaches contribute to a deeper understanding of how religious texts influence literature, albeit from different perspectives and research methodologies.



The study of Etehem Haxhademi's use of mythological and religious motifs also draws parallels with the findings on Sabri Hamiti's dramaturgy (Buzhala, 2021). Both authors, working in different historical periods, focus on rethinking mythological and religious symbols in the context of national identity, reflecting the importance of cultural heritage through the use of classical mythological narratives. Haxhademi's works demonstrate an active integration of ancient Greek, biblical, and Albanian myths, creating a multilayered structure in his dramatic texts. This corresponds to how Hamiti uses religious and mythological symbols, but in a postmodern key, adding new meanings and ironic tones. While Haxhademi relies on classical models of tragedy to emphasize historical events, Hamiti deconstructs these same themes through modern postmodernist discourse. However, both authors share a common feature in their approach to the "mythologization" of historical events. Haxhademi mythologizes Albanian history, highlighting national identity and creating heroes that symbolize the moral and political values of Albanian society. Hamiti's approach is from a deconstructivist perspective, where traditional myths are not only rethought but also criticized and ironically transformed in response to the challenges of contemporary society. Both approaches reflect the importance of myth as a tool for national self-identification, though in different ideological and aesthetic contexts. Thus, the main parallel between these studies lies in the fact that both authors use myth as a means of interpreting national history and culture, although the difference lies in the methods and purpose of this interpretation: Haxhademi's classical approach contrasts with Hamiti's postmodern deconstruction.

The study of religious and mythological archetypes in Sabri Hamiti's works has a strong connection to the study of religious texts through the lens of the sociology of literature, particularly the genetic structuralism of Hasanah (2022). The study analysed how religious motifs and symbols in Hamiti's dramas are used to reflect cultural and social contexts, similar to how the sociological approach to religious texts reveals the connection between the text and its socio-historical context. Both approaches emphasize how the interpretation of religious and mythological texts is shaped and influences social and cultural perceptions. This allows to understand how the cultural and social context of the author influences the text and how these texts interact with society, which is essential for understanding both Hamiti's dramaturgy and religious interpretations.

Despite the acknowledgment of the role of the religious paradigm in Albanian dramaturgy, certain differences exist between this study and other works in the field. For instance, research by Lamçja (2022) on the importance of Albanian mythology in culture and literature shares common features with the study of religious and mythological archetypes in Sabri Hamiti's dramaturgy. Particularly the focus on the influence of mythology on literary works and the formation of literary canons. However, Lamçja's research covers a broad range of themes and periods, analysing Albanian mythology from the Middle Ages to the present, whereas this study focuses on the work of a single author, emphasizing specific dramatic works. Therefore, both studies complement each other by revealing different aspects of mythology's influence on Albanian literature and culture.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that the results of this study demonstrate the significance of the religious paradigm for contemporary dramaturgy. The postmodern deconstruction of religious texts, as shown in Sabri Hamiti's works, not only expands the boundaries of literary possibilities but also creates new layers of meaning, which are crucial for understanding contemporary Albanian identity and cultural heritage. This topic is significant for future research, as it encompasses many aspects of the interaction between religion, culture, and literature.

## Conclusions

The analysis of the religious paradigm in contemporary Albanian drama reveals the profound influence of religious narratives and symbols on the structure and content of dramatic works. Albanian dramaturgy actively employs biblical, Quranic, and mythological plots as metaphorical and allegorical tools to explore issues of spirituality, social responsibility, and cultural identity. Through the deconstruction of traditional religious texts and ideas, playwrights challenge established moral paradigms, opening possibilities for multifaceted interpretations of these themes in a modern context. Postmodern deconstruction enables authors to address topics such as sin, salvation, and moral



responsibility from new, sometimes paradoxical perspectives, adding new layers of meaning and enhancing the relevance of the dramas.

Religious and mythological symbols play a crucial role in Albanian dramaturgy, acting as cultural artifacts that provide a connection between the past and the present. They not only transmit historical heritage but also serve as tools for understanding contemporary challenges faced by Albanian society. In particular, symbols like the cross, the crescent, and the images of biblical and Quranic figures allow authors to analyse modern social and political phenomena through the lens of religious experience and mythological narrative. This underscores the significance of religion and myth in understanding national identity and the cultural development of Albania. Postmodern tendencies in Albanian dramaturgy demonstrate new approaches to religious discourse, emphasizing the blurring of boundaries between the sacred and the profane, the multiplicity of interpretations, and the dynamic nature of religious texts. Through the use of postmodern techniques such as deconstruction and irony, authors find new ways of interacting with religious plots, transforming them into tools for reflecting on contemporary culture and society. This contributes to the cultural development of theatre, allowing for the exploration of deep social and philosophical questions through religious discourse, particularly issues of moral responsibility, identity, and freedom.

The limitations of this study lie in its focus on individual playwrights and a limited number of texts, which does not fully capture the entire spectrum of contemporary Albanian dramaturgy and its religious and mythological aspects. Moreover, the analysis is predominantly centered on textual elements, excluding a detailed study of the visual and performative aspects of the theatre. To broaden this research, it would be valuable to consider a wider body of dramatic texts and to conduct a comparative analysis with other postmodern theatrical practices in Europe and the Balkans.

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