ALAN SINFIELD AND DISSIDENT READING: A STUDY OF THE SELECT FICTION OF ISMAIL KADARE

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

English

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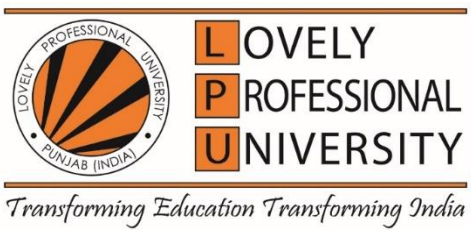

LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY
PUNJAB
2023

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the presented work in the thesis entitled ***Alan Sinfield and Dissident Reading: A Study of the Select Fiction of Ismail Kadare*** in partial fulfilment of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is the outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. Balkar Singh**, working as Professor in the Department of English/ School of Humanities of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with the general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever the work described here has been based on the findings of another investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled ***Alan Sinfield and Dissident Reading: A Study of the Select Fiction of Ismail Kadare***, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the Department of English/School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India, is a research work carried out by **Tawqeer Un Nissa**, 11815944, is a bonafide record of her original work carried out under my supervision, and that no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.

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Dated: 20-11-2023

Abstract

The thesis titled *Alan Sinfield and Dissident Reading: A Study of the Select Fiction of Ismail Kadare* attempts at analysing eight of Ismail Kadare's select fictional works including *The Three-Arched Bridge* (1978), *The Traitor's Niche* (1978), *Broken April* (1978), *The Palace of Dreams* (1981), *The Pyramid* (1992), *The Blinding Order* (1991), *Agamemnon's Daughter* (2003), and *A Girl in Exile* (2009). The texts are analysed with special reference to Kadare's treatment of certain historical and political events, mythology, and core beliefs of a culture while investigating their role in the dynamics of power. These texts have been selected in such a way that the study could cover the last four decades of the writing career of the author which is the period of time when his writing genius had reached its fully ripened stage. Moreover, these texts are most appropriate for the kind of research which the present study aspires to accomplish. The study, in addition, attempts at exploring how Kadare uses his literary genius as a tool for dissidence against oppressive regimes, on the local as well as the global level. It is worth mentioning that the research work employs Alan Sinfield's approach of *Dissident Reading* as employed by him in his work, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (1992) while he analyses various literary texts.

In his writings, Kadare shows himself to be an imaginative and audacious writer who is sympathetic to his nation's modernisation but growingly conscious of the drawbacks of communist advancement. The Albanian Communist identity and how it is a crucial component of Albanian history and identity as a whole are additional significant aspects of his oeuvre. The effects of the Communist era on Albanians are grievous and cannot be undone. It is the Albania under Communist regime that serves as a site for Kadare to build

a more complete nation that embraces its history, its virtues, and its vices, and one that looks beyond the existing historical realities, toward a future that is defined by multiple voices fully integrated into one Albanian identity, and which serves as the site where he carves his vision of his people; undoubtedly suffering, but always enduring. The relationships between ideology and power, as well as the rejection of the Albanian past, come together as the new Albania is created giving birth to a well-organised group of literary ideas that not only criticise the government and its vision of the new Albania but also cut to the heart of long-dated totalitarian system.

A steady stream of upheavals, wars, revolutions, and general instability have characterised Albania's history. Albania has struggled with the issue of ethnic identity, and more especially, religious identity, ever since its founding. Between the East and the West as well as between Islam and Christianity, Albania lies at a crossroads. Kadare through his works urges one to acknowledge Albania's incredibly complex and nuanced disposition. The only way to do so is to carefully examine the past, without regret or rejection, and with the willingness to practice candour, openness, and inclusivity.

The present study examines how Ismail Kadare's works construct and reconstruct historical events that have been lost to memory and to tangible historical reports, all of which contribute to the importance of his work at his native as well as global levels. It further takes into consideration how his historical novels about the end of the Byzantine era, the conquest of the Ottomans, and the chaotic beginnings of the modern Albania of the 19th-century search for roots of the oppressive regimes of the present times. Furthermore, Kadare's depiction of the interaction between the individuals, and the institutions with authority attempting to repress them shall be explored raising issues that go beyond Albanian circumstances and highlight designs of control over people on a global level. It

shall analyse how Kadare through his narratives portrays fundamental human behaviours with reference to power structures, whether through allegory, symbolism, or fusing the past and the present.

Moreover, through the lens of Alan Sinfield's approach of *dissident reading*, the study seeks to highlight how the conditions of plausibility are used by the stakeholders of power to persuade the subjects in such a way that they attain subjectivities that are appropriate for the sustenance of the social order, thereby serving the ends of the ruling authority. Further, it shall focus on the process of the production of ideology through different institutions and its repercussions, in a specific society at a particular time.

In the late twentieth century, Alan Sinfield emerged as one of the most prolific and prominent figures of his generation. Due to his contribution to the world of literature, the reading as well understanding of literature entered a new dimension. Using an interdisciplinary approach by merging cultural and political theories, he came up with a novel rather a dissident approach of reading conventional texts. In other words, Sinfield made a point of deconstructing the traditional and conventional modes of cultural assessment and analysis; wherein his recurrent business seems to question the basis of institutions, their rules, norms, and ideological assumptions of critical observation and analysis thereof. In his endeavours, it is obvious, he seems to engage himself and invite the attention of the readers alien to academics, previously a long tradition, but it characterises his perfect and undisputed scholarship.

Dissident reading is not completely opposed to power, neither does it serve as an antithesis to overturn the values, inclinations, and stratagems of power; it is the result of the internal contradictions and conflicts of these structures. However, Alan Sinfield's perspective implies a deviation from certain aspects or tenets of the commonplace ideology

or structures of culture; at the same time, dissidence may not achieve a considerable reaction from power. Alan Sinfield, in his work *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*, asserts that dissident reading is concerned with the "study of cultural apparatuses … and their relations with other institutions" that have a tendency to partly justify and legalise the violence perpetuated by the state; however, may also aim at other interests and purposes (26). It analyses the means and methods by which "plausible stories" are produced, and subjectivities are "construct[ed]," as well as those "faultlines and breaking points" which make "dissident reading" possible (26).

However, Alan Sinfield also affirms Raymond Williams' argument concerning the coexistence of those cultural forces which are "subordinate, residual, emergent, alternative, and oppositional" along with the dominant cultural forces in variations of integration, compromise, and confrontation (26). Sinfield holds that "contradiction and conflict" are "two types of disturbances," legitimated by the state and the ideology (116). To Sinfield, contradiction is more basic in the sense that it is fundamental to social interaction as a whole, just like when the dominant order denies what is needed; to put it otherwise, when it generates its own denial or negation by maintaining itself. Conflict occurs along the "structural faultlines" created by contradictions; it arises between opposing agendas, either as a condition of discord or as an operational conflict. He also maintains that ideology is also undermined not just from below, but the "antagonisms" that lie inside and between the members of the dominating sections also play a part in it (116).

Sinfield uses the expression "dissident" instead of "subversive" because he remarks that the term subversive seems to mean accomplishment, that is, a structure was overthrown or subverted; therefore, as a result, "containment must have taken place," however, normally, the regimes do not get subverted and patriarchy is not overpowered (49).

Dissidence, to him, means rejecting an aspect of the dominant without assuming how things will turn out. Although, it sounds as an uncertain assertion, however, he contests that it is powerful since it assumes that there will always be an ongoing contest, where the dominant might occasionally lose the ground and the subordinate might hold onto its position.

While examining the relationship between the dynamics of power including the key concepts concerning ideology, hegemony, subjectivity, and culture, the study examines how Kadare's select texts articulate dissidence against oppression. Besides, the critical insights provided by various intellectuals relevant to the study shall form the bedrock of the theoretical framework of the study. Moreover, the format of the study shall be completely based on MLA 9th edition.

The research work endeavours at achieving the following main objectives:

1. To trace dissidence as an emerging social and political will in the select novels of Ismail Kadare.
2. To study myths, folklore, legends, and politics of plausibility in the select novels of Ismail Kadare.
3. To analyse subjectivity, ideology, and power apparatus in the select novels of Ismail Kadare.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the thesis is divided into five chapters followed by a conclusionary section. The first chapter titled "Ismail Kadare: Life and Works" focusses on the biographical accounts and oeuvre of Ismail Kadare while emphasising the select novels selected for the undertaken research work. A review of the literature along with the research gap is also covered in this chapter.

The second chapter titled "Alan Sinfield and the Dissident Reading" provides an insight into the approach of dissident reading as put forward by Alan Sinfield. In addition,

it discusses the important concepts used in the theoretical framework of the study. Moreover, various theorists and their observations that have been significantly influential upon Alan Sinfield's critical thought are also enumerated in this chapter.

The third chapter titled "Subjectivity and Power Apparatus" lays stress on bringing out the ways and means adopted by the power apparatus to subdue the subjects concerned and the way their subjectivity is maneuvered thereof. The chapter while analysing the selected fiction of Ismail Kadare encapsulates questions like what happens to subjectivity when the subjects and power are intertwined; what are the ways by which subjects are assumed, and then, constructed by the various power apparatuses; and how do different norms and imperatives constitute and regulate the subject.

The fourth chapter titled "Cultural Constructs and the Politics of Plausibility" emphasises the plausible patterns and conditions usually created by the dominant forces of a society wherein they justify their actions to secure and ensure their existence through the means of different cultural constructs. In this chapter the focus is laid on these constructs encompassing a wide range of elements including customs, laws, rituals, beliefs, religions, myths, legends, folklore, etc., exploring how these constructs play their role in the dynamics of power whereby ideology is propagated through politics of plausibility.

The fifth chapter titled "Hegemonic Masculinity and Social Hierarchy," while analysing the texts of Kadare, highlights different patterns of hegemonic masculinity present in various cultural settings, and the role of the same in helping the ruling class to establish and maintain its domination. It further analyses how the exaltation of masculinity tries to stabilise a system of power and oppression that permeates the entire gender hierarchy. It also considers the issues like how the positions of power are inhabited by a particular group of men by way of controlling men as well as women. The role played by

the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in the alteration of subjectivity rather social behaviour of men shall also be encapsulated.

Finally, while summarising the research work, the conclusionary section titled "Conclusion" outlines the outcomes and the findings of the study. In addition, it enumerates the relevance and scope of the study in the context of the present world scenario beset by several conflicting issues. The section also takes into consideration the limitations and shortcomings of the study keeping in view its range and nature.

Acknowledgements

All glory to the Almighty, the Most Beneficent, and the Most Merciful, whose grace guided me from the very inception to the completion of this research work. I owe a debt of gratitude to many persons, but, first and foremost, my earnest gratitude is due to my supervisor, Professor Balkar Singh, for his invaluable and unparalleled guidance and support throughout this research programme. His meticulous supervision provided me with the irreplaceable critical insights needed for the completion of this project. These words are an inadequate expression of my gratitude to him.

Besides my supervisor, I gratefully acknowledge the encouragement and insightful comments that I received from Professor Sharanpal Singh (Punjabi University, Patiala), Professor Pavitar Prakash Singh (Dean, School of Humanities), and Professor Ajoy Batta (Head of the Department of English); especially, at the outset of this project. I am also deeply indebted to the faculty members of the Department of English, particularly, Professor Sanjay Prasad, Professor Digvijay Pandey, Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Tramboo, Dr. Gowhar Ahmad Naik, Dr. Kumar Gaurav, and Dr. Muzafar Ahmed Bhat, whose ingenious suggestions at the periodic seminar presentations have been instrumental in shaping this thesis.

I put on record the administrative staff members of Lovely Professional University, particularly those of the Centre of Research Degree Programmes (CRDP) and Research Degree Evaluation Cell (RDEC) for their timely assistance and cooperation. I also extend my sincere thanks to the librarians of the Department of English, and the Central Library, Lovely Professional University, for their supportive behaviour.

Many thanks to my fellow researchers and friends especially Dr. Bilques Farooq, Dr. Hina Wali, Mr. Murtaza Reshi, Mr. Rajdeep Guha, Ms. Nida Nighat, Ms. Somy Manzoor, and Ms. Nasreen Iqbal Kasana for their love and admiration. The time spent with them provided moments of much-needed relief during this journey that was akin to a roller coaster ride.

My words fail to express my thanks to my parents, Mr. Ali Mohd Dar and Mrs. Mehmooda Banoo, for their continued love, prayers, and encouragement which kept me going during the hard times I came across this journey. This venture would not have been possible without their support. In addition, I would like to thank my beloved sister, Ms. Pakeezah Jan for being there for me whenever I was perturbed. Those long phone calls with her lightened my heart and brightened my days. A special thanks to my dear husband, Dr. Arif Ahmad Wani for being my best friend and closest advisor. I value his being patient with me and encouraging me with his wise counsel. Lastly, I would like to thank all those who helped me in this endeavour, directly or indirectly; not forgetting the ones who persistently kept on asking how long it was going to take me to complete the course.

Tawqeer Un Nissa

Dated: 20-11-2023

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Chapter 1

Ismail Kadare: Life and Works

The inaugural winner of the International Man Booker Prize, Ismail Halit Kadare, is an Albanian novelist, essayist, playwright, and poet whose works have been translated into more than forty languages. Ismail Kadare was born on 28 January 1936 in Gjirokastër, Albania. Since Shakespeare, most Europeans have conceived Albania as a place associated with romantic experiences and adventures as well as with barbaric and wild customs. Generations of European romantics were enthralled by Byron's "rugged nurse of savage men," the Germans were captivated by Karl May's "Among the Shkipetars," and during the closing years of the Ottoman Empire, the legendary British author Edith Durham fought for "her wild Albanian highlander" (Morgan, *Ismail Kadare* 309). The Second World War memoirs written by Julian Amery and David Smiley, two British spies, in Albania seem more like accounts of a romantic era in the nineteenth century than like accounts of contemporary combat. It is not unexpected that J. K. Rowling, a children's author, chose Albania's woodlands as the hiding place for Voldemort, Harry Potter's archenemy, in 2007.

Despite Albania's history of national liberation, communist rule, and democratisation in the twentieth century, the country nevertheless evokes notions of a "medieval, wild, or romantic Albania" that dominates Western culture (309). Even Professor John Carey, the chairperson of the International Man-Booker group, contributed to the well-intentioned but romantic simplification of the author and his homeland by referring to Kadare as a descendant of Homer and a bard of the Balkan culture. Ismail Kadare, not satisfied with this label, pointing toward his universal themes, contends that a writer could not be reduced to a particular land. Moreover, disproving the notion about Albania as a far-off land of

romance and adventures he remarks that despite being oppressed and isolated due to its dictatorial history, Albania is a setting suitable for literature. It is “an epic zone,” the cradle of great epic poetry (Hanley and Scott *Albanian*).

In his writings, Kadare shows himself to be an imaginative and audacious writer who is sympathetic to his nation’s modernisation but growingly conscious of the drawbacks of communist advancement. The Albanian Communist identity and how it is a crucial component of Albanian history and identity as a whole are additional significant aspects of his work. The effects of the Communist era on Albanian’s are grievous and cannot be undone. It is the Albania under Communist regime which serves as a site for Kadare to build a more complete nation that embraces its history, its virtues, and its vices, and one that looks beyond the existing historical realities, toward a future that is defined by multiple voices fully integrated into one Albanian identity, and which serves as the site where he carves his vision of his people; undoubtedly suffering, but always enduring.

A steady stream of upheavals, wars, revolutions, and general instability have characterised Albania’s history. Albania has struggled with the issue of ethnic identity, and more especially, religious identity, ever since its founding. Between the East and the West, as well as, between Islam and Christianity, Albania lies at a crossroads. Kadare through his works urges to acknowledge Albania’s incredibly complex and nuanced disposition. The only way to do so is to carefully examine the past, without regret or rejection, and with the willingness to practice candour, openness, and inclusivity.

Ismail Kadare’s father, Halit Kadare, was a post office employee, and his mother Hatixhe Dobi was a homemaker. He received his primary and secondary education in Gjirokaster before enrolling in the Faculty of History and Philology at the University of Tirana to study languages and literature. Kadare attended the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow for two years (1958 to1960) after earning his teaching credential in

1956. In 1959, he wrote his debut novel, *The City with no Signs*, with the primary goal of rejecting the conventions of socialist realism, while concurrently publishing a collection of Russian poems.

Following the Soviet-Albanian split in 1960, Kadare returned to his native country and started a career as a writer after first working as a journalist. His debut book, *Coffeehouse Days*, which he disguised as a short tale and published in the literary journal *Zeri I Rinise* in 1962, was promptly put under ban by the government. Up to the fall of the communist government in 1990, the actual novel was kept in his drawers for many years. *The General of the Dead Army*, which Kadare first published in 1963, was later translated into French by Isuf Vrioni and released by Albin Michel in 1970, paving the way for Kadare's international success. His subsequent book, *The Monster*, was instantly outlawed once it appeared in the magazine *Nntori* in 1965. Kadare was prohibited from publishing for three years after he outraged the authorities by publishing a political poem in 1975. A Writer's Plenum sharply criticised Kadare's *The Palace of Dreams*, another well-known book, which was published in March 1982. As Kadare was charged with drawing analogies to Communist Albania in the book, it was ultimately banned. In addition, the head of the League of Albanian Writers and Artists claimed that Kadare avoided politics by encasing a lot of his work in folklore and history. The government also outlawed his book *A Moonlit Night*, which was released around the time Enver Hoxha passed away in 1985. Claude Durand, Kadare's French editor, assisted him in smuggling *The Agamemnon's Daughter* out of the country that same year. The authoritarian government in Albania was specifically criticised in the book. In 1990, Kadare made the announcement that he was applying for political asylum in France due to his dissatisfaction with Ramiz Alia's administration which had replaced the one headed by Hoxha. He underlined his desire for "complete democratisation" in a letter to President Ramiz Alia, adding that there is hardly any

possibility of “legal opposition in Albania,” as a result of which, he chooses the “course which [he] never wished to take and which [he does] not recommend to others” (qtd. in Carry). He has split his time between France and Albania since 1990.

Understanding Kadare’s work requires an understanding of the context. The experience of Albania was significantly different from that of the other communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe. The history of communist Albania was depicted by official Albanian writers and artists as the tale of a backward, remote, and besieged people progressing toward a statistical utopia. An example of obsessional xenophobia and betrayal, and a chorus of ferocious contentions with real and imagined adversaries that the outside world hardly noticed, the actual history of communist Albania is, nonetheless, distinctly dystopian. It is a sombre record of bloodshed and tyranny.

The communist leaders Enver Hoxha and Mehmet Shehu came to dominate Albania after 20 years of internal party strife and campaigns to eliminate the nation’s longstanding communist opposition. They prioritised protecting and preserving their power base over preserving the independence of Albania and changing the nation in line with the procrustean ideals of traditional Stalinism. In order to achieve these objectives, the ruling communist party adopted or territorised the entire population of Albania, forcing them into required front organisations, bombarding them with propaganda, and punishing them with a monstrous police force unconstrained by anything resembling ethical, religious, legal or political principals and norms. By portraying themselves as the watchful protectors of the nation’s independence, along with the communist party and state security apparatus they controlled, Hoxha and Shehu ruled Albania and deprived the Albanian populace of the most fundamental civil and human rights. Albania became a client of the Soviet Union in late 1948 when it severed ties with Yugoslavia. After Stalin’s death, they later made amends with Josip Broz Tito, the President of Yugoslavia. Albania steered clear of Moscow in 1961

and discovered China as a new patron. Albania broke away from its enormous Asian sponsor after China's isolation ended in the 1970s and enacted a rigid policy of autarky that led to the nation's economic disaster. All religious organisations were outlawed in 1967, and the nation was dubbed the first atheist state in the world. Christian and Muslim churches also had their property seized. Mehmet Shehu, the prime minister, was believed to have been in charge of a scheme to depose Hoxha when he passed away in 1981 in strange circumstances. The secret police, the Sigurimi, executed a number of former party officials in 1983. When Hoxha passed away in April 1985, Ramiz Alia succeeded him as the first secretary of the party. Ramiz Alia attempted to maintain the communist regime while enacting hesitant reforms to boost the flagging economy.

Kadare has received praise for his writing both domestically and abroad, and has also been called out as an agent of the dictatorship in Albania. Although Kadare has lived a life dogged by controversy in his own nation, it would be incorrect to portray him as a figure who was muzzled by the regime. Kadare created some of the excellent and subversive works to come out of socialist Eastern Europe in a place where writers were frequently persecuted, detained, tortured, and murdered. He was a significant member of the Albanian Union of Writers and the Party and his work was only occasionally published. He was appointed a Deputy of the People's Assembly and given permission to travel internationally. He was successful in avoiding jail time, work camps, and other sorts of punishment. Although, he was priviledged to some extent, nevertheless, it is crucial to note that he was not free to reject invitations to travel or to join official organisations. His writings were subject to censorship from above, just like every other element of his existence in Albania. The stress, threats, and dread brought on by the tyrant Hoxha's erratic actions greatly affected Kadare as well. Hoxha was shrewd enough to back Kadare as a desirable person to present in the international arena while yet maintaining some respect

for France. However, in his capacity as ambassador, Kadare did not endorse the government. Instead, he made use of any available possibilities to spread the literary works that so eloquently described the situation in his nation. His track record as a writer is still flawless.

The top four members of the Politburo, Enver Hoxha, Mehmet Shehu, Ramiz Alia, and Manush Myftiu, were avid readers of modern literature and had amassed substantial personal collections that they had purchased from French bookshops. In particular, Hoxha yearned to be read in France because he was moved by the concepts of French culture and civilisation. Hoxha, who comes from the urban middle class of Gjirokastra, seems to have had intellectual aspirations while studying in France and Belgium, unlike many of his political allies in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The dictatorship valued literature, and unlike their Eastern European counterparts, the Albanian leaders, and Hoxha in particular, were able to appreciate quality writing. Enver Hoxha also developed a relationship with Dritero Agolli, a talented writer. After the purges of the intelligentsia in 1972, he was appointed president of the Union of Writers, a position he held until the collapse of the dictatorship.

Kadare's poetry collections, "Youthful Inspiration" (1953), "Dreams" (1957), and especially "My Age" (1961), had already gained widespread recognition by the early 1960s (Elsie, "Evolution" 23). Particularly young people adored his work. Young people in Albania after the war saw Kadare as a poet with fresh ideas. After releasing his first poems in the early 1950s, he quickly gained the attention of literary circles and had strong relationships with editors and literary figures like Llazer Siliqi, Todi Lubonja, and others. Enver Hoxha's intervention in a literary argument between writers from the war and the newly-emerging post-war generation in 1961 helped raise Kadare's political image. As Kadare got back from a trip to Moscow, he was charged with cosmopolitanism, decadence,

and anti-national views alongside Dritero Agolli, Fatos Arapi, and other individuals. Unexpectedly, Enver Hoxha sided with the younger generation when it came to the old guard's criticism of liberal viewpoints and writing practices. He does not just seem to have wanted to disabuse his old friends of any thoughts they might have had about their continued power as ex-partisans. He bought their allegiance during a period of change and potential ideological isolation by building a breach between the generations and supporting the younger, liberal postwar writers against the older, conservative Stalinists.

After his return, Kadare continued to have access to contemporary works from the wider world through his job as a journalist, author, and editor of the foreign literature section of the venerable Albanian literary journal *Drita*. At that time, Earnest Hemingway was well-liked, modern Western European and American literature was available, and Western culture could be accessed via Italy and Yugoslavia by means of radio and television. Kadare was interested in movies and experimented with voice recording and other types of composition. Albania's film industry was established in the late 1950s with significant Soviet backing, and even little villages like Fieri in the Myzeqe, where Kadare was later banished as retribution for his overly logical writings, had movie theatres. As evidenced by this quote from Kadare from *Albanian Spring*: "I took up literature again, but the crisis had at least one lasting effect: it inscribed in my head the decision never to resemble in any way the Soviet writers of the time, beginning (of course!) with their outward appearance" (30). However, the cinema was more closely guarded by the regime than writing, and his natural talent for writing and poetry reasserted itself. In publications like *Drita, Zeri I Rinise,* and *Nentori*, "A Tour of the Cafes," an excerpt from *The City without Signs*, as well as other short stories, were published. These stories were later collected in *Stories Across Time* (1963), and *Eleven Short Stories* (1965).

Todi Lubonja, who at the time oversaw the regime's youth policies, had a key role in getting Kadare's work published in the youth journal even though it was immediately outlawed upon release. As the author draws links and considers the variations of life under communism, themes, concepts, and experiences from Kadare's earlier works as well as unpublished stories and poetry subsequently reappear. Before taking on its final shape in *The General of the Dead Army* and *Chronicle in Stone*, early draughts of the Italian occupation, the tale of his hometown's first brothel, and other material would emerge in "The Great Aeroplane" and "The City of the South" (1971). The ideas from the poems "Laocoon" and "The Trojan Horse" are repeated in *The Monster* from 1965, and his final essay "Aeschylus or the Great Loser" from 1985. The 1973 book, *Winter of Great Solitude* uses ideas from the poetry, "The Sixties" as its starting point. Furthermore, the 1967 poetry, "The Pyramid of Kheops" served as the inspiration for the 1988 political parable *The Pyramid*, not the recently designed and constructed monument for Enver Hoxha in the heart of Tirana. Before being released in its entirety, *The City without Signs* would remain unpublished for an additional forty years, concealed in the author's apartment. *The General of the Dead Army* first appeared in *Zeri i Rinise* in 1962 in installments before being released in the form of a book in the next year and in a revised form in 1967 (Pipa 51).

Kadare felt he was being offered the position of a national writer-in-the-making following the successes of his youth, with his popularity among young people and his Gorki Institute credentials, and in the wake of the unexpected victory over the old guard, during the honeymoon years of the early 1960s: "I felt something new and dangerous coming towards me. My shoulders were lightly touched by the national author's mantle" (70). Kadare and his companion Dhori Qiriazi had a private conversation about exile. He temporarily slept in a hotel room near Wenceslas Square in Prague when returning from Finland in 1962 with the intention of seeking refuge due to the deplorable circumstances in

Albania. The harsh realities of living in an uncharted Eastern European nation made him reconsider giving up his language and his country for a scenario that was hardly any better. He considers the absurdity of seeking exile in the East rather than the West as he looks back during the 1990s. But the fact that the West had not yet crossed his political radar shows just how much of a socialist product he was.

As he was raised under communism, his natural point of orientation was the East. His choice to leave the Eastern steppes and go back to Albania was motivated by a more profound need. "To that silent death in the steppes I preferred the arena filled with howling and the mantle which would force my shoulders into a stoop," he said, acknowledging that his creativity, which depended on his native tongue, would wither and perish in exile. "I rode the machine back from Prague to Tirana to take the cursed crown, just like the sinner who cannot resist temptation" (Kadare 75). Kadare's desire to return to Albania was motivated by his sense of ethnic identity and his place in the Albanian literary community. In his poem "Longing for Albania," (1960) Kadare, a poet from Moscow, conveyed his deep longing for his own country,

I was filled with longing for Albania
Tonight as I returned home on the trolley,
The smoke of a *Partizani* cigarette in the hand of a Russian
Curled bluish, twirled upwards
As if whispering to me, its compatriot,
In the language of the Albanians. (79)

The young author's dedication to his native land following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and growing awareness of the dictatorship's problems like generational tug of war between traditional and modern ways of life, issues with nepotism and rampant corruption predominant in the regime, stagnation in social and cultural aspects, and young people

dropping out of school out of frustration and boredom, dominate the works that he compiled during first half of the 1960s. Albania appears in these works as a setting for discussions about socialist modernisation; but by 1964 there has been a change in how Albania is portrayed. For the writer, ethnic identification had developed into a strong sustaining force. Kadare started to feel a tension between the state's politicised nationalism and his own now-strongly felt patriotism as the regime moved toward openly nationalistic socialism. Over time, this debate evolved into a more or less open conflict over Albania's voice.

Perhaps the only writer from Albania who is well-known outside of it is Kadare. He gave his citizens their little glimmerings of hope for reform by speaking for a different, better Albania. He was dedicated to the language, culture, and national identity of Albania and held humanist ideas dear. He was initially drawn to the communist paradigm of development in his socially and economically poor country. In parallel, he established himself as a powerful figure in France, his preferred Western intellectual hub. Despite being acutely aware of the necessity for Albanians to engage in modernity in Europe, he grew to strongly disagree with the regime's concept of the Albanian new man, and his works effectively demonstrate the benefits of ethnic identification. Kadare used literature to express his opposition rather than dogma or philosophy. Through his portrayal of the gloom of socialist daily life and his potent evocations of an Albania more lasting and ancient than the new Albania of Enver Hoxha, he showed defiance. He adamantly refused to be forced into exile or to give up his language and identity. The works of Kadare were distributed under the communist era in a variety of ways: they were first written as short stories, then they underwent numerous stages of censorship, revision, confiscation, reworking, and publication both inside and outside of Albania. In addition, Kadare refused to let the category of the political alone define his texts, retaining the aesthetic freedom to adapt and revise them.

Outside of Albania, most people are familiar with Kadare's writings through their translations into French, and more lately, German and English. Even famous authors like Sophocles, Dante Alighieri, and Fyodor Dostoevsky are mostly read in translations over the globe. The translation is more or less necessary for lesser-known authors or authors from minority languages to reach a worldwide audience. Translations are now essential in ensuring that the views of minor cultural and linguistic communities be heard by the rest of the world at a time when English is becoming the language of global communication, and in Anglo-American cultures where the study of a foreign language is declining.

Ismail Kadare is considered to be one of the most influential writers and thinkers of Europe in the 20th century. He is looked upon as a political and cultural guide of Albania as well as an international writer who shaped world literature in the 20th century. Kadare became a lifetime member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences of France and was awarded the Prix mondial Cino Del Duca in 1992. In 2005 he received the inaugural Man Booker International Prize which was followed by the Prince of Asturias Award for Literature in 2009. In the same year, he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Science in Social and Institutional Communication by the University of Palermo in Sicily. In 2015, he was awarded the bi-annual Jerusalem Prize. Besides, on several occasions he has been nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature (Elsie 6). Furthermore, in the year 2019, he was honoured with the prestigious Neustadt International Prize for Literature.

Totalitarianism along with its various forms of operation are one of the main themes in Ismail Kadare's writings. In his book *Albanian Spring* (1991), Kadare makes the observation that dictatorship can be equated with monstrous colossuses like many-headed hydras and dinosaurs as well as with structures like those of pyramids, bunkers, and fortresses (Kadare 187). Most of the stories written by Kadare are based on many myths relating to historical events that Albanians lived through. In addition to putting them in the

context of the current period and Albania's Communist state, he uses old mythology. He is well known for using sardonic and allegorical techniques, which he mostly employs to evade and defeat political surveillance.

The character of Kadare's life experience in Albania has proven to be extremely contentious. It is crucial to grasp the context in order to comprehend his works. It is crucial to grasp the context in order to comprehend Kadare's works. The Ottomans took control of Albania in the middle of the fifteenth century. Due to the Ottomans' loss in the Balkan Wars, their control over Albania came to an end in 1912, and as a result, the modern nation of Albania was born. Italy invaded the current Kingdom of Albania in 1939, creating Greater Albania, which later became a protectorate of Nazi Germany in 1943. As mentioned earlier, the People's Socialist Republic, a communist state established in 1944 under the direction of Enver Hoxha, and the Labour Party came next. The experience of Albania was significantly different from that of the other communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe. Up until Enver Hoxha's passing in 1985, and perhaps even until the communist government's overthrow five years later, Albania remained a Stalinist country. Albania witnessed significant social, political, and economic changes as well as isolation from the rest of the world throughout the Communist era. M. V. Gayathri describes communist Albania as a clear example of treachery and compulsive xenophobia, a chorus of bitter polemics with actual and imaginary adversaries, and an "inventory of blood purges and repression" ignored by the outside world (2).

Kadare began writing in the 1950s as a poet, but in 1963, his novel *The General of the Dead Army* was published, catapulting him to fame around the world. Although he is well-known for his poetry in Albania, his reputation abroad is built on his prose, particularly his historical novels. English translations of almost twenty of Kadare's novels are available which include *The General of the Dead Army* (1963), *The Siege* (1970),

Chronicle in Stone (1971), *Twilight of the Eastern Gods* (1978), *The Three-Arched Bridge* (1978), *The Traitor's Niche* (1978), *Broken April* (1980), *The Ghost Rider* (1980), *The File on H*. (1981), *The Palace of Dreams* (1981), *The Shadow* (1986), T*he Concert* (1988), *The Blinding Order* (1991), *The Pyramid* (1992), *Elegy for Kosovo* (1998), *Spring Flowers, Spring Frost* (2000), *Agamemnon's Daughter* (2003), *The Successor* (2003), *The Fall of the Stone City* (2008), *The Accident* (2008), *A Girl in Exile* (2009).

The select works of Ismail Kadare chosen for the undertaken study include *The Three-Arched Bridge* (1978), *The Traitor's Niche* (1978), *Broken April* (1978), *The Palace of Dreams* (1981), *The Pyramid* (1992), *The Blinding Order* (1991), *Agamemnon's Daughter* (2003), and *A Girl in Exile* (2009). These texts have been selected in such a way that the study could cover the last four decades of the writing career of the novelist which is the time period when his writing genius had reached its fully ripened stage. Moreover, these texts are most appropriate for the kind of research which the present study aspires to accomplish. The research work seeks to analyse the select fiction of Ismail Kadare, with special reference to his treatment of certain historical events, mythology, and core beliefs of a culture while investigating their role in the dynamics of power. The study aims at exploring how Kadare uses his literary genius as a tool for dissidence against oppressive regimes, on the local as well as the global level. Moreover, the study seeks to highlight how the conditions of plausibility are used by the stakeholders of power to persuade the subjects in such a way that they assume subjectivities that are suitable for maintaining the social order, thereby serving the ends of the ruling authority. Further, it shall focus on the process of the production of ideology through different institutions and its repercussions, in a particular society and culture.

In addition, the study seeks to examine how Ismail Kadare's works construct and reconstruct historical events that have been lost to memory and to tangible historical

reports, all of which contribute to the importance of his work at his native as well as global levels. It shall further emphasise on how his historical novels about the end of the Byzantine era, the conquest of the Ottomans, and the chaotic beginnings of the modern Albania during the 19th-century search for the roots of the oppressive regimes of the present times. Furthermore, Kadare's depiction of the interaction between the individuals, and the institutions with authority attempting to repress them shall be explored raising issues that go beyond Albanian circumstances and highlight designs of control over people on a global level. It shall analyse how Kadare through his narratives portrays fundamental human behaviours with reference to power structures, whether through allegory, symbolism, or fusing the past and present.

The late fourteenth century is depicted in medieval Albania in the Balkan Peninsula in the 1978 novel *The Three-Arched Bridge*, which uses history as a text. The novel's action takes place just before Albania is conquered by the Turks. The book's narrator is an Albanian monk named Gjon who describes the circumstances surrounding the building of a bridge over the river names Ujana e Keqe, or Wicked Waters, in southern Albania. His narration highlights the bitter history of intercultural hostility in the Balkans. It is based on an old tale from Albania which states that in order to cross a river and build a major bridge or other structure, a volunteer must be sacrificed to it. The book explores the connection between myths and facts and frequently demonstrates how myths have been or might be manipulated to conceal crimes.

A man is found buried at the base of one of the arches as the bridge is being built. The builders (a secret foreign firm) have used cunning tactics to gain the legal right to construction. Folklore from the Balkans, notably Albanian, frequently deals with immurement. Human sacrifice is frequently associated with the building of structures in stories with the immurement motif because, according to the folklore reflected in the

stories, the immolated victim's spirit will safeguard and protect the building. Particularly in Albanian folklore, bridges are typically the constructions that call for human sacrifice; frequently the victim is a nursing mother. Here, Murrash Zenebishe, a straightforward mason, was covertly annihilated. The monk comes to the conclusion that Zenebishe had likely made a deal with a competitor business to undermine the construction of the bridge out of a variety of suspicions and agonised guesses. He was slain by the original builders after they caught him in the act and immolated him. They were sure that the murder would be seen as a ritualistic killing carried out by superstitious individuals who wanted to keep the bridge safe. The narrative is intricate and suspenseful.

Kadare has created an allegory of Albania's devastation by the sophisticated opposing interests of Eastern and Western powers by weaving together Albanian history and folklore. He demonstrates that despite the contrasts between the two groups, they cleverly identified cultural weaknesses (superstition, poverty, credulity, etc.) on Albanian soil that they could exploit the simple people in order to rob them of their possessions. In addition, as Brother Gjon points out, the evil done by these forces foretold an even more persistent evil that the populace would endure: the Ottoman conquest, which in historical reality would lead to the Ottomans' eventual domination of Albania for nearly five hundred years.

Published in 1978, *The Traitor's Niche* is another work of historical fiction. The narrative is set against Ali Pasha of Ioannina's unsuccessful uprising opposed to the Sultan from 1820 to 1822, and it describes the harsh measures taken to put an end to future uprisings. The narrative travels between Istanbul and Albania by following Tundj Hata's journey. Tundj Hata is an imperial messenger whose responsibility is to deliver traitors' severed heads to the capital for display. It is a world where governments outlaw entire

languages, armies are adorned with scarecrows, and forgetting is more difficult than remembering, *The Traitor's Niche* is a fantastical narrative of oppression and revolt.

In the centre of the Ottoman Empire, that is, in Constantinople's main square there lies a niche which has been chiselled out of old stone. As ordered by the Sultan, the decapitated heads of his enemies are displayed here. People throng to get a glimpse of the newest head and chit-chat concerning the condition of the state: the province of Albania is once more calling for independence, and the niche is waiting for a new memento. The imperial courier, Tundj Hata, is tasked with delivering the heads to the capital city; surprisingly, he enjoys it and enthusiastically completes this mission. He makes money through illegal side shows while traversing remote and underdeveloped areas, providing communities with the spectacle of death. Even more, the renegade Albanian governor's head turns out to be very profitable for him.

Another masterpiece by Kadare titled *Broken April* which was published in 1978 received positive reviews as soon as it was released. The novel was made into a Brazilian movie called *Behind the Sun* in 2001. *The Kanun*, an oral collection of customary Albanian rules or codes, is the centre of the narrative. While showcasing various facets of this code, the narrator gives the readers terrifying descriptions of numerous events that happen as a result of Kanun, which forces one to doubt the existence of this code. Through various characters like Gjorg and Diana, the narrator offers a dissident point of view. Gjorg is portrayed as a direct victim of this strange law, whose internal struggle with determining whether his own actions are right or wrong leads one to question the code. Diana is used by the narrator to offer an unbiased viewpoint because she is portrayed as an outsider who finds the supposedly lofty and sacred traditions to be extremely sorrowful.

On March 17, the narrative begins with Gjorg Berisha, a 26-year-old young boy, waiting for Zef Kryeqyqe, the man who killed Gjorg's brother. Now, in retaliation, Gjorg

must murder Zef following Kanun traditions. He is sickened by the idea of turning into a murderer. But he is bound to uphold the Kanun and adhere to the tradition. A 70-year-old feud leads to this retaliation murder. Ironically, a traveller who had previously begged Gjorg's grandfather for shelter was murdered by a member of Zef's family as he was leaving. The blood feud between the families started because of Kanun's claim that they had a duty to exact revenge for his murder. Gjorg is fully aware that by killing Zef, he will also perish. Gjorg strives fervently to avoid all of this, but he is unable to break with his forefathers' customs. A last, he shoots Zef, thus killing him; and as is customary, he shows respect for his victim by going to the funeral. The Kryeqyqe family makes the Bessa announcement on the day of the funeral. Gjorg is safe for thirty days. He views April to be an "unfinished April," the month he knows he will cease to exist (Kadare 19). The Kanun now orders Gjorg to travel to the Kulla of Orosh and to make a payment of the tax for his atonement. To get to the Kulla, he crosses Albania's High Plateau, and while doing so, he encounters Diana. He hopes there was a way to prevent his predicament. He feels like a bird in a net. He cannot find a way out, and neither can he endure punishments or make sacrifices to endanger his life.

The focus of the narrative switches to two foreign visitors who are a married couple on their honeymoon. Diana, the wife, is eager to visit the highlands. Bessian is eager to absorb all the knowledge he can. Although he has written about the High Plateau, he has never really been there. He informs Diana in a patronising manner of what he knows about the neighbourhood and its residents while asserting dominance over his new wife. When they arrive at an inn, they run into Gjorg, who has just finished paying the blood tax and is headed home. Diana is astounded by his account and has a peculiar bond with Gjorg as well as an expanding void. She seems to worry that she married the wrong man.

Mark Ukacierra, a *steward of the blood*, who oversees the taxes regarding blood feuds that the Kulla collects, is the next character the tale follows. The narrator emphasises the politics that is at work in these mountains through Mark Ukacierra. People are encouraged to kill one another and taught to believe that Kanun's practices are divine since doing so advances the Prince's goals by generating an ever-increasing blood tax. Mark worries that his culture is vanishing as well. Year after year, he collects less money in the form of blood taxes, and fewer people are getting killed. Mark seemed to be in denial about the Kanun's influence appearing to be weakening.

Before his time is up, Gjorg chooses to embark on another adventure and gradually comes to the realisation that all he really wants is to see Diana one more time. Meanwhile, Diana and Bessian traverse the High Plateau. Diana has been acting strangely ever since their trip to the Kulla, and it is noticed by Bessian. He simply shows an anthropological interest and is untouched by the concept of the blood feud. He has no sympathy for the families caught up in vengeful cycles and blood feuds. Eventually, Diana astounds Bessian by vanishing into a tower of safety built to shelter a killer whose bessas had run out. Though she knows his truce must be almost up, she does not completely confess to herself that she is looking for Gjorg and wonders if he will be there. Bessian is indignant and demands that she be hauled outside. They immediately need to depart the High Plateau; he thinks after taking her to an inn. Gjorg is still seeking Diana's carriage as April 17th approaches. Bessian regrets having brought Diana to the Plateau, but he has not come to terms with the fact that she no longer loves him. He believes she has somehow lost her mind. Gjorg hopes to see her before he is killed, but he is unsuccessful in doing so. Instead, he consents to carry out his own revenge killing since it is been going on for far too long.

Ismail Kadare's *The Palace of Dreams*, a dystopian book, that was released in 1981, is another work of historical and political fiction. The novel was instantly outlawed by the

authorities two weeks after its release. The tale, which ostensibly takes place under the Ottoman Empire, is meant to depict the author's contemporary authoritarian regime. The narrative centres on the evil totalitarian ministry known as the Palace of Dreams, which hires Mark Alem to categorise, interpret, and sort the dreams of the citizens of the empire in quest of the Master-dream that hold the key to the future of the empire.

Mark-Alem begins employment in the Palace also called the Tabir Sarrail, a Sultan's ministry tasked with gathering and examining the Empire's dreams for indications of potential political and social disturbance. The offices of Selection and Interpretation are located above the copying rooms and archives, which are at the bottom of the Palace's organisational structure. He quickly advances from his initial role of choosing dreams for additionally required study to offering explanations and inferences of possible Master-Dreams which are considered to be the most important among other countless dreams that arrive there on every weekend from all over the state. As he gets promoted, he is informed immediately that the Tabir Sarrail's path to the heights runs through Interpretation, and his uncle later affirms that those who master the Palace also have the chance to control the state. The Master-Dreams serve as the foundation for the Empire's political choices.

Through the creation of a myth of reward and charity, this control mechanism is made tolerable by the populace. A tale claims that a pitiful wretch who resided in a deserted byway had a dream that prevented the State from suffering a dreadful catastrophe. After this, he receives a marriage proposal from one of the Sultan's nieces as a reward. The truth, however, is much different: in the state's unrelenting quest for power, the Master-Dream dreamer is put through torture, questioning, and ultimately execution.

The massive instrumentalisation of the Empire's aspirations, as depicted in the novel satires the methods of ideological and cultural impositions that were common in communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe. The Palace is a sizable and potent state agency in charge

of the Empire's collective consciousness, similar to George Orwell's portrayal of *Ministry of Truth* as depicted in his novel *1984*. Kadare transforms the Palace into an allegorical description of the means and methods by the use of which communist dictatorships in Central as well as Eastern Europe operated. Such means and methods include the nebulous power structures, the instrumentalisation of myths, belief systems, and legends in the provision of ideology alongside the establishment of a dominating section, the bureaucratisation of interpersonal associations engulfed in the fear, terror, and insecurities, and the pretentious display of stability, peace, and order in an environment where power-structures hardly have any significant influence.

Ismail Kadare's novel which was published in 1992 under the title *The Pyramid* is also regarded as a work of genius. It takes place in 2600 B.C., at the height of Pharaoh Cheops' reign in ancient Egypt. The novel illustrates the terrible methods a totalitarian government uses to maintain its hold on power. Pharaoh Cheops wishes to renounce the custom of erecting pyramids, but his advisors persuade him in the end to construct the grandest pyramid. They make it very evident to him that constructing the pyramid will reduce the prosperity of the general populace, increasing their dependence on the ruling class. The next step is the participation of people in the building of Pharaoh's tomb, the tallest and most imposing pyramid. Egypt's energy and resources are savaged by the enormous pyramid. As it grows higher and higher, thousands of people perish, and Cheops, who is portrayed as a power-crazed fanatic who seeks praise, regularly orders waves of arrests and torture of those who are wrongly accused of undermining the project.

There are parallels to be drawn between this narrative and Stalin's paranoia, violent purges, and other atrocities, but the narrative also illustrates how a state or ruling class may sway public opinion so that its citizens wilfully act against their own best interests. As the narrative comes to an end, it jumps several centuries forward to show Timur the Lame

(Tamerlane) building a pyramid out of 70,000 skulls in central Asia. This final image and the horrors that came before it, serve to once again demonstrate Kadare's mastery of the political fable.

In addition, *Agamemnon's Daughter* is a brief novel that was written in 1985, during the final years of the Stalinist rule in Albania, but it was not published until 2003. It is another work of historical and political fiction. It is an internal monologue of an anonymous television journalist whose girlfriend Suzana, the daughter of the leader's designated Successor, ends their relationship because she thinks he might not be the right person and because it might damage her father's reputation. The tale is set against the legend of Iphigenia and the antiquated Balkan tale of "man and eagle."

The action of the novel take place in Albania during the country's final years of communism. The narrator, who works for the state-run media organisation, has taken Suzana, the daughter of a senior government official who is rumoured to be in line to succeed the dictator, as his lover. Suzana's father has made her quit the relationship since continuing it could harm, if not ruin, his position. Nevertheless, the young man has been granted the prestigious opportunity to participate in the Party's platform at the May 1 Parade. Agamemnon, the terrible Greek general, is suddenly seen by our narrator among the flags, propaganda streamers, and images of the country's leaders while the routine ceremonial of the regime's self-glorification takes place. He instinctively knows that just as Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, Iphigenia, his own love will be sacrificed by Suzana's father. In this captivating book, which he wrote in Albania but was later taken to France by smuggling it in the 1980s, a few chapters at one time, Kadare denounces the machinery of the authoritarian system with remarkable energy, taking us back to the early origins of Western civilisation and tyranny.

Furthermore, Ismail Kadare's short novel *The Blinding Order* was written in 1984 and released in 1991, not long after Hoxha's regime in Albania fell to pieces. *The Blinding Order*, a parable on the use of terror by authoritarian regimes, is set in the Empire of Ottomans during the nineteenth century. Its plot revolves around a religious decree issued by the Sultan ordering the blinding of anyone with an illusory evil eye and the ensuing terror campaign. This entire narrative is told in the fable-like tone of 1,000 nightmare nights.

Ismail Kadare's most recent book, *A Girl in Exile*, was published in 2018. William Giraldi links Kadare to "Victor Serge and Eugene Ionesco," considering their absurdist and rebellious influences that are predominant in the novel. He defines the book as a picture of the horror depicting Albania under Stalinist authoritarianism, wherein its people were ravished from the year 1945 to the year 1991 (Giraldi). The narrative opens with Rudian Stefa, a well-known Tirana playwright who has been sought out by the Party Committee for unspecified reasons, revealing his nervous state of mind. Later, he learns that Linda B., a former internee who lived far from Tirana, committed suicide and that a signed copy of the playwright's book was found among her things. Interestingly, Migena, Rudian's potential love interest, is good friends with Linda B. In an effort to shed light on any potential associations between his profession and the young girl's death, Rudian decides to get involved.

As the narrative progresses, the narrator provides a terrifying narrative of incidents that demonstrate how people living under a Stalinist dictatorship are perpetually watched upon. Even routine activities like drinking tea at a certain café, having a romantic relationship, who one hangs out with, and the writings of writers are accused of being seditious. In a moment where a cup of tea or coffee might be poisoned, thus resulting in the death of Rudian, Kadare provides the readers with a tense and eerie café scene between

Rudian and an investigator. Furthermore, one is constantly at danger of having a fellow citizen, whether they are a friend, loved one, or complete stranger, criticise them. “Snares and treachery are everywhere,” as the narrator so eloquently puts it (Kadare 13).

Kadare through his work opposes the frustrating difficulty of creativity in a repressive, anti-individualistic regime during the period when some regions of the globe are indulgent in yearning for communism. This is made clear by how the Party Committee’s philistines allow the manuscripts of Rudian’s plays to languish as they undergo an autopsy for any hints of insurrection or dissidence. His new play has been delayed by the authorities because it features the spirit of a World War II partisan who confronts his murderers. Socialist realism’s rules forbid the supernatural from appearing on stage.

Linda genuinely defies death with her love for the man she has never met. Her preoccupation, combined with her passionate, idealistic longing for the Albanian capital Tirana, far from the regional backwater where she and her affluent family are sentenced to internal exile because of their ties to the exiled royalty, holds the narrative together in the interim. The two females, who are “daughters of socialism,” as the saying goes (Kadare 143), end their enduring love triangle with astounding philosophical selflessness. And instead of resisting or retaliating, they respond to oppression and injustice with a wholly novel, dissident, and unconditioned response that makes the reader dizzy and transcends even what we regard as freedom. They go “beyond the laws of this world,” in Kadare’s words (143).

By fusing Orpheus, Caligula, Skanderbeg, the early Hoxhist era, and the fall of communist Albania, Kadare transforms Albania’s political topology into the protagonist’s present-day experience. The narrator keeps bringing up stories about Orpheus, such as the time he added two strings to the standard lyre, which, in Kadare’s account, was a revolutionary development that caused chaos in Olympus’ bureaucracy. Although the

author does not connect his own tale too closely to the classical one, there are clear parallels between Rudian and his forbidding ghost and Kadare, who once smuggled his letters past Communist censors. However, the two extra strings could mean more than just writers' difficulties. Maybe they produce a sound that is completely different from what humans can hear. The vibration is what ultimately calmed Cerberus, the hound of Hades, and freed Eurydice, the beloved of Orpheus, from the underworld.

In 2005, on honouring Ismail Kadare by presenting the first International Man Booker Prize for Literature to him, Professor John Carey, Committee Chairman Man Booker International Prize 2005, hailed Kadare as a literary genius who through his works delineates an entire culture including "its history, its passion, its folklore, its politics, its disasters." He further lauds him as "a universal writer" whose "tradition of storytelling that goes back to Homer" (Hanley and Scott).

Ismail Kadare's literary works are characterised by his use of literary devices like allegories, symbols, metaphors, and irony which appeal to the intellect of his readers. While comparing the writing style of Kadare with that of other Balkan writers, Robert Elsie in "Evolution and Revolution," describes Kadare as the epitome "of creativity and originality" existing in contemporary literature of Albania (259). Robert Elsie in another article "Subtle Dissent of a Balkan Bard: The Life and Works of Ismail Kadare" opines that Kadare, with the publication of his first novel, *The General of the Dead Army* (1965), introduced a new style of writing by using metaphors like rain, mud, grey clouds and storms in the stream of Albanian literature and also made Albanians able to view the conditions of their nation from the perspective of an outsider. Moreover, Kadare by using his comparative liberty and talent opposed the authoritarianism of Enver Hoxha in a more "subtle but effective way" (6). Arshi Pipa in "Subversion vs. Conformism" analyses the writing style used by Kadare in his various novels in order to illustrate how Kadare rewrites history in order to oppose a

system. By using devices like allusions and analogies, Kadare, ironically and allegorically exposes the loopholes present in the dominating system of Albania. His writing style is usually grotesque and full of rhetorical devices like hyperbole, caricature, and ellipsis. Like an electric eel, his writing gives shock to the readers rather than a surprise. Robert Elsie Kadare attacks the "literary mediocrity within the system" with full courage which resulted in a certain "degree of flexibility" in the system of social realism enabling it to thrive ("Evolution" 259). Peter Morgan in "Modern Homer" contends that although Kadare's texts do not look political ostensibly his works are actually aimed at criticising the political leaders who led the regime during that period and he is successful in doing so by his use of "Aesopian" modes (8).

While mapping the history of Albania in the works of Ismail Kadare, many critics and researchers have come across the observation that his works highlight the issues related to identity and history. In a similar line**,** Peter Morgan in his essay "Modern Homer" lauds Kadare by calling him "the last great chronicler of everyday life under Stalinism" (7). Morgan makes a critical assessment of Kadare's works which he had published till 2006 and opines that Kadare evokes the stories from ancient Albania, which he finds more durable than modern Albania, in order to represent the difficulties faced by the Albanian people living under the Communist rule. Kadare is a magnificent writer who is simultaneously an Albanian patriot of Albania as well as an Existentialist of Europe existentialist. He describes him as a "repository of the legends of his nation and communist modernizer, dictator and dissident, Zeus and Prometheus" (10). Kadare gives voice to both the ancient identity as well as the modernity of Albania.

It has been explored that Kadare's narratives depict and highlight various aspects of socialism as experienced in Albania. In a similar vein, Ani Kokobobo in "Bureaucracy of Dreams" analyses Kadare's *The Palace* in the light of socialism and claims that the novel

delineates “an abstracted and composite portrayal of socialism” (527). Through his “dream project” Kadare tries to highlight the struggle which an artist has to undergo in a “socialist regime” where the bureaucrats through their continuous surveillance deprive the literary and creative productions of their aesthetic value, in order to make them “politically relevant realistic narratives” (528). Janet Byron in “Albanian Nationalism and Socialism” explores the thematic concerns present in Kadare’s works regarding the nationalist thinking of Albania and the socialist thought which emerged there in the twentieth century. In some of his texts, Kadare hails the traditional nationalistic ideals of his country; however, in other places, he lauds the modern socialist notions. Kadare does not actually favour one over the other but tries to suggest that the “strengths of socialism must redeem the weaknesses of national traditions; and conversely, the virtues of national thought must overcome the imperfections of socialist practice” (614).

Kadare’s texts have been found to emphasise the significance of ethnicity and the role it can play in making a change in society. Peter Morgan in “Ancient Names” observes that Kadare’s novel, *The Palace of Dreams,* sets forth the idea that ethnicity can act as one of the most important factors needed for a social change to take place in a post-communist society. For achieving this purpose, Kadare traces the identity crisis of a “typically ‘Eastern European’ bureaucrat and ‘man without qualities,’ in an allegorical Ottoman Empire” (45). Adrian Brisku in “Occidentalizing the Past” points out that Kadare promotes the idea of Europe which is essentialist and Eurocentric and that of Albania as the other; his texts reveal a kind of inferiority regarding the Albanian identity when compared to modern Europe.

It has also been observed that Kadare’s texts are characterised by his use of mythological references. Janet Byron in the article “Albanian Folklore and History” expresses her point of view that Kadare superimposes the history of Albania with its

mythology in order to show how Eastern and Western powers depredated the naïve and simple inhabitants of Albania while exploiting their belief in superstitions and legends. Kadare also tries to unveil the "psychological truths" upon which the "core of folk beliefs" has been established (41). Moreover, Kadare's "depiction of foundation sacrifice" serves as an example of the "Girardian scapegoat mechanism" whereby he tries to illustrate how "immoral acts are committed [by the state] in order to make social existence possible" (213-215).

The religious identity of the Albanian people has often been a debatable topic and Kadare's texts also display the impact of various religious identities, particularly the one created by the influence of the Ottomans on the people of Albania. Ines Angeli Murzaku in "Inter-Church and Inter-Religious tensions" holds the view that besides promoting the "European identity of Albanians," Kadare through his novels spreads the idea that a "divided religious identity" gives birth to a "divided nation" (3). John K. Cox in "What's Behind the Veil?" points out that Kadare's interest in the portrayal of the Ottoman Empire results from three main reasons. Firstly, the invasion of Albania by Turks led to the mass conversion of people to Islam which in turn led to the isolation of Albania from the rest of Europe, especially the Western part. Secondly, Kadare could not directly oppose Enver Hoxha and his rule; thus, he used Ottoman Empire as a tool for indirectly attacking his contemporary dictator. Finally, Kadare finds that the Ottoman period is the main source of different policies that prevail in Albania and are a source of problems faced by Albanians in the domestic as well as the foreign sphere.

Besides, Kadare's texts have also been analysed through the postcolonial perspective. Likewise, Rebecca Gould in "Allegory and the Critique" claims that in spite of the fact that Kadare is a European writer, his fiction takes part in 'postcolonial conversation' and falls under the category which Frederic Jameson calls the "third world allegory" (209). Kadare

goes back to the "distant past" not just for gaining knowledge but his main motive is to make his "fiction speak, allegorically, to the present" (209).

Although critics and scholars have majorly ignored the aspect of Kadare's works that deals with the issues faced by women, however, a few scholars have thrown some light on the same. Irena Myzeqari in "Identity Politics" explores the power discourse at play in the works of Ismail Kadare, especially his political novel, *Agamemnon's Daughter*, and highlights how feminist identity concerning power relations is created in the novel. By the end of the novel, the myth of the ever-sacrificing female figure is maintained. John K. Cox in "*Waterloo of the Old Ways*" claims that the issues related to the problems faced by Balkan women of various ages have been highlighted in Kadare's works, albeit they do not dominate his works. Women are most conspicuously absent from Kadare's writings, as they are from the majority of Balkan literature, from the military, politics, and government administration. Along with the depiction of different social problems and the portrayal of various facets of the Ottoman Empire, Kadare portrays women in such a way that it provides food for thought about power relationships.

Kadare's texts have been translated from the Albanian language into French and English. Although, the translated texts might not have been able to capture the true spirit of Kadare's writing genius, however, the credibility of these translated texts has been affirmed by the writer himself. Peter Morgan in "Translation and Dictatorship" remarks that although Kadare was not linguistically capable of translating his texts from Albanian to some other language yet he "closely supervised the translations" (40). Being "safe from the last-minute changes, additions, and deletions of editorial hands" faced in Albania; his translated works are more "reliable… than the Albanian originals" (40).

After a thorough review of the literature, it has been found that the works of Ismail Kadare revolve around Albanian ethnicity along with nationalistic and religious identity.

Some critics have also explored his use of allegoric, ironic, and symbolic tones primarily intended to indirectly satirise the brutal workings of his contemporary ruling class, in particular. However, his works have not been, yet, analysed with reference to the approach of dissident reading employed by Alan Sinfield, which primarily focuses on the relationship between the text and its context highlighting the hidden dissident or subversive forces present in a particular text. This study shall attempt an analysis of the select texts of Kadare mentioned previously using the approach employed by Alan Sinfield while making an analysis of various canonical texts. Furthermore, it has not been explored as to how his texts depict the use of various strategies used by despotic rulers to manipulate the ideologies of their subjects and interpellate them. The theoretical framework of the study revolves around the reflections of critics and philosophers especially those of Michele Foucault, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams, and Antonio Gramsci, as Alan Sinfield's approach is significantly influenced by these intellectuals. Furthermore, his texts have not been analysed extensively with regard to the role of gender in power politics and how the exaltation of masculinity tries to stabilise a structured system of suppression and dominance in the entire gender order. This research work considers the issues like how the positions of power are inhabited by a particular group of men by way of controlling weaker men as well as women.

Chapter 2

Alan Sinfield and the Dissident Reading

Alan Sinfield has emerged as a prominent figure in the twentieth century. His contribution can in no way be undermined or overlooked as far as his work in the fields of English literature, Cultural Studies, and Queer Studies are concerned, resulting in his zealous and indispensable advocacy for the cultural materialist tradition, which he became particularly associated with in the 1980s. His wide range of works includes *The Language of Tennyson's In Memoriam* (1971), *Literature in Protestant England, 1560-1660* (1983), *Society and Literature, 1945-1970* (1983), *Political Shakespeare* (1985), *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* (1985), *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (1992), and *Cultural Politics- Queer Reading* (2005). He has made tremendous contributions in the previously mentioned fields through his enormous work, which ranges from the Early Modern period up to the contemporary one, engaging himself in the profuse production in a broad spectrum; and while taking on a literary master, for example, Shakespeare, the study would be untraditional and iconoclastic one (Alderson).

Alan Sinfield was born in 1941 and his prodigious work is marked by his post-war experiences; the national ambition for Capitalistic inclusion and its eventual failures thereof, with the emergence of the New Left and counter-cultural movements, which he was an active participant, and the Thatcherite attacks on both. In his works, Sinfield makes a point of deconstructing the traditional and conventional modes of cultural assessment and analysis; wherein his recurrent business seems to question the basis of institutions, their rules, norms, and ideological assumptions of critical observation and analysis thereof. In

his endeavours, it is obvious, he seems to engage himself and invite the attention of the readers alien to academics, previously a long tradition, but it characterises his perfect and undisputed scholarship.

Keeping in view the limited scope of the research work undertaken in this thesis, the emphasis shall be laid on Sinfield's approach of analysing literary texts as employed in this famous work, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*. Through his approach of "dissident reading," he makes an analysis of different strategic organisations while critiquing the means and methods which assist in the production stories that appear to be plausible and by which subjectivities are constructed. It further analyses those "faultlines and breaking points" which makes dissident reading possible (Sinfield 26). While offering dissident readings of Shakespeare's texts, Sinfield challenges the traditional, conservative, and humanist readings. However, it cannot be undermined that his readings rely on the deliberations of eminent philosophers and intellectuals particularly those of Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Michele Foucault, and Raymond Williams. Besides, before going into the details of Sinfield's approach, it is worth mentioning that some of the key concepts that his analysis draws on include concepts like power, ideology, hegemony, and subjectivity. As such, the chapter provides insight into such concepts followed by Sinfield's cogitations on the same.

A social system without power and power interactions is inconceivable because power is an essential component of social systems. By the employment of various tactics for imposing one's own desires on other people, such as physical threat and psychological intimidation, power gets defined in its true definition. When one examines the phenomenon closely, it is simple to reject or criticise the idea of the use of power. Different social systems, such as the subsystems of morals, faiths, production, and families under the general heading of a social structure, have emerged throughout the history of humanity. In

order to maintain particular value and belief systems, world views and shared perspectives, along with the hierarchy where people work and exist in a manner that rarely raises any questions, one's "order" also comes to help. It essentially legitimises power dynamics (Joseph 2).

Power develops at the interpersonal level. A single person can neither create nor use power when they are alone. When Foucault brought the idea of power down to the level of relationships, he altered it since relationships require more than one person to execute them. A society is made up of people, and that society functions as a structure. The individual who is a part of this social system is on the verge of losing his identity during this process. Even the Marxist scholar Louis Althusser also advocated the view that in social explanations, the individual should not be given autonomous significance (Joseph 13). In society, there are various levels ranging from the individual and familial to the societal structures. Every culture has a particular mindset or way of thinking that is, in some ways, universally shared at all of its levels and is tied to day-to-day existence. All the structures in society are connected by this link, and only if one takes into consideration the customs, concepts, and symbolic or cultural significance that function as a bridge between the larger social patterns and individual behaviours, organisations, and interventions, can we identify the relationships between them.

In general, traditional and experimental, orthodox and unconventional, and conventional and its alternatives have always been forces at work in all civilizations. It may be claimed that behavioural and cultural norms of the individuals who are part of a society are the major components useful to illuminate its structure without generalising these dialectical oppositions. Rarely do the novel and unconventional forces appear overnight. The determining factors present in all communities include history and culture. When old things are destroyed or rendered helpless to fend against new ones, new things appear.

Therefore, a society's culture, common beliefs, and history serve as the primary factors in determining and observing power relations. It is possible to comprehend the significance of power within a social system using a variety of theories and notions.

In a dictatorship, the government has full authority to interfere in the bulk of social affairs. People lack the ability to make decisions. To solve problems that one person cannot solve alone, there is always a need for group action. Nietzsche argues that for doing tasks that an individual is afraid or lacks the bravery to perform, multiplicities are invented (382). As an individual is too weak to muster the confidence to act on his own wishes, shared experiences and societies are much more forthright and illuminating when it comes to the character of an individual.

The state uses its legislative authority to compel a society to function properly, acting as an independent body. In actuality, group decisions should be treated on par with individual ones. There is less of a distinction between modern rational theories and earlier utilitarian reasoning. The aforementioned notion has taken on the appearance of collectively-individual freedom of choice in the resulting intertwined situation. One such assumption is that people in a society are "rational individuals" and make decisions that as per their belief will advance their pursuits and inclinations (Joseph 27). An individual needs access to the proper information to make an appropriate and informed decision, and this information is, to varied degrees, regulated by the government in practically every society. Individual decisions are indirectly under the influence of the state as well.

When given a specific amount of decision-making authority, a person will typically exercise it in one of two broad, distinct ways: either offensively or defensively. The way a person uses power relies on how they are doing in life right now. While using the opportunity to make judgments, influence plays a part. While a person is free to make decisions, other factors are at work on them, including induction, sanctions, rewards, and

punishment. If the ability to make decisions and behave appropriately is what constitutes power, then making decisions while under the influence is not power at all but rather a servitude to it. If this is considered the norm, then the average person has very little authority to make decisions on their own.

In an authoritarian state, the ruler is free to make decisions on behalf of the populace. To prevent the tendency for the opposition, it is also vital for a leader, a dominant group, or a governing political organisation to appear increasingly just and sincere than they actually are. Every level of politics, from the personal to the international, is the same. It can entail the adoption of punitive laws and regulations that are justifiable in the name of the overall welfare and stability of a group or society. Coercion can take various forms apart from physical force, such administrative planning, technical control, and bureaucratic supervision. Both hegemony as well as ideology both play a significant part in this. Most of the time, the persons who are being ruled are under the delusion that the choices made are beneficial for the overall society; it enables them to endure the oppressive coercion imposed upon them.

The notion of practice, which Louis Pierre Althusser, a French neo-Marxist theorist, developed to represent human behaviour in a power position, was taken from structuralism. Although Althusser did not focus on power entirely, he did address the issues and problems concerning control within a community or culture. When examining power as per Althusser's lens, it may be said that power is not just present whenever members in a given culture believe they are powerful or feel oppressed or exploited. Instead, power is a component that is integrated into and created by a society's activities. Since social practices lead to relationships of dominance and exploitation, they are beyond the control of their members' conscious efforts and deeds. There is only class practice, according to the Althusserian school of Marxist thinking, and class conflict is the only issue that authority

must address. The institutions that the ruling elite created have always supported their ideologies.

The social structures of a society are more important to Althusser than the people who make up these smaller structures' supporting cast. The relevance of individuals as deciding elements in various social events diminishes as they become a component of a framework. Although there may be conflicts or opposition amongst a society's substructures, many issues originate from the systems related to economy (*For Marx* 254). The traditional idea of Marxism which equates "ideology" with "false consciousness" was rejected by Althusser. He gave it his own structural interpretation.

He contends that ideology is institutionalised and forced on people through the materiality of structures. He believed that structural representations of ideologies shape how individuals think. A social system can be made more cohesive through ideology. It fosters obedience to the rulers by encouraging people to accept the supremacy of a specific class as inevitable. An important figure among the ones who attempted to advance the theorical perspective of Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas, emphasises the idea that social systems essentially lack power; as such, they derive authority from distinct classes. For instance, unless it corresponds with a powerful class, the state structure is powerless (Poulantzas 115). In exchange, the state itself supports and acts in the same class's interests. The state creates a system that allows decisions to be made and actions to be carried out in favour of capital in order to protect the long-term interests of the capitalist class. Power is viewed by duo, Althusser as well as Poulntzas, to be a characteristic of societal connections that helps in the survival of these social structures. As such, they focus is not laid on specific people. They only concentrate on the larger social system since it is closer to them.

Like Althusser, the advocates of structural Marxism consider various social systems and structures. Michel Foucault, who created fresh theories of power that examine power,

culture, history, and knowledge, came after it. According to Foucault, society is a complex field of study where power is present in all aspects of daily life and is represented by discourses, political and cultural institutions, as well as medical and legal practices. He transferred authority from a higher plane or a larger level to small-scale operations of traditions belonging to a society. Foucault argues that there lies power in all kinds of relationships. Power is a network of relationships that circulate throughout a society rather than something that is imposed on others. He rejects the idea that only a select few can use power for repression and restraint. Even more, this tyranny and restriction produce a new behaviour, thus it is not ineffective. Foucault's perspective on power dynamics is a grassroots model that permeates entire social relationships, viewing people as active subjects rather than passive dupes. It contrasts with the perspective on power as put forth by Althusser, which is about governmental suppression and unidirectional power flow from the higher to the lower plane.

He rejects the notion that power is something held by those who are considered to be the most powerful in a society and used against those who are less powerful. Instead, power in a society governs both the existence and livelihood of those who hold the power as well as of those who lack it. According to him, "power" serves as the prime mover in various relationships rather than being a still object that is passively held in someone's hands.

> Power must by analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power…. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 98)

Instead of analysing power as a downward process, Michel Foucault uses an ascending approach. He is not invading governmental power by limiting power to the interpersonal level. Instead, he expands the scope of the study of power outside the purview of governmental authority, that occupied the primary attention of scholars who inquired into the domain of "power."

Furthermore, he argues that the truth can only be endorsed by those in positions of authority. The truth is equal to an untruth till a particular "knowledge" is not sanctioned by those in the positions of authority, whether they be concerned with religion, bureaucracy, or technology. When a particular production of knowledge challenges or opposes power, the latter makes every effort to put an end to that production. In order to maintain its position of dominance, disciplinary power enforces a favourable truth. A particular nation, community, or society produces and disseminates this kind of truth through its religious, educational, publishing, and advertising organisations and structures. Regarding the same, it is appropriate to talk about certain characteristics of power used for the disciplining of people as promoted by Foucault's thought. Disciplinary power aids positions of authority in controlling social behaviour.

> Discipline consists of a concern with control which is internalised by each individual: it consists of a concern which with time-keeping, self-control over one's posture and bodily functions, concentration, sublimation of immediate desires and emotions- all of these elements are the effects of disciplinary pressure and at the same time they are all actions which produce the individual as subjected to a set of procedures which come from outside of themselves but whose aim is the disciplining of the self by the self. (Joseph 43)

The behaviour of individuals is institutionalised in accordance with the needs and requirements of the context through the use of discipline measures. The behaviour

expectations for locations and institutions including prisons, schools, universities, the military, and workplaces are hardly distinguishable from one another. Despite the fact that the idea of disciplinary regimes has been applied to situations other than prisons where people behave, people must adhere to the institutionalised rules of standardised conduct in a society. An instance, that Foucault takes from is the model of Panopticon originally proposed by Jeremy Bentham, which uses the fewest possible supervisors for regulating and altering the conduct of a large number of individuals, like the prisoners. This technique eliminates the necessity for physical strength, aggression, weapons, or material servitude. It only takes a single glance to change a person's behavioural patterns.

Bentham's Panopticon can be viewed as only an illustration or prototype of contemporary surveillance technologies that alert more people to the existence of a remote watcher who is closely monitoring their daily activities. The use of closed-circuit cameras makes it simple to find and keep an eye on anyone in a crowded street, mall, or hotel (CCTVs). The same purpose can be carried out on a far greater scale by spy satellites orbiting the Earth. These technologies' reach extends beyond just open spaces; they can also be used to monitor a person's activities while they are in their own private space using a computer, browsing on web, or perhaps conversing using a mobile device. The computers are given distinct Internet Protocol addresses, which allows technologists to keep track of all forms of communication a person engages in while also keeping a record of the websites they have visited. The same is true of telephone discussions in modern society. Some methods for setting up space and activities enable the exercise of power more.

The bulk of areas are converted into confinements defined by various institutions, depending on the type of enclosed facility and its inmates, which suggests that the prisoners are rarely or never allowed to leave them within a set time frame. Prisons, schools, and workplaces like factories are examples of contained institutions that force people to stay in

a narrow geographic area. Even these enclosures are divided into smaller groups, schools, sections, and cells for keeping convicts, students, and labourers in their respective areas. Similar circumstances apply to how various social groups are organised and behave when given specific duties to do in accordance with a set schedule. Additionally, it occurs in workplaces including schools, companies, and the military. According to O'Farrell, people are given specific trainings for performing "the same set of movements" simultaneously, for example, marching in formation or reciting lessons simultaneously" (103). All of this is consistent with Foucault's theory of productive power.

Disciplined authority is used to control people's daily actions in order to promote specific forms of behaviour. In earlier civilizations, likewise the civilisation of the Greeks, the ruling authority did not take charge of its citizens' biological needs in a direct manner. Modern governments, on the other hand, assumed responsibility for the lives and behaviours of their people in order to exert control over them. As a result, mention McHoul et al., the state's disciplinary authorities oversaw natural phenomenon like "births, deaths, sexual relations," along with "sickness, disease, bodily hygiene" (61).

The past ruling authorities focussed the resources on matters the matters concerning law and order, and used physical force to enforce their authority and further their goals. Power, which had a strong hold over death, indulged itself in people's lives. Power entered the everyday lives of humans at the most basic level with the aid of disciplinary mechanisms.

> Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate domination was death, but with living beings, and the mastery over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself; it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body. (Foucault 142-3)

As stated in *Power/*Knowledge, according to Foucault, power in older systems emphasised on amassing "wealth and commodities" such as real estate and assets land, however, in more contemporary systems, subjects having unique personalities were turned into goods and products for the purpose of extracting "time and labour" (104). This buildup is known by Foucault as "bio-power" (186). Human beings are able to internalise the disciplinary features by being subjected to a persistent disciplinary regime of force. It is what is most readily apparent in prisons and military facilities. Surveillance and check over the actions and behaviour of subjects, along with their organisational segregation have been reduced to their consequences with the use of disciplinary regimes of geographical distribution. What Foucault argues about people becoming normalised despite continuing to be subject to strict disciplinary demands is an intriguing and ironic outcome of such actions. Foucault observes:

> The individual is not to be conceived as a sort elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the *vis-a-vis* of its prime; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 98)

As the less personalised subjects have previously undergone normalisation, power regimes tend to focus more on them for further normalising them in comparison to the more individualised persons.

Philosophers like Thomas Hobbes believed that power had a home in the body of the sovereign; they had a different perspective on power before Michel Foucault. Foucault stole power from society's leaders and dispersed it to everyone to varied degrees in his theory

on power. Instead of the linear, one-dimensional model that was previously thought of, he demonstrated how power operates as a web. According to Foucauldian rules, the definition of power is "nothing more and nothing less than the multiplicity of force relations extant within the social body" (McHoul et al. 84).

However, Marxist theorists do not believe that power exists in every nook and cranny, and at every stratum of a social system, despite the fact that Foucault does not assign the economy any importance or even a major role in his theory of power. They hold to the notion that only one class- the class that controls the capital- retains control of the world. Because of their financial clout, dominant people continue to be the true rulers, whether they hold direct or indirect control. Schmitt holds that the reason it is the ruling class is that it has the power to shape society to its favour since it owns and controls the means of production. In business, politics, and other spheres of influence, members of the ruling class are in positions of authority. They own the media; thus, they exert a great degree of control over it (162-3).

In Marxism, exploitation is connected to the concept of power. The class that controls the modes and methods of production and distribution can freely take advantage of others who lack these resources and who merely serve as their wage labourers. If this capitalist class is to be believed, even religious and cultural institutions serve as their servants. Marxism advocates using class conflict to displace the concentration of power, that lies with the political and industrial elites who belong to the bourgeoisie, and give the proletariat, or waged workers, who make up the broad masses, complete control. The dominance and authority in powerful regimes is also exercised in an indirect manner by fostering an atmosphere that will allow them to maintain their position as the dominant force rather than just via the use of physical force and severe regulations. The concept of

'hegemony' introduced by Antonio Gramsci along with the concept of 'ideology' by Louis Althusser, have received a lot of traction in neo-Marxist philosophy.

The Italian Communist Party's General Secretary, Antonio Gramsci, who developed the idea of hegemony, was put in prison by the fascist government in 1926. He stayed there all the way up until his 1937 death when he passed away. He developed a theory of hegemony as a result of those years, which was later adopted by twentieth-century Marxist thought. His *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del Carcere* contain fragments of his ideas. His theoretical concept of hegemony centres on the primary tenet that ideas are just as important to the dominion of man as physical power. Marx referred to "the ruling class" producing the "ruling ideas" in his famous work *The Communist Manifesto* (62). Gramsci bestowed this thought with a novel meaning by freeing it from the framework of economy in which it had previously become mired. There is no denying that each type of government has authority in and of itself. The ruled are required to accept and follow the rules that are set out by the ruling class. This sort of authoritarianism runs counter to the idea of hegemony.

Thomas Bates asserts that hegemony can be equated with "political leadership based on the consent of the led;" it is that sort of "consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularisation of the world view of the ruling class" (352). It comes to play whenever the beliefs of the dominant section are ingrained in the minds of those who are under the domination ruled in a manner as to influence their traditional and cultural way of life and thinking. In this way, hegemony occupies the position of cultural authority. Gramsci splits the Marxian superstructure into two sections, civil society, and political society, as a result of this rejection of economics. Through the roles that its members play, including those of teachers, journalists, priests, and so on, civil society contributes to the shaping and reconstruction of the public consciousness. On a microscopic level, they operate and refine the social and political ideas within the context of a personal social framework.

Whenever the political aspects of a society are engaged in the public business of passing laws as well as upholding the rule of law, it operates in a straightforward and comprehensive way. The rulers have an impact at both levels. Intellectuals bring a perspective that is frequently favourable to the ruling class in civil society. They are primarily responsible for spreading the order defined by hegemony within the spheres of their society. As such, they persuade the populace for carrying out their masters' orders. They are led to believe that their rulers' well-being is also their own. The ruling class employs coercive mechanisms to stifle rebellious thinking if these academics fail to reach a consensus. The philosophers and intellectuals of other groups look up to and follow those who are part of "the historically progressive class" among them (Bates 353). Hegemony must be established for a liberal state. Failure of hegemony results in disagreement and discord, which then raises the likelihood of dissent or rebellion, ultimately, leading the state to use force. A liberal state is created by hegemony as opposed to a dictatorship. Any novel or significant transformation either in the social or in the political domain, as viewed by Gramsci, begins as an authoritarian process. The transition stops being authoritarian and ushers in a stable period, if it is successful in establishing a true hegemony (in a period of time that is preferably shorter). The political society's views are spread by the intellectuals of civil society. They serve as the state's agents inadvertently. Through the state's seductive tactics, both directly and inadvertently, the idea of the "State-as-Educator" as proposed by Hegel, is created (Bates 359).

Due to their submission to the forces of the ruling class and the adoption of their worldview, most people do not support freshly rising revolutionaries (Bates 360). All of this occurs unintentionally. When someone is aware of this, they automatically begin to break free from the state's cultural hegemony. It takes an intellectual bent of mind to awaken the consciousness. No common person is able to become cognizant of themselves.

It is also true that every society, regardless of its beliefs or culture, has its unique ways of thinking. To ensure that the state functions without interruption, these speculative or transcendental domains must be incorporated with hegemonic ideology. Gramsci has no faith in democracy or universal suffrage in any sense. The voting booths are "mere forms" in his eyes; the actual power is held by "cultural organisations" and the "parliamentary game" is nothing more than an "illusion of popular sovereignty" thanks to the use of hegemonic force and consensus (363). The ruling authorities control most of the communication channels and only permit the dissemination of information that benefits them to reach the public. The idea of "public opinion" that modern democratic states hold to be so important is nothing more than the end result of a well-regulated flow of data and information. That is why the government always seeks to influence the public's attitude before beginning an "unpopular action" (363). Gramsci compares the bureaucracies and cultural institutions to "the trench system" in combat, noting that the success of a state in a war is directly related to its level of preparation during times of peace (364). A state can be overthrown by revolutionaries only if it is going through an internal crisis. A crisis in the state's hegemonic structure is referred to as an "organic crisis" when the populace loses confidence in the state's and the country's leaders.

The ideology created by Louis Althusser is another imitation of Gramsci's hegemony. Although much has been written and said about ideology, no "adequate definition of ideology" has yet been provided (Eagleton 1). Since "the ruling ideas" of each era are "the ideas of the ruling class," according to Karl Marx, it is a misrepresented perception of reality that benefits the dominant group. He refers to it as "false consciousness" and links it to the ruling ideas (Eagleton 44). Louis Althusser advances the analysis of the concept of *ideology*, and distinguishes between ideology as a wide-ranging force that unites society, and ideology under the control of the dominant authority that helps

them uphold their power. He claims that ideology serves a distinct purpose from the state's oppressive apparatus, even if it serves the same goal- assisting the ruling class in maintaining its position of power. He refers to it as the "Ideological State Apparatus" since he thinks it is operating in a systematic manner (Althusser, "Ideology" 142). He provides Marxian logic to back up his claim:

> As Marx said, every child knows that a social formation which did not reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produced would not last a year. The ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production. (Althusser "Ideology" 127)

Reproducing these circumstances leading to productive output refers to maintaining a social structure as it is. The workers are paid pay so they can continue working, but they are not given enough financial freedom to advance financially lest they outshine or surpass their employers in prestige. This repetition of the production state spans generations and is not just constrained on daily basis. The type of education that is provided to pupils in schools and colleges is clear. The students in these educational institutions are typically only trained to "know how" necessary for jobs they would have to go for in management or menial labour. It may appear that the new generation is simply learning skills that will aid them in their future professional employment in educational institutions, however, the same course of action also involves:

> a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'. (Althusser, "Ideology" 132-3)

The governing body formerly thought to maintain its people's subservience via oppressive instruments like the institutions of court, prison, and army, now has another way to do so by employing various diplomatic modes and methods of *ideological state apparatus*. Within a society, the machinery consists of institutions for religion, education, law, the family, the media, and culture. Ruling classes must resort to violent or physically forceful measures, in order to preserve their hold on power; the other entails no violence at all. Institutions in the religious, educational, legal, familial, media, and cultural spheres make up the Ideological State Apparatus. The fact that the first one is public and the other is typically seen as private is another distinction between the two. According to David Hawkes, Althusser's ideology is the idealised depiction of a physical process in which people imagine themselves to experience their true lives and existence (121).

Alan Sinfield upholds the aforementioned contemplations concerning power structures, which are predominantly delineated in his work, *Faultlines*. To Sinfield, dissident reading is concerned with the "study of cultural apparatuses … and their relations with other institutions," that have a tendency to partly "legitimate state violence," however may also be "bent partly to other purposes" (26). It analyses the means and methods by which "they produce plausible stories and construct subjectivities," as well as "the faultlines and breaking points through which they enable dissident reading" (26).

One of the important arguments, Alan Sinfield makes in *Faultlines*, is about the role played by *politics of plausibility* in a particular culture. Alan Sinfield's conception of the politics of plausibility is rooted in Louis Althusser's opinion on how ideological state apparatus including various cultural constructs are employed by the authority to *interpellate* its subjects. Sinfield remarks:

> Ideology is produced everywhere and all the time in the social order, but some institutions- by definition, those that usually corroborate the prevailing power

> arrangements- are vastly more powerful than others. The stories they endorse are more difficult to challenge, even to disbelieve. Such institutions, and the people in them, are also constituted in ideology; they are figures in its stories. (33)

According to Alan Sinfield, civilizations must create ideologies that will support the continued production of a wide range of goods. Societies must create not only food, energy, and tradeable items, but also "understandings" of "a system of social relationships" to maintain the process as a whole (32). Its capacity to make what is going on around us appear like a believable account gives ideologies their power. The most convincing worldview is the one that generates the most evidence. Ideology is created across the entire cultural spectrum, but it is nowhere more potent than in the narratives (discourses) of the wealthy elite. Discourses of the privileged have a more convincing tone than justifications from the excluded. The discourses of individuals who speak within the ideological wheelhouse of the powerbase sound uncannily sensible, obvious, and full of common sense, in contrast to the stories of the excluded, which sound suspicious. Othello, according to Sinfield, commits suicide because he is unable to reconcile his barbarian nature with the ideal of the civilised man Venice aspires to create. Ironically, Othello and the audience are led to accept the dominant Venetian state philosophy.

Alan Sinfield while citing Mark and Engels maintains that the class in charge of "the means of material production" also has control over the those of "mental production" (35). Institutions that deal in ideas will be under the influence of groups with financial might. Sinfield queries, "How can we even conceive, much less organise, resistance, if we come to consciousness with the power structures that uphold the social order?" (35). As per "the essentialist-humanist approach to literature and sexual politics" it is generally assumed that the individual is the basis for the genesis of "truth and meaning," however in reality, the power structure is the source of the consciousness of people who develop ideas, creating

even more structures that define and trap people (37). He concurs with the notion that the state's wealthy elite controls inferior groups "through the ideological framework" that it both occupies and defends (33).

Shakespeare's plays, in his opinion, serve as illustrations of this procedure, in which powerful men give the most potent stories a distinct scope and direction. He contends that Iago's narrative (discourse) succeeds not because he is cunning but rather because his deceptions perfectly reflect the prejudices, presumptions, and stereotypes of a Venetian culture that views black people as exotic, inferior to white people, illiterate, barbaric, and prone to falling back on stereotypes. Othello transitions from being a colonised subject living in white Venetian society's rules and attempting to internalise its philosophy to becoming an outcast, rejected, and completely alienated from it until he assumes his position as its other (Sinfield 31). Even Othello accepts this view of himself because he is subsumed by the dominating ideology of political, economic, and cultural elite in Venice, a society that makes use of his military skill but refuses to accept him as a legitimate member of its own. Othello, who the state portrays as a monster, eventually heeds its loud summons. Because Iago's lies seem "plausible" and "sensible" to the Venetians and even (tragically) to Othello himself, his schemes succeed rather than being clever (31).

The underlying cultural material that Iago exploits (and which Othello falls victim to) is referred to by Sinfield as the politics of plausibility. Certain explanations of experience seem reasonable as a society evolves around and through its members. These interpretations, which are supported by their combined experiences, are seen as relevant and legitimate by them. To put otherwise, the subjects are willing to comply despite the injustice and humiliation they experience because the ideology in power sets the parameters for believability. Sinfield argues that this is how people are made "to believe things that are neither just, humane, nor to their advantage" (35). Sinfield again asks if there is some other

way to justify "how people can be persuaded to kill and be killed in the name of beliefs that are neither true nor in their interest?" (*Shakespeare* 10).

Considering the complexities of power dynamics, gender and sexualities are also important factors that impact power relationships. Alan Sinfield argues that each of the appearances of Desdemona including her submission "to Othello's abuse and violence" fits one of the dominant "models for 'woman'" in our societies, thus making it "plausible in itself" (Sinfield 53). To Sinfield, gender is a social and ideological construct as he remarks that essentially there is no "woman or man, but there are ideas of women and men and their consciousnesses," which take shape in "representations" (63). Commenting further on the relationship between power structures and ideologies concerning gender and sexualities he argues:

> Rather, sexualities, genders, and the norms proposed for them are principal constructs through which ideologies are organized, diversely in diverse cultures but always with reference to power structures that are far wider than individuals and their psyches. They are major sites of ideological production upon which meanings of very diverse kinds are established and contested. (128)

The greatest threat is that men will not prove adequate and that they may possess traits that are considered to be "feminine" and "effeminate" (131). Any male who departs from the right totality of masculine essence is characterised by effeminacy. There is no room for a manhood that does not involve fighting. Naturally, those who disagree with strongly held beliefs often feel pressured, but "assertive masculinity" is inherently repressive because it justifies itself by successfully frightening others (134). Besides, the subjugation of women is crucial to the sustenance of masculinity because it is rooted in man's threat of being encroached upon by their subordinate gender. Therefore, the ideological construction of

gender helps the dominant structures to stabilise a structure of dominance and oppression, thus, playing a significant role in power relationships.

However, Alan Sinfield though not refuting Althusser's and Foucault's conception about creating an unbreakable continuation of "ideology and/or power," affirms the argument of Raymond Williams concerning the coexistence of "subordinate, residual, emergent, alternative, and oppositional cultural forces" along with the dominant cultural forces, in "varying relations of incorporation, negotiation, and resistance" (26). Sinfield holds that "contradiction and conflict" are "two types of disturbances," legitimated by the state and the ideology (116). To Sinfield, contradiction is more basic in the sense that it is fundamental to social interaction as a whole, such as, when the dominant order rejects what it requires or, rather, when it creates its own annulment by maintaining itself. Conflict occurs due to the "structural faultlines" created by frictions and contradictions between opposing interests, either as a state of disequilibrium or as an active conflict. He also maintains that ideology is also undermined not just from below, but the "antagonisms" that lie "within and among the dominant class or class fraction" also play a part in it (116).

Sinfield uses the word "dissident" instead of "subversive" because he remarks that the term subversive seems to mean accomplishment, that is, a structure was overthrown or subverted; therefore, as a result, "containment must have taken place," however, normally, the regimes do not get subverted and patriarchy is not overpowered (49). Dissidence, to him, means rejecting an aspect of the dominant without assuming how things will turn out. Although, it sounds as an uncertain assertion, however, he contests that it is powerful since it assumes that there will always be an ongoing contest, where the dominant might occasionally lose the ground and the subordinate might hold onto its position. In a similar vein, the characters of Kadare's narratives are not successful in subverting a dominant system but some of them do carry dissident ideas or intentions, in the least. Thus, asserting

the point that the contest, though contained for the moment, shall be continued, eventually making the dominant lose its ground and the subordinate hold its position.

Alan Sinfield holds that our conception of "who we are" is intertwined with the notions and ideas that "we have of proper authority and of the potential for dissidence" (26). He further asserts that every system of authority requires unwavering "vigilance," and in most of the cases the price of "dissidence may be high. But it is not constructive to suggest that if you try to make the world better you [have to] sacrifice your integrity and probably make things worse" (14). He, furthermore, remarks that dissidence necessarily takes place "with reference to dominant structures," therefore, in order to oppose the structures, they must be first invoked (47). Even Foucault in his work *The History of Sexuality,* holds that there does not exist something like "great Refusal," however he envisions "a plurality of resistances" which according to him are dispersed across different time periods and locations, with varying levels of intensity, occasionally prompting certain groups or individuals to take decisive action (qtd. in Sinfield 47). While describing the state as the most significant and "powerful scriptor," (34) Alan Sinfield confirms that it is not possible for cultural producers including, "dramatists, copywriters, and literary critics" to stand out of an ideology, however, they still possess "a certain distinctive power- an ideological power- to write some of the scripts" on their own (14). As such, he emphasises that in order to subvert the dominant oppressive power structure, there is a need to "shift the criteria of plausibility" (34) which can be best done by the humanities intellectuals and literary figures as they can make some stories and representations "more plausible than others," thereby contributing to the contest (26).

It needs to be acknowledged that abrupt revolutionary changes are rare as dissident opportunities are limited often resulting in great personal causes. However, it does not end here; as due to the complex nature of society a dominant culture cannot be homogeneous.

Pointing toward the layered nature of a society which reflect various “interests within the dominant class (e.g., an aristocratic versus a bourgeois outlook)” and contain multiple “traces from the past (e.g., religious ideas within a largely secular culture),” alongside the “emergent elements in the present,” Stuart Hall and his colleagues theorise that such layered society would not be in “open conflict” with the “subordinate cultures.” There is a probability for their coexistence wherein by negotiating “the spaces and gaps in it,” they eventually, pave their own way, threatening the system from within (qtd. in Sinfield 45).

Chapter 3

Subjectivity and Power Apparatus

While reflecting upon the contemporary cogitations on subjectivity, Etienne Balibar observes that keeping in view its long-dated history in terms of linguistic, political, and philosophical connotations, the topic has been caught in a "play of words" (Balibar 8). The word "subject" has its roots in two Latin terms "subjectum" (that refers to the subject as either a person or a thing) and "subjectus" (that refers to the subject as subservient); thereby incorporating both. As such, the argument regarding the term "subject" is caught up between a problematic of freedom and power from the very beginning (8). The term's tangled roots allude to both a type of neutral substance, which served as the original foundation for freedom and autonomy for much of the history of Western philosophy, and a political-juridical condition of subjection to the rule of a "sovereign" or a superior authority (8). Due to its knotted roots, the "subject" has historically been torn between its "agentic aspirations and the always-encumbered relationality of subjectivity" (Callison 173).

Usually, the term subjectivity is equated with one's experiences in terms of how one "relates to oneself, with the problem of self-knowledge, or a deeper realm of interiority;" although these experiences are "inaccessible to others," yet "the affective makeup or reality of one's person" is made up of the same (173). As mentioned by Maurice Florence, subjectivity is described by Michele Foucault as the way how "the subject experiences himself in a game of truth where he relates to himself" (461). According to Michele Foucault, power plays a significant role in the making of an individual. To him, the term "subject" is associated with two meanings, that is, "subject to someone else by control and

dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" ("Subject and Power" 781). He further states that both the meanings "suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (781). All the various forms of subjection are in essence "derived phenomena," meaning that they are only the products of "other economic and social processes," such as the forces, class conflict and production, alongside ideological systems, which determine the nature of subjectivity (782). At the outset of "The Subject and Power," Foucault states that instead of analysing power, his goal is to record the different ways that people are turned into subjects (777). As such, Foucault views production and power relations as being equally important to humans, therefore these two concepts are closely related because both have an effect on and some control over subjects as well as having some influence over them.

In a similar vein, Alan Sinfield in his work, *Faultlines and the Politics of Dissident Reading* maintains that one of the aspects of carrying out a "dissident reading" is to analyse how different organisations "construct subjectivities" (26). To him "the individual" is not an autonomous entity but "an ideological concept;" as such "the whole idea of anything being outside politics is a political idea tending to inhibit understanding and action" (26). He upholds that people's notion of who they are is closely linked with the sense they have concerning the "proper authority and of the potential for dissidence" (26).

Adhering to the above-mentioned assumptions with regard to subjectivity, the study while analysing the selected fiction of Ismail Kadare shall hereby encapsulate questions like what happens to subjectivity when the subjects and power are intertwined. What are the ways by which subjects are presupposed, and then, constructed by the multiple power apparatus? How do different norms and imperatives constitute and regulate the subject? In this chapter, the issue raised about the nature of a subject shall be undertaken by examining

how the nature of the subject is subjected and contrived, and also by examining the effectiveness and interaction of power.

Ismail Kadare's works are essentially political as they centre on social relationships with reference to authority or power. Kadare, through his fiction, performs the dissection of power relations; thus, laying bare the anatomy of the same. Revolving around various dimensions of power structures, the texts under study, delineate the ways the subjectivity of individuals within such spheres gets affected. The metaphor of the totalitarian state, its methods of operation, and its structure and function are the major thematic strands discussed in this chapter. Although it is unknown whether Kadare was aware of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, his notion of discipline and the power derived from it will majorly serve as a theoretical foundation for identifying and evaluating the power structures present in the texts of Ismail Kadare selected for the study.

In his work, *Discipline and Punish*, which examines the different types of punishment used in Western nations, Foucault uses a genealogical approach to his research, departing from what may be labelled as "'empty formalism' of the earlier work, especially in the powerful ways in which power is … centrally reintroduced" (Hall 10). According to Foucault, power structures exert their control over an individual's body by changing it so as to make the person more malleable and ultimately more disciplined. For example, in modern times, the forms of punishment evolved from executing a body publicly to the punishment of the psyche in a more private manner. Foucault strives to highlight all the changes that the history of discipline has inscribed upon humanity and how these inscriptions edify society as a whole.

Foucault surmises that the power structures, which enforce and lubricate the process generating the subjected people, always provide outcomes, without fail and without taking into consideration any anomalies that might occur in a complex society. Alan Sinfield refers

to these anomalies, created by the complexities within a society, as "faultlines" (11) which might lead to a tendency of giving rise to dissidence, though not strong enough to withstand containment.

While interrogating the inner workings of the power apparatus resulting in the subjugation of its subjects, Ismail Kadare's *The Palace of Dreams* serves as one of the best means to decode the issue. Mark-Alem and his response to the various power structures that exert pressure on his choices are brought to the forefront of the conversation, which then highlights how a person functions within the power systems that claim him. The Quprili family and the empire in *The Palace of Dreams* are two independent representations of power that he must contend with. Though, the growth of Mark-Alem's ethnic consciousness and acceptance of its significance is another key factor in how he develops throughout his journey, the same ethnic identity serves as the focal point of the war between the empire and the Quprilis. "The fictive period of the novel," as per Peter Morgan, starts during "the winter of 1877-1878 and ends in the spring of 1878" placing it close to the time of the Treaty of San Stefano, the war between Russia and Turkey, and the Congress of Berlin ("Between" 375).

All of these events are significant regarding the history of Albania and her battle to gain independence leading to the achievement of a national identity. Mark-Alem's failure to comprehend his place in the Quprili and the empire's power struggle makes him a representative of the Albanian subject. Uncle Kurt gives Mark-Alem a hint as to who their family is, turning Kurt into the representative of the whole country. Morgan holds that

> Kurt represents an Albanian ethnic nationalism that is Islamic, but is also strongly aware of its pre-Islamic roots, his brothers and the Vizier represent the family's political compromise with the Ottoman Empire … and the Sultan represents the

> Empire, a long-standing force of occupation of Balkans with a foreign religion and culture … (374)

It implies that Mark-Alem is caught between these three opposing ideologies, each of which tries to integrate him into their functioning. Even more, Mark Alem's name is an amalgam of two different identities wherein "Mark" signifies his Christian roots, and "Alem" represents his present Islamic identity. Likewise, in *Blinding Order*, Marie is called by two names, that is, "Marie" and "Mariam" which are Christian and Muslim names, respectively. As such, she is caught up between two different identities which in a way represent two different ideological forces.

Likewise, Ismail Kadare's novel *A Girl in Exile* appears to be a local depiction of communist Albania from a different angle as he dedicates it to the young women of Albania, "who were born, grew up, and spent their youth in internal exile" (*A Girl)*. However, because of Kadare's brilliance, the local illuminates the universal, making this a story about the plight of the oppressed subjects living in an oppressive regime. The foreign reader also understands and most likely empathises with the tale of "common isolation," as experienced in communist Albania. That is to say, Albania was not only a part of the communist bloc, which was divided from the West but it had also been isolated by the dictator with the catchphrase "with our own effort" from Eastern/communist alliances. Through the suicide of Linda B., who is placed under internal exile, Kadare uses the idea of self-imposed death to convey to his reader the strange condition of an amputated existence that has undoubtedly impacted Albanian identity. In fact, Linda B.'s suicide, which was Kafkaesque in its absurdity, parallels Albania's self-imposed isolation because it shows self-imposed death as a means of achieving the dream of preserving the true teachings of Marxism-Leninism. Linda B. commits suicide after learning she did not have breast cancer, which meant she would not be able to travel to Tirana for treatment.

Again, through the narrative of *The Pyramid*, Ismail Kadare transports the audience to Egypt in the year 2600 B.C., while keeping a connection with Timur the Lame's reign and relating it further to the oppressive political conditions of his own time as experienced by his own people in Albania during the Communist regime. *The Pyramid* is frequently interpreted as a direct allegory of the communist regime, its inner workings, the way power over the subjects was maintained through the use of fear and terror, and thus, playing upon their subjectivity which left Albania with a sizable power vacuum followed by years of instability. Eric Faye claims that *The Pyramid* was written while Hoxha's pyramid museum "[was being constructed] by some Albanian construction workers" in 1988. As such, it is often read as a direct parallel to the pyramid building in Tirana (qtd. in Lameborshi 76). Kadare tries to figure out what all totalitarian governments have in common, how all oppressive regimes maintain power, and how past and present become one when these regimes are perceived in the absence of linear, chronological time. He does this by exploring the lives of subjects who are subject to a tyrannical and oppressive authority. As such, the narrative revolving around one of the seven wonders of the world delineates the strategies and methods used by absolute rulers to protect and uphold their position of authority.

The Traitor's Niche is another work of historical fiction by Ismail Kadare. The narrative is set against Ali Pasha of Ioannina's unsuccessful uprising against the Sultan from 1820 to 1822, and it describes the harsh and irrational measures taken by the authoritarian rule to put an end to future uprisings. It is a world of oppression and revolt where the subjectivity of subjects is meddled by displaying severed heads, territories are degraded to the extent that subjects are enforced to follow shabby dress codes, entire languages are outlawed, and even forgetting is more difficult than remembering.

Set in the Communist era in Albania, *Agamemnon's Daughter* centres on the dilemma of the narrator as his beloved Suzana is being pressurised by her father who is an influential Communist Party member, to end their relationship. The narrator is an unnamed news presenter showing some traces of anti-communist views. The text highlights the way, Suzana's father sacrifices his daughter's love and happiness in order to advance his own political goals and ascend to the top of the Communist Party by keeping Suzana away from the narrator. As such, the horrific love story of *Agamemnon's Daughter* is thrust into the frigid machinery of the state's power mechanism.

In this text, Kadare openly criticises elements of Albanian society under the Communist regime, in a quite transparent manner. However, as mentioned in the introduction of the book, these "dangerous manuscripts" were taken to Paris by smuggling them with the intention of enabling Kadare's publisher to announce that a previously unpublished section of his work would be released right away in the case of the writer's natural or "accidental" death (Terziu 130). It is unclear why Kadare chose to write a book in the middle of the 1980s that openly criticised the Communist Government (130). Furthermore, it is uncertain if Kadare believed that he at risk as he was writing the novel, however, he was unquestionably ready for it because "the Communist propaganda machine would find it much harder to bend Kadare's work and posthumous image to its own ends" once the tone and content of the unpublished works were made public" (130). Using Th.D., the painter as a representative of the artistic sphere, who is "simultaneously considered privileged and persecuted," Kadare projects his own predicament (Kadare, *Agamemnon's Daughter* 56). Although the privileged position of the painter makes him invulnerable to an overt attack from the state,

> [b]ut who can be sure that nothing could happen to him under cover or behind the scenes? An automobile accident, for instance, or a dinner that just happened to be off,

> and then, next morning, a splendid funeral, and *finita la commedia!* [Even] the irritation you can feel now and then on his account is there for him to hear the message: *Aren't you grateful to he still alive? What more do you want?* (58)

Even more, Kadare distinguishes between writers who were dissidents and wrote during the height of a totalitarian system, like himself, and those who did so after communism's collapse, in an interview with Eric Faye. He elaborates:

> The critics forget that in a dictatorship, the most massive war is not against the dissidents, but in an almost universal and mythological fashion, it is against human life. In order to rule a country, a dictatorship aims to transform human identity by creating an alternate universe, one where dictatorship can thrive. (qtd. in Lameborshi, "Ideological Fluency" 560)

One such universe is Tabir Sarrail in *The Palace of Dreams* where employees of all ranks plunge into their aspirations while being cut off from one another and are subjected to the authority of the intangible empire. The power structure that controls the Palace sees each person, first as a subordinate, and then, as someone who will uphold the authority of the state via his services. Furthermore, Tabir Sarrail's strength derives from the individual bodies that operate both inside and outside of its borders, and in turn, the sum of these people makes up the empire whose aspirations are spied on. Thus, the subjects serve as cogs in the wheels of a larger power apparatus.

In one more Kadarean universe, *The Pyramid,* as the Pharaoh Cheops shows his reluctance in continuing the long-standing custom of building pyramids, the high officials convince him for the same by saying: "a pyramid is power …, repression, force, and wealth …, [which results in] domination of the rabble; the narrowing of its mind; the weakening of its will; monotony; and waste… [I]t is your most reliable guardian" (8). The construction of the pyramids is explained to be his saviour, a way to "[consume] the excess energy of

[Egypt's] population," and "debilitate" it with massive projects that would "destroy body and soul" (Kadare 8). Cheops' advisers come to the conclusion that building pyramids is essential to the state and to keep the subjects under control. In this case, the subjects serve as the functional units of the larger mechanism which is an assemblage of power apparatus, in such a way that the energy is derived from them by weakening them.

Once again while investigating the inner workings of a power edifice resulting in the alteration of the subject's free will or subjectivity, Ismail Kadare in his novel *Broken April* interrogates the same. Essentially, *Broken April* centres on the life of Gjorg Berisha, a 26-year-old man who is entangled in a never-ending blood feud. He is portrayed by the narrator as a puppet whose strings are under the control of power apparatus typified by the *blood feud*, a crucial custom to the functioning of the tribal law labelled as *Kanun*. As per the custom, it is obligatory that if somebody kills a person, that person's closest kin must exact revenge by killing the murderer. The murderer's death should subsequently be exacted upon by his own nearest relatives, and so the cycle continues. This starts a never-ending series of cold-blooded murders leading to the killings of hundreds of innocent men, and even the extinction of some clans. Gjorg is a subject who endures constant pain and desolation as a result of his obligation to kill Zef, his brother's murderer and finally, getting killed. Even Gjorg Berisha considers many of the Kanun's customs to be absurd, he still finds himself a hunted man with blood on his hands. Here through the character of Gjorg, the pliable nature of the subjectivity of numerous Albanian teenagers living in the northern mountainous region, under the shadow of Kanun's power machinery, is represented.

Michele Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* goes into great detail about the nature of this authority, which is attained both by controlling the subjects and their output. Foucault writes:

> the power exercised on the body [or subject] is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation,' but to dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should decipher in it a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess; that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory. In short, power is exercised rather than possessed. (26-7)

It implies that power relationships are dynamic in a way that exchanges taking place within the power apparatus implicate the subjects that fall under that domain. In a similar manner, Mark-Alem is concurrently confined within these structures of power apparatus. Likewise, it holds true for all the subjects in *The Palace of Dreams,* especially when you take into account how dreams are gathered from all around the empire. Divisions and subdivisions established by the state receive voluntarily submitted dreams and deliver them to the palace for analysis and interpretation. The process of dream collection, thus, involves the populace of the empire as well and is based on the promise of an elusive reward, as in the case of the tale of "some poor wretch … whose dream saved the State from a terrible calamity," who was offered the reward of getting married to one of the Sultan's nieces (Kadare 39). The poor and wretched fellow is actually imprisoned in the palace and subjected to continuous questioning, despite popular belief. People within the empire recognise the possibilities of favour and instinctively act on their desire to be favoured by it, which is essentially a desire to be powerful, to negotiate a deal, and to carry out a transaction that will ensure a prosperous and secure life.

Similarly, even strong government figures want to maintain their standing and security within the empire. The Vizier, Mark-Alem's oldest uncle, is one such representative. Mark-Alem half-heartedly gets to realise that his position in the palace is

essential for the family since it was previously noted that it was only because of his family that he was permitted to work in the Tabir Sarrail. It gets revealed when the Vizier enquires about the rumour that "the Master-Dream is sometimes a complete fabrication" (Kadare 127). The Vizier is aware of the balance of power in the empire, and he purposely positioned a member of his family in the centre of the palace to prevent any attacks on the Quprilis from outside forces. Thus, the Vizier is aware that his position of authority within the empire is a "perpetual battle rather than a contract" (Foucault 27). He is, thus, motivated to actively work to maintain his position within the empire as a result of his grasp of power dynamics.

In *Traitor's Niche*, the impact of the power apparatus on subjectivity is clearly illustrated through Abdullah, the keeper of the niche, wherein the various aspects of his social life including his employment, his opinions on it, his marriage, his sexual difficulties, and finally his sanity get affected. Guarding the place where decapitated heads of the Sultan's enemies are put to display, he learns over the years that people are not as significant as they think themselves to be. To him, "the mechanisms of the state [are] … huge mill wheels turning with a muffled creak in the darkness, dripping black water from the empire's eight-centuries-old foundations; … [and thus, he finds it] impossible to make out anything in this gloom" (Kadare 88). With every passing day, his sense of being insignificant in comparison to the gigantic mechanism of the power apparatus increases; as a result, he is not able to live a normal life like other people within his social sphere. Not only is he supposed to keep an eye on the *head* but is also obliged to preserve it and save it from any kind of anomaly. In case he fails to fulfil his task, he is bound to meet a tragic end as has been the case with the previous keepers. As such, he is overshadowed by the feelings of fear and terror. Getting the foresight of his vulnerable position his desolation begins with him losing his sense of individuality, resulting further in his sexual impotency,

and eventually, culminates at a point where he loses his mental balance and turns frantic. In this way, his self or subjectivity is implicated by the huge system of power apparatus and he falls prey to the same.

In a similar vein, in *A Girl in Exile* all the prominent characters being aware of their vulnerable positions within the state, are engaged in this perpetual battle for survival and security. Linda B., the representative of the section of society that has been labelled as the adversary of the people, serves as the representative of this metaphor. Besides, the reader sees that Migena, Linda's best friend and accomplice in the crime of loving Tirana and its decadent symbol Rudian, is the daughter of a respected veteran and party member, which heightens the irony and demonstrates that death-like isolation was a condition shared by all Albanians at the time, not something peculiar to those in internal exile. Though Migena belongs to the section of the society which is affiliated with the government, she is also continuously struggling for maintaining her safety and security. In addition, Rudian, the representative of the artistic or the literary section of the society, is also battling for his own life since he signed the book for Linda B. and had one play banned and another questioned for ostensibly deviating from the party line.

Complying with the same process of maintaining one's safe position in the system, Suzana in *Agamemnon's Daughter* is obliged to sacrifice and give up her emotional yearnings. In her meeting with the narrator, she claims that she finds it more and more difficult to see him. Her father's career is progressing, and as a result, their family was in the spotlight. Her father is about to ascend one rung at the Central Committee's most recent plenum two weeks prior. As such, she is expected to alter her way of life, her dress, and the people she interacts with. If not, she risks damaging his career. That's why she is asked to sacrifice her feelings and shun her affair with the narrator. Besides, the narrator is left with no choice but to yield to the decision made by her father as any attempt of dissent is bound

to destroy his own career. Thus, in the struggle of maintaining their security within the bounds of the colossal power structure represented by the state, these characters, representing different rungs and subjects of the society, submit their will to the system.

In *Broken April*, Gjorg's family falls victim to the blood feud cycle almost by accident. The Berisha family is tangled with this snare after sheltering a stranger who is then shot dead upon leaving their home, in contrast to killing someone in a fit of rage (Kadare 31). The Kanun states that one must avenge the death of a visitor if he is killed in one's presence. The Berisha family is therefore drawn into a familial conflict that would last for many generations. Even though Gjorg does not want to get involved with the conflict, his own parents push him into it for their own security and safety. In the event that he does not perform his task, they are required to pay a sizable fine. As such, "the sense of desolation … inside him" grows stronger every day due to the significant harm that his inaction does to his family (7). He is "sick at heart" because he knows that by killing Zef, he is courting his own death (51). It reflects that the insecurity regarding the vulnerability of one's existence implicates the subjectivity of an individual.

The process of establishing power over a multitude of individual bodies is one that Foucault talks about in great detail and is one that is applied in the texts of Ismail Kadare. Power must be obtained before it can be maintained. Mark-Alem in *The Palace of Dreams,* progressively begins to understand the process of work and the enormous number of people who contribute to dream selection and interpretation after being accepted as a clerk into the palace. According to Foucault, discipline primarily affects the person who changes from a solitary active cell into a component of an active control system. He looks at how armies and soldiers were created in the eighteenth century and claims that the soldier is a body to which discipline is administered to subjugate the subjectivity of the individuals.

Foucault arrives at the conclusion that individual soldiers become "docile" bodies as a result of military training and discipline. He claims: "A 'political anatomy' [relating to the ways of building armies] was being born; they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines" (138). As a result, "subjected and practiced bodies" are produced under disciplined conditions (138). The employees of the offices of the palace, occupying different tables are these "docile" bodies. Alan Sinfield describes these docile individuals as "good subjects" produced by a power structure "who feel uncomfortable when they transgress" (*Faultlines* 45). Without questioning the system, they laboriously sort and label the limitless files of dreams. They are made to feel significant in this process, which is especially clear when Mark-Alem's boss describes the selection procedure "Provincial sections carry out the initial sorting, although it is merely preliminary. Here's when the actual selection starts. We filter the dreams that contain anything of interest from those that do not, just as the farmer separates the wheat from the chaff" (Kadare, *Palace* 30). The final phrase makes an obvious reference to the Bible and serves to highlight how important the status is within the palace. The Selection department must exist and operate well, just as it is crucial to distinguish between good and evil. Without it, the interpretation of the really crucial dreams would be slowed down, which could harm the empire. Therefore, it might be stated that the Selection division of the palace is more significant than the Interpretation, which is regarded as Tabir Sarrail's elite. The relevance of the reward system, with rank as the top prize, is amplified by a sense of self-importance and pride at having contributed to such a crucial phase in the process of dream interpretation.

The idea of "[r]ank functions on a pyramidal concept of power" a mode of discipline that may be applied to a power structure with two basic manifestations: "it serves both as a reward and as a punishment" (Tarpley 68). According to Foucault, a discipline of rank

"rewards simply by the play of awards, thus making it possible to attain higher ranks and places; it punishes by reversing this process" (181). As in *Traitor's Niche,* this struggle for rank is illustrated by the vie for dominion between the Turkish Hurshid Pasha and the Albanian Ali Pashë Tepelena. Ali Tepelena, entrusted to govern the Pashalik of Ioannina, the European territory of the empire, rises up in rebellion against the Sultan in 1820, prompting Hurshid Pasha, commander, and grand vizier, to be dispatched to put an end to the uprising by executing Tepelena. Even though Hurshid Pasha vanquishes the Albanian rebel and places the region under imperial rule, the fact that both men ultimately end up on the niche demonstrates the extreme unpredictability of Ottoman power at its height. In other words, discipline serves as a framework to support the placement of people in a setting that encloses them in power-based relationships.

Although the Vizier in *The Palace of Dreams* holds a prominent position within the empire, the world of dreams being examined inside the palace poses a danger to that status. It is assumed that Mark-Alem is aware that the purpose of his employment and duty is to uphold the Quprilis' status and position within the empire. The Vizier tells Mark-Alem, "Whoever controls the Palace of Dreams possesses the keys of the State" (Kadare, *Palace* 124). Mark-Alem's rise in ranks within the palace denotes two things: first, that he is an effective docile body within the palace, and second, that he is an indispensable docile body to his family, whose survival is a direct result of Mark-Alem's penetration into the palace's power structure.

Thus, under the control of two power systems with dissimilar goals but comparable effects on his individuality and identity, Mark-Alem turns into a submissive rather a docile body. On the most basic level, he becomes a subservient body inside the palace's walls by becoming just another cog in a larger system of power, an automaton that operates in accordance with the established rules, one who occupies a spatial position, performs

prescribed activities, and arranges these activities within predetermined frameworks. Besides, he is a submissive member of his own family since, in order for the tribal Quprilis to exist, he must give up his goals and aspirations by being a docile body and turn into an automaton. In Peter Morgan's words, Mark-Alem is "classic Central European 'man without qualities,'" and it slows him down at the outset, but once he is in charge, he finds it surprisingly easy to fall into the habit of being in charge" (Morgan "Ancient" 52). Thus, the docile state of Mark-Alem snatches away his individuality rather his subjectivity in favour of a being that can only define itself in connection to the system of power that controls it. Mark-Alem begins to rely on the "altered universe" as the source of truth, reality, and identity once he is given the ability to reign. Earlier, he had heard of former employees of the palace who, in a sense, had withdrawn from life while they were still living and who, whenever they ran across people they knew, "looked as if they had just come down from the moon" (Kadare, *Palace* 108). And now he himself wonders, "What had happened… to life, to mankind, to everything here below?" as he strolls through the streets of his town on one of his days off, "How tedious, grasping, and confined this world seemed in comparison with the one he now served…. There seemed no point in walking about this faded city" (118). Given that it is actually the world outside the power structure that rules him, and that this outside world has become insubstantial. As a result, Mark-Alem has fully acceded his body to the palace's hierarchy of power. He is completely submerged in the parallel world that the palace portrays. He has been transformed into a perfected docile body, in Foucault's terms, ready to engage in the power dynamics of the palace.

Likewise, the conditioning done by "the reward and punishment" politics, is illustrated in *Broken April* through the Prince and his first cousin, Mark Ukacierra also labelled as "the Steward of the Blood" whose ancestors have ruled the Plateau for ages.

The steward's job is to collect the blood taxes and maintain the records of revenue in "The Blood Book" (Kadare, 136). It is considered the task of the steward to encourage acts of vengeance and keep the blood feuds going on, so as to maximise the revenue. However, recent records show a decline in the revenue collected by the blood tax. Taking it as a threat to his rank and authority, the Prince warns the steward: "If you, the steward of the blood are tired of your work, don't forget that there are plenty of people who would be happy to have the post…" (Kadare 150). Therefore, in this case, discipline as well as the sense of being significant to a system turns the steward into a docile body, thus, conforming to the system without questioning it. This in turn results in the subjection of the masses involved in the whole process leading to their docility.

Given the age in which *The Pyramid* was published, it is clear that Kadare intends to illustrate the degree to which communism's repressive nature had eradicated any signs of uniqueness and had diminished understanding of the various elements that made up the individuality of Albanian subjects. The workers who construct the pyramid are changed into power-wielding cogs, unable to assert themselves in society and perpetually under the rule of the pyramid. As mentioned earlier, Foucault makes an effort to identify how power structures create, acquire, and spread power. To him, power is analysed in terms of how the subject becomes "docile," and becomes a useful creature within the power structures from which he cannot escape. The power of the Pharoah transforms people into builders of pyramids, the power of Timur transforms people into frightened, dying creatures, and the power of Hoxha's regime transforms people into subjects of political systems who are united by repressive ideologies, like the bunkers that blotch Albania's landscape.

To put it otherwise, discipline acts as an agenda behind the encouragement of positioning individuals in defined circumstances that enclose them in power-based exchanges. In *Agamemnon's Daughter,* Suzana, the daughter of one of the regime's top

officials, must put her feelings aside because her relationship with the narrator threatens her father's political aspirations. The sacrifice appears straightforward at first, but Suzana actually makes the offering in order to appease her father. However, in the narrator's mind the sacrifice is difficult. Suzana's sacrifice makes him think of a dreadful contrast as he watches the May Day Parade from the main stand. The play of the power apparatus gains a timeless and universal status as he is reminded of Agamemnon's sacrifice in Greek mythology by Suzana's offering. He is reminded that before his army started its battle to capture the city of Troy, Agamemnon offers his own daughter as a sacrifice to Artemis in order to placate her. In the end, Suzana's father acts in the same manner. In an effort to improve his career in the shadows of the tyrant, he has chosen to murder Suzana's heart by turning her into a docile body. In this way, the text invokes the paradigm of the tyrant, which contains one essential component: sacrifice for the sake of power. The fact that Agamemnon's sacrifice was fruitless, however, makes it worse and increases the narrator's sense of dread. Although ending his relationship with Suzana might be a meaningless gesture for him, it acts as a functional element in the power structure of the state.

In *Agamemnon's Daughter,* the narrative is entwined with the myth of the Trojan War. In order to call for the ultimate sacrifice from his troops, the commander of the Greek army, Agamemnon, offers his daughter, Iphigenia to be sacrificed. According to Kadare, Agamemnon, the supreme leader, would have "no empathy for anybody else" if he had given up his own daughter (57). Blood had already been spread on the axe's blade. *Agamemnon's Daughter* also gives us another illustration taken from political sacrifice when "Stalin sacrificed his own son Yakov … to be able to … say that his own son had to share the same destiny … the same fate … as any Russian soldier," thus giving him a free hand over others (42). The main motive of this whole game of sacrifice centres on the sole

fact that it provides the powerful an upper hand over the subjects, completely, and their acts get transformed into unquestionable feats.

Suzana's prominence as the novel's primary female protagonist allows Kadare to depict the realities of Albanians' daily lives, at that period. Through the figure of Suzana, the narrative occasionally highlights beliefs, prejudices, and patterns of Albanian life under communism. Suzana's red outfit, for instance, represents her docility as well as her assimilation or subordination to the Party's principles. The colour red serves as a metaphor for both the bloodshed during her sacrifice as well as her subjugation to communism.

In another masterpiece among political fictions of Ismail Kadare, *The Blinding Order*, as a disciplinary measure, the state, in order to subordinate its subjects, issues the "qorrfirman" or the Blinding Order to arouse the feeling of horror among thousands of its subjects (120). All of a sudden, the subjects get engulfed by a "feeling, … [of] fear…. no ordinary fear, …. [but] an ice-cold, impersonal, and baffling emotion called fear of the state" (121). Different methods are employed to carry out the process of putting out the eyes:

> the Byzantino-Venetian method (an iron bar forking into two sharpened tips); the Tibetan method (which involved piling heavy stones on the convict's chest until his eyes popped out of their sockets); the local method (using acid); the Romano-Carthaginian method (sudden exposure to a bright light); and the European method (protracted incarceration in total darkness). (130)

The subjectivity of subjects in *The Blinding Order* is altered to the extent that they lose their ability to act in a natural way. While some people convinced themselves that they could fend off evil by maintaining a positive attitude and making jokes about it whenever possible, others started to silently disappear from society in the hopes that they would be forgotten. This results in their transformation into docile bodies. Making mental lists of all

their personal adversaries or all the people who envied them or their positions in the civil service and may use the opportunity to disparage them, they isolated themselves at home. Among the latter, some attempted to gain an advantage by condemning their adversaries first in the hopes that, even if they were unable to completely eliminate them in time, they would at least lessen the impact of the denunciations to follow. Thus, they unknowingly become the functional units of the larger system of power apparatus, thus helping in the continuation of the scheme of the decree.

In *The Blinding Order,* an edict introduces a new term, "*disoculation"* referring to the "forcible putting out of eyes" applicable to those who attempt to challenge the Blinding Order or evade its application by hiding from it (119). However, people reporting themselves to the authorities are promised to receive sustaining compensation. Moreover, due to the universal nature of eyes, it was applicable to all, regardless of their position in the state's hierarchical structure, including "ordinary citizens or civil servants" (120). Both Xheladin, a representative of the common employees working for the state in the "Blinding Bureaus," and the grand Vizier, a representative of the officials holding positions of higher rank are seen struggling for their safety; both of them being potential threats to the Sultan. However, by the end, the two are contained by putting out their eyes; thus, keeping no scope for rebellion against the power structure. Therefore, in this case, the power apparatus is devised in such a way that in order to secure their lives and ranks in their respective domains, the subjects are left with no choice but to acquiesce to the set mechanism.

Ismail Kadare's *The Three Arched Bridge* depicts a struggle for power between two groups concerning the modes of transportation; first, the "Ferries and Rafts" representing the group in charge of the transportation through the medium of water, and second, the builders of roads and bridges. In order to sustain their long-sustained position, "Ferries and Rafts" try various methods to sabotage the construction of the bridge as the constructors

pose a certain threat to their position. However, in order to establish their own stay on the ladder of the power structure, the builders respond with more sinister plots. Meanwhile, the Count, keeping in view his own monetary benefits, gets involved in this fight for power by supporting the builders. In this process, Murrah Zenebishe, who himself had yielded to the politics for some monetary gains, falls prey to the vicious snare by losing his life, in the name of sacrifice. As such, all of them turn out to be the perpetrators of bloodshed and terror. Henceforth, their subjectivity gets implicated and they lose their human spirit due to their lust for power and domination. However, unbeknownst to them, the whole process serves the interests of the larger structure of power apparatus, that is, the Ottoman Empire, and paves the way for the expansion of its empire; thus, transforming all the earlier mentioned groups into docile bodies working towards the better functioning of the empire.

In *Traitor's Niche,* the realm of the Ottoman empire which the night couldn't envelop is compared to the "creature with its head in the middle, the octopus" (64). Keeping in view the need for the controlling measures required for maintaining the enormity of the empire, it is bound to employ a multitude of disciplinary tactics. The territories which show any signs of rebellion are crushed by "partial or full erasure of [their] national identity" (149). As per the doctrine of Caw-caw, the department of Central Archive is supposed to accomplish the goal

> through five principal stages: first, the physical crushing of rebellion; second, the extirpation of any idea of rebellion; third, the destruction of culture, art, and tradition; fourth, the eradication or impoverishment of the language; and fifth, the extinction or enfeeblement of the national memory. (149)

People are left with no choice but to follow the dictates for their survival. All these measures subordinate the subjects of such provinces turning them into automatons and *docile* entities.

Again, in *Traitor's Niche,* in an attempt to embody the spirit of the powerful empire, Tundj Hata, the royal courier of the severed heads, loses his human spirit. His job cuts him off from the whole world which appears useless to him, and as a result, he gets obsessed with the decapitated heads which become an integral part of his livelihood. He replicates the power system by exploiting the already suppressed subjects of the above-mentioned territories. Knowing that "for [such] remote, buried hamlets, this spectacle [of a head without a body can serve as] … their literature, theatre, art, philosophy and perhaps love," he turns it into a business for himself by making a show of it in exchange of some coins (61). In a sense, his individuality is subordinated and subjected as he plays a role in the power apparatus and loses his sense of ethics, morality, and empathy.

Individuals who have been fully subordinated and subjected are essential to power systems because they affirm authority by subordinating themselves to it and are crucial to the replication of this power. Thus, the power structures may automate the maintenance of power through the manipulation of their subjects by creating docile bodies. Foucault uses Bentham's Panopticon, a structure designed for subject observation, as an example to demonstrate this idea. A circular structure with individual cells is located at the building's periphery, and in the building's centre is an observation tower from which all cells can be watched; however, the individuals inside the cells are unable to see inside the tower. Hence, in Bentham's construction:

> Power [is] visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any moment, but he must be sure that he may always be so. (Foucault 201)

As such, the subject or prisoner inside the Panopticon cell is conscious of his visibility in the light of the observation tower, ensuring his submission to the possible observer. It

makes no difference if the subjects are being watched by an observer or not. It is crucial that the prisoners must recognise the single gaze and submit to it, even though they actively contribute to its empowerment. It is obvious that the niche in the *Traitor's Niche* is placed in the wall to arouse the feeling that the lifeless eyes of the head were watching every part of the square. This allowed even the most feeble and unimaginative bystander to picture his own head being put on a show at this abnormal height. As such, it compelled the subjects to yield to the system, willingly or unwillingly.

In a similar way, *The Palace of Dreams* offers a solitary, silent, and unreliable view of the empire. Mark-Alem is informed on his first day at the palace that "[the] fundamental principle of the Tabir Sarrail resides not in being open to outside influences but in remaining closed to them. Not in openness but in isolation" (Kadare 23). "For in the nocturnal realm of sleep are to be found both the light and the darkness of humanity, its honey and its poison … mak[ing] its first appearance in men's dreams … [and] cast[ing] its shadow long before it manifests itself in real life," the palace is used as an isolated tower of observation to watch over the sleep of the empire (25). Accordingly, Mark-Alem is haunted by "a fleeting impression that on the edge of his glance there lurked, like a dying wave, the outer fringe of something fearful, though its epicentre was far away (23).

In addition, the Palace asserts that it operates under the premise that the unconscious anticipates one's behaviour. This presumption adds another dimension to the Palace's assertion of its authority over people because it allows it to know things about them that they themselves are unaware of. The subjects' intentional submission of dreams to the Palace for study enables it to serve as a police force of the unconscious and upholds its control over people. This stubbornness is a product of both the already-described illusion of reward and the dread of being observed. If they do not submit their dreams, would the palace still find them? What would happen if the answer was yes? Are they under

observation? Do they see them? Should they voluntarily make themselves apparent, which in this case refers to the unconscious? Even though people are unable to discern the Palace's complex power structure and workings, these issues arise simply by its presence.

Likewise, in *The Girl in Exile,* Rudian's life changes when the Party Committee summons him after discovering a signed copy of one of his plays in the possession of an intern, a young girl by the name of Linda B. Rudian learns that Linda B. has committed suicide and that her family has been placed in an internal exile. When Rudian becomes embroiled in the strange case, the tale paints a terrifying picture of the regime's paranoia and unverifiable surveillance similar to Foucault's Panopticon. Rudian finds his home country to be disgusting since there are "[s]nares, treachery everywhere" (13). Consuming coffee in a specific restaurant is viewed as suspect. Even speaking openly in a restaurant is not secure. Restaurants like the Flora and the Dajti are believed to have "microphones under the tables," and everyone in Tirana is aware of it (29). An individual cannot have faith in another person. In group conversations, it is frequently stated that one person in every four people is a spy. A section of people think it is true, while others think it was created by the Security Service to instil terror (45). A person's future life is unexpected at every moment. Nobody is aware of what calamity is going to befall him next. Even arrests occurred in the most extraordinary locations. In a movie theatre, for instance: the man seated next to you who is laughing at the movie in the most uninformed manner suddenly pulls handcuffs out of his pocket, and the handcuff is around your right wrist. This is in line with Foucault's Panopticon principle, which states that "power should be visible and unverifiable" in order to stop subjects from acting against their will (201).

As Foucault believes that in order to produce subjected and docile bodies, discipline is necessary. In *Agamemnon's Daughter,* numerous instances of oppressive measures taken by the oppressive regime against the subjects, showing slight traces of non-conformity have

been delineated. In conformity with the Panopticon principle, "shadow workers" are supposed to be spread all over, thus, resulting in suspicion and a looming sense of threat among subjects (22). For instance, it is reported that some people have been observed laughing on the day Stalin died. In retaliation, "Every one of [them is] punished without mercy… [and] many years later, they [are] still easily identifiable by the wistful appearance they [are] condemned to wear for the rest of their lives to atone for having once laughed out loud" (Kadare 14). Also, for giving approval to a play containing around "thirty-two ideological errors," Leka B. gets demoted and subjected to run "amateur theatricals in the sticks" (17). Even the hurricane of surveillance and paranoia "batter[s] all the… institutions of cultural life. It was said that grievous errors of liberal inspiration had spread their tentacles almost everywhere… [including] the Union of Writers and Artists, books and magazines, and film production" (90). The shadow of scrutiny "got to the point where you couldn't find any Valium at the pharmacy (just asking for a box of tabs became a suspicious act). Couples split up, people had depression and mental breakdowns (96). There is distrust everywhere.

The struggle for survival becomes so grim that the subjects debase each other in order that they could save themselves from the perdition. Alongside suffering from the pangs of "collective guilt," people are "obliged to take a stand, make accusations, and fling mud at people…. Minds became drunk on an unwholesome brew: the euphoria of self-debasement, of universal corruption. *Sell me, brother, I won't hold it against you, I've sold you so many times already …*" (86). This proves to be fruitful for the state because, in the words of the narrator, "when life is withered and stunted, it is also easier to control" (107). It stops subjects from acting in accordance with their own wishes and turns them into perfectly trained docile bodies.

When describing the idea of Panopticism, Foucault refers to the seventeenth century, when drastic measures were required to contain the rapidly spreading epidemic. The town was divided into different sectors, each of which was overseen by an intendant. It also included

> a rigorous spatial partitioning: the closing of the town and its outlying districts, a restriction to leave the town under pain of death, the extermination of all stray animals. A syndic is appointed to oversee each street, keeping it under observation; if he leaves the street, he will be put to death. (195)

In addition, according to Foucault, "disciplinary projects have the image of the plague at their core, which stands for all manifestations of confusion and disorder, just as projects of exclusion have the image of the leper at their core, cut off from all human contact" (199). Modern states exclude such components to maintain their nation free from all those impurities that might be dangerous to their power system.

Following the same line of thought, Kadare in *A Girl in Exile,* depicts the life of Linda B., an adolescent, whose imprisonment is extended by a directive that is sent out every five years. She is said to be "different in every way," but because she is in internal exile, she is unable to fulfil her dreams of living a free life, leaving her crippled (28). The guidelines established by the "dictatorship of the proletariat" predetermine the course of her life (138). Linda has to show up at the police station every afternoon at a specific time. For her, absconding has consequences, including a statutory fine for visiting a neighbouring town, a double fine for farther-off cities, and a far worse penalty for the capital city, that is, life in prison or execution. She then meets Rudian Stefa on a television programme, and he fills the void in her heart left there because of her longing for Tirana. She not only respects Rudian but also develops feelings for him. It is followed by the delivery of the autographed

copy of one of Rudian's plays that Migena gives to her as a gift, which makes her yearn even more for Tirana and Rudian.

When Linda hopes to be diagnosed with breast cancer since only then is she allowed to attend the oncological hospital in Tirana, the story turns out to be quite spooky. By stating that "here at the end of the twentieth century, was a young girl who had thought of an unfavourable breast scan as her last chance, almost her salvation," the narrator cynically condemns the oppressive Communist system. For her, a positive outcome is unpleasant news and dashes all of her dreams. She had wished to purchase a few days or even a few hours of regular living, even at the cost of her own death. However, her offer is declined. Her hopes are again dashed though, as it turns out that her body will benefit but her soul will not. She scorns the dictatorship by saying, "Thank you, dictatorship of the proletariat. I know that you are a good thing, just and infallible, as we learned at school, but I am tired ... I've had enough of this life," in a sarcastic tone. "I am done with this existence" (138). Eventually, Linda gives up and ends her life because she is unable to handle the suffering. In doing so, she submits to the political forces and mechanisms that wanted to see her destroyed.

Thus, Kadare brilliantly illustrates through this story how independence is taken away from a life lived under severe control and constant observation. People unknowingly or intentionally follow the predetermined rules that benefit the governing authority because of the way the power system is set up. To Foucault, the Panopticon is a wonderful contraption that, whatever use one may desire to put it to, delivers uniform effects of power (202). Additionally, the story emphasises the drawbacks of such an anti-individualistic structure, where it is impossible to even express oneself. As such, it illustrates how the subjectivity of the subjects is impacted by the interwoven structure of the power apparatus.

Similar to the Panopticon concept, secrecy and verifiability are essential to the maintenance of power. In *The Palace,* the gaze and its ability to control the populace are threatened and endangered if someone is able to look beyond the Palace's impenetrable walls. Kurt, Mark-Alem's younger uncle, asserts that the Palace is the only institution where citizens interact directly with the government and that, despite the fact that the people do not rule, "[t]hey do have a way to control all the activities of the State, including its criminal activity. The Tabir Sarrail is that mechanism" (Kadare 63). Kurt's insight makes the gaze less anonymous and hence threatens its authority. Kurt is able to see beyond the opaque barriers of power and see that the people are really the ones who hold it; otherwise, the Palace and its influence would vanish. The Vizier similarly expresses the same idea to Mark-Alem that some people think that this world is governed by the realm of their dreams. However, he believes that everything is controlled by this world as it is "this world that selects what it wants from the abyss" (Kadare 127). Therefore, if this world does choose the dreams and if the masses do choose the flow of dreams, then it is these same masses that govern the Palace and make it possible for it to operate. But that is very unlikely and rare. The power structure is, therefore, supported by the submissive bodies, which allows it to function.

The Palace is in peril because the Quprili brothers have discovered the secret and gained access to the observation tower. They are no longer passive machines that serve the empire's interests. Kurt's assassination serves as a signal to the Quprilis that the empire is definitely watching them in order to keep its hold on power. When Mark-Alem observes the Vizier submit to the might of the empire, he discovers "a trace of what looked like submission," in the Vizier's eyes, which ultimately informs Mark-Alem as well (Kadare 168). On one occasion, Kurt, referring to Quprilis family remarks:

> We're like people living at the foot of Vesuvius. Just as they are covered with ashes when the volcano erupts, so are we every so often struck down by the Sovereign in whose shadow we live. And just as the others resume their ordinary lives afterwards, cultivating the soil that is as fertile as it is dangerous, so we, despite the blows the Sovereign rains on us, go on living in his shade and serving him faithfully. (52)

Mark-Alem is forced to submit to the most powerful, his family, and ultimately the empire because he is torn between three ideologies. He feels as if,

> he [is[crouching there [within the dimensions of the palace] … to protect himself, and that if ever… he gave in to the call of life and left his refuge, the spell would be broken. The wind would turn against the Quprilis and the men would come for him as they'd come for Kurt (203).

The "call of life" may be the sound of the *lahuta* that is waiting to reveal itself within his chest; it suggests that freedom is represented by a fully realised and accepted national identity. Additionally, Mark-Alem represents the Albanian population under communism, which was unable to freely search for its identity outside of the barriers the communist regime had erected.

Likewise, in *The Pyramid,* a moment of anxiety, paranoia, and distrust precedes the start of the construction process. With the laying of each stone, number of labourers and masons are put to death for various reasons; some perish in accidents, while others are executed because of their negligence or because they made some disparaging remarks. Any dissenting attempt is put down in its tracks. A government official might, for example, be "dissected alive, beginning with the tongue that had proffered the idea, and going on to the throat, the lungs, the hands that had participated in the speech, and so on, until more or less nothing of his body remained" after suggesting the suspension of the pyramid (38). A person's "bones are broken with millstones" if they dare to ask "inappropriate questions"

(34). The post-pyramidal period, which turns out to be more terrifying and awful, comes after the pyramid's completion. Cheops experiences uneasiness and constant internal struggle because, as the pyramid nears completion, he realises that both the subjects and the pyramid are eagerly anticipating his own demise. The threat of his approaching doom anguishes him increasingly and he vows to subdue them more:

> He would not force them to love the pyramid, though that would not have been very difficult… He would get them to spin out the paeans of praise for the pyramid in exact proportion to their hatred of it. He would thus degrade them remorselessly, humiliate them in each other's eyes, in the eyes of their wives and children as well, and in the end turn them into nothing more than worms. (53)

People are clearly able to see how the post-pyramidal era has brought them painful agony that is worse and more upsetting than the pain it caused them throughout its building. Some people noted that while Egypt was being built, it had already been digested once. Now, it was chewing the cud like a buffalo was devouring hay for the second time (80). The narrative emphasises Pharaoh's power preoccupation and ruthless temperament by stating, "[he] had had people punished on allegations of delaying the building process. Then, because they had sped up the process, he had others imprisoned for the opposing offence. For the original reason once more, then for no apparent reason after that" (87). In this way, the subjects are forced to submit to the larger power structure by force and repression which eventually turns them into docile bodies.

Therefore, in conformity with Faye's claim that Kadare perceives power as ahistorical is more justifiable because Kadare produces a timeless quality in the texts under study that seems to linger not in the background but to take centre stage. In fact, Kadare affirms as much in an interview with Faye from 1990: "I [take] what is timeless from antiquity. What I have written about Egypt has nothing to do with daily life. Instead, the

connection that humanity as a whole has with pyramids is what draws me" (qtd. in Lameborshi, *Ismail Karade's Voice* 80-1). *The Pyramid's* concept of totalitarianism as a system that can reappear throughout history is representative of how state power is ageless. Totalitarianism is seen as a system that operates on the same tenets of terror, fear, and suppression. Kadare does, however, also allude to the eventual perdition that these despots experience. Ironically, the Pharaoh himself ends up being the biggest victim of the totalitarian politics he adopted. His own entrapment and demise are the result of the pyramid. Similar to the struggles and labour a silkworm goes through to create the cocoon that it is wrapped in.

The author, using a variety of literary and creative tactics, highlights the themes and motivations underlying the primary principles of power politics, which can appropriately be referred to as *Pyramid Politics*. Kadare makes it clear that the construction of pyramids is still ongoing. The tyrannical rulers continue to build their pyramids in one manner or another, sometimes making them ostensibly visible and other times making them difficult to see. In other words, ruthless and despotic leaders of any dominant section of a society have occasionally participated in this *Pyramid Politics*. Thus, the fiction Kadare creates serves as a model for leaders who pursue ever-greater power while ignoring the requirements and desires of their people and hence, playing upon their subjectivity.

By writing during a time period in which hierarchical power structures ruled entire nations, Kadare is able to show that the subjects are the ones who give the government its power, that their lives do not need to be lived out in prison cells, and that their consciousness, passions, dreams, and lives- while imperfect- are not to be locked up. This is the message that stands out in the selected texts above all others as being far stronger and more significant. Its worth is based on fundamental truths about how people and power interact, as well as how people are left of any possible tendency of dissidence. As Alan

Sinfield puts it that the opportunities for dissidence are always "limited- otherwise we would not be living as we do. Revolutionary change is rare and usually dependent upon a prior buildup of small breaks," therefore, in most of the cases, "there are great personal costs" (45). As is evident from the personal costs paid by the characters exhibiting some potential for dissidence like that of Kurt's assassination in *The Palace of Dreams;* the liquidation through the blinding of the grand vizier in *The Blinding Order;* the decapitation of dissident viziers and Pashas in *The Traitor's Niche;* the immurement of Murrah Zenibishe in *The Three Arched Bridge;* the death of Linda B. in *A Girl in Exile,* the mass arrests and killings of the masses in *The Pyramid;* the death of Gjorg in *The Broken April;* and the imprisonment and death of the narrator's previous manager in *Agamemnon's Daughter*.

Sinfield uses the word "dissident" instead of "subversive" because he remarks that the term subversive seems to mean accomplishment, that is, a structure was overthrown or subverted; therefore, as a result, "containment must have taken place," however, normally, the regimes do not get subverted and patriarchy is not overpowered (49). Dissidence, to him, means rejecting an aspect of the dominant without assuming how things will turn out. Although, it sounds as an uncertain assertion, however, he contests that it is powerful since it assumes that there will always be an ongoing contest, where the dominant might occasionally lose the ground and the subordinate might hold onto its position. Likewise, the major characters portrayed by Kadare, although, not successful in subverting a dominant system, do carry dissident ideas or intentions, in the least. Thus, asserting the point that the contest, though contained for the moment, shall be continued, eventually making the dominant lose its ground and the subordinate hold its position.

The dominant system's resorting to the use of coercive or ideological strategies for the containment of rebellious elements, makes it obvious that a will for dissidence does

reside within the layers of different hierarchical structures of a particular social or political order; that is what threatens the power positions of the dominant authorities. In *The Palace of Dreams,* the threat posed by the Qyprili family on the empire headed by the Sultan illustrates the will for dissidence germinating within the echelons of power. Although, the vizier represents the family's political compromise with the Ottomans, as they have been overpowered and left docile by the controlling authority; yet, his younger brother, Kurt represents those who withhold subversive ideas with a belief that "one day they'll win real independence" (61). Even, Mark-Alem's clandestine wish of throwing off "the protective the Islamic half-shield of 'Alem'" elucidate his budding urge for dissidence (189). Nonetheless, both Kurt and Alem are subverted by the dominant system: Kurt ends up being assassinated and Mark-Alem's subjectivity is compromised by making him a part of the Tabir Sarrail and thereby a functional unit of the dominant system.

However, the faultlines are already present in the system as elucidated by the vizier that contrary to the state's belief that it governs the world through the medium of the Tabir Sarrail, it is this world that has the potential to govern the state; the reason being that if the masses choose the selection and flow of their dreams, they might even hold the power of governing the palace.

In *The Blinding Order,* in an attempt to eliminate the elements of dissidence, the authoritative empire liquidates the vizier, who has the back of the already mentioned Qyprili family, by blinding him along with hundreds of other innocent beings. For achieving this purpose, the empire employs religious beliefs for creating conditions of plausibility and spreading their desired ideology which eases the task for them. Therefore, the state subverts its subjects apparently taking away not only their freedom of action but their freedom of thought.

In *The Traitor's Niche,* the state does not leave any scope for freedom as its subjects are subordinated by altering their subjectivity in various ways. Abdullah's loss of the sense of his existence followed by his loss of "manliness" suggests the strengthening of the controlling power of the state. Besides, the role assigned to Tundj Hata transforms him into a grotesque being who replicates the conditions of plausibility used by the state at his personal level; thereby, ending up backing the machinations of the state.

However, the oppressive strategy of displaying the heads of decapitated pashas and viziers does not reach its culminating point. No doubt, it is suggestive of the invincible nature of the sultan; but at the same time, it throws light on the unstoppable attempts of dissidence that continue to emerge because of the conflicts and contradictions in the system. Even Abdullah after losing his sanity frantically abuses "the offices of state, the sacred monuments, everything, and then he [yells]: I am a rebel, do you hear, cut off my head, cut it off and put it [in the niche]" (196). By doing this he invites his own perdition; but it undoubtedly suggests the will for dissidence residing deep in the hearts of the masses, though in suppressed form.

One of the objectives of this research work is to trace dissidence as an emerging social and political will in the texts of Ismail Kadare and it has been achieved in this chapter. The chapter arrives at an inference that the contest, though contained for the moment, shall be continued, eventually making the dominant lose its ground and the subordinate hold its position. Kadare through his narratives, highlights the faultlines in the system which might lead to a tendency of giving rise to subversive elements, though not strong enough to withstand containment. Even Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*, says there is no "great Refusal," but envisions "a plurality of resistances" which according to him are dispersed across different time periods and locations, with varying levels of intensity, occasionally prompting certain groups or individuals to take decisive action (qtd. in Sinfield 47).

Another objective of this research work is to analyse subjectivity, ideology, and power apparatus in the select novels of Ismail Kadare. In this chapter, the relationship between subjectivity and power apparatus in the selected fiction has been analysed leading to the following outcomes. In their vie for supremacy, the opposing power structures and forces keep on continuously trying to integrate the subjects into their functioning. In *The Palace*, Mark Alem's subjectivity is continuously affected due to the conflict between the two opposing ideological forces, that is, his Albanian ethnicity and his Ottoman identity. Moreover, the powerful forces while creating the emotions of fear and terror, along with the threat of being surveilled, among the subjects, render them more disciplined. For instance, in *The Pyramid*, Cheops uses the same methods to subjugate his subjects and strengthen his power base. Similarly, the characters in *A Girl* are deprived of their free will because of the surroundings dominated by the feelings of terror, fear, and surveillance.

Furthermore, in order to put an end to the apprehended uprisings and attempts of dissidence, harsh, irrational, and oppressive measures are taken by the authoritarian regimes, thereby, meddling the subjectivity of subjects. Likewise, in *Traitor's Niche*, the subjectivity of characters like Ali Pasha, Hurshid Pasha, Tundj Hata as well as Abdullah is also meddled. In addition, even the most private aspects of an individual's personal life are intricated into the frigid machinery of power, as depicted in the narrative of *Agamemnon's Daughter* through the impact of the power apparatus on the narrator's and Suzana's relationship. One more finding of the chapter is that in such a society, there is no scope left for the freedom of expression through any form of art and literary production. It is depicted through the impositions and restrictions faced by Th. D., the painter in *Agamemnon's Daughter*; Tahsin, the poet in *The Traitor's Niche*; and, Rudian Stefa, a playwright in *A Girl in Exile.*

Besides, subjects are implicated by the power apparatus to such an extent that they are left docile, thereby, serving as the functional units of the larger machinery of power just as the characters like Mark-Alem in *The Palace of Dreams*; Linda B. in *A Girl in Exile*; Xheladin in *The Blinding Order*; and Gjorg in *The Broken April* function as the cogs and wheels of the larger system. Therefore, it results in the alteration of subjectivity. Finally, considering their vulnerable positions in the echelons of the power structure, even the oppressors or the powerful are implicated by the power dynamics. It is manifested through the character depiction of Cheops in *The Pyramid*, Ali Pasha in *The Traitor's Niche*, the vizier in *The Palace of Dreams*; and, the King Agamemnon and Suzana's father in *Agamemnon's Daughter*.

To sum up, the value of life and the price of life, blood feuds and blood taxes, heavy pyramids and surreptitious palaces, the niche of disgrace and the monument of honour, self-sacrifice and the sacrifice, psychic desolation and physical exile, death sentences and blinding decrees, etc., are all essential artistic expressions used in the texts under study to articulate the dynamics of power apparatus with reference to its impact on the subjectivity of the individuals concerned. While unfolding the relationship between power and subjects, it becomes clear that the suppressor as well as the suppressed, the killer as well as the killed, the sacrificer as well as the sacrificed, all are played upon by the exchange of power dynamics. Further, the main focus therein has been on how social subjects likewise the main personae or the characters undergo various phases and vicissitudes in their lives for their survival and how the various institutions contributing to the might of the dominant power apparatus affect their subjectivity including the very mode of living or survival. However, in a particular cultural setting, different plausible patterns and conditions are usually created by the dominant forces of the society wherein they justify to secure and ensure their existence through the means of different ideological tools making use of

cultural constructs such as myths, folklore, and legends. The same process and the significance of such cultural elements in normalising the injustices done by the power structures shall be explored in further study.

Chapter 4

Cultural Constructs and the Politics of Plausibility

The term ‘cultural construct’ refers to the ideas and concepts which have been ascribed meanings during the evolution of a particular culture. In other words, cultural constructs are ideas that are the subject matter of the process of cultural construction. If a concept is described as a cultural construct, that does not imply that it does not genuinely exist. Instead, it involves being aware of how the concept’s significance varies between cultures and societies. The definition of a culturally produced concept is determined by the culture in which it comes into being rather than by objective or absolute truths and facts; as such, it may vary between cultures.

Culture also includes a person’s historical and social context in addition to ethnic or national values and traditions. According to the ‘Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity’ of UNESCO, which was adopted in November 2001, culture is defined as “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, that encompasses, in addition to art and literature, life styles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (IFLA/UNESCO). Through different social institutions including family, education, etc., culture directs an individual towards modification and sophistication. Thus, the accomplishments of culture are acquired as a result of learning which takes place over time.

Additionally, at the individual level, culture usually represents the blending of the experiences from several social contexts over time, including the child’s home, school, circle of friends, and community. These contexts also include ethnicity, race, and gender. Larger macrosystemic characteristics including political, social, economic, and historical

aspects all depend critically on culture. Besides, anthropologists study culture as "systems of shared symbols and meanings" (Keesing 79).

Culture functions as a system of knowledge that rewards normative behaviour and other socially acceptable modes of conduct in order to consolidate, reinforce, transmit, and preserve the constructed meaningful world across time. As a system of activity, culture is dynamic in that its participants influence their surroundings in order to negotiate new meanings. Culture is not just a set of common meanings; it also includes personal systems for making sense of the world, setting priorities, and fostering interpersonal relationships. The collective views, values, and behavioural expectations of a group of people are reflected in culture. Any common system that an individual interprets is likely to be modified by their experiences in various contexts with different cultural connotations. Examining shared systems of meaning that are expressed in knowledge, beliefs, values, behavioural expectations (norms), and actions for a community is, therefore, necessary to understand the culture at the collective level.

In this chapter the focus shall be laid on these constructs encompassing a wide range of elements including customs, laws, rituals, beliefs, religions, myths, legends, folklore, etc., exploring how these constructs play their role in the dynamics of power whereby ideology is propagated through politics of plausibility. According to Gary A. Fine and Irfan Khawaja, the "politics of plausibility" plays a significant role in this regard because plausibility, "speaks to the audience's interpretation of events- the content and referents of the text. Are these claims that could reasonably be thought likely to happen within the world as we know it? … The answer is linked to beliefs and attitudes about the social order, and, thus, the stories have a political character" (190).

Plausibility varies from one culture to another. Boureau mentions that "in societies (or subgroups) dominated by religion, truth is ordered by reference first to the *revealed*

(scriptures in the European Middle Ages, the Bible or the Koran today) and the *authorized* (the Church Fathers in the European Middle Ages, rabbinical comments or hadith lore today) and only after that to the *authenticated* and the *alleged"* (Boureau 256). In other words, belief is important for the propagation of an idea or narrative. Fine and Khawaja further explain that:

> plausibility … affect[s] the interpretation of narratives, addressing whether and to what degree an audience is likely to accept a truth claim…Attitudes to these stories by audiences may vary from complete belief to the recognition that the story is possible to a scornful denial of any truth value. The experiences and cultural background of narrators and audiences influence the orientation to a text. (191)

In a similar vein, Alan Sinfield in *Faultlines*, stresses the role played by *politics of plausibility* in a particular culture. While analysing Shakespeare's *Othello*, Sinfield argues that Iago's schemes succeed because his lies seem "plausible" and "sensible" to the Venetians and even tragically to Othello himself, his schemes succeed rather than being clever (31).

The underlying cultural material that Iago exploits (and which Othello falls prey to) is referred to by Sinfield as *the politics of plausibility*. As a society develops around and through its members, certain accounts of experience seem to seem plausible. They consider these interpretations to be pertinent and valid since they are reinforced by their collective experiences. In other words, the subjects are willing to submit even in the unfairness and humiliation they face because the prevailing ideology conditions the conditions of plausibility. As Sinfield remarks, this is how people are made "to believe things that are neither just, humane, nor to their advantage" (35).

Alan Sinfield's conception of the politics of plausibility is rooted in Louis Althusser's opinion on how ideological state apparatus including various cultural constructs are

employed by the authority to interpellate its subjects. Althusser contends that "an ideology is a system (with its own logic and rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas, or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with historical existence and role within a given society" (10). Considering the complexities of history as the base with humans as its subject Althusser concludes that "ideology as such is an organic part of every social totality" (13). Ideology, according to Althusser, is a structure. The historical functioning of society depends on this arrangement. As a result, ideology cannot be eliminated and would persist even in civilizations where there were no longer any conflicts between classes or classes themselves. Thus, ideology is manifested through various cultural constructs and actions, which are "inserted into practices" (114), for instance, beliefs in myths, legends, religion, customs, rituals, etc.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Kadare's texts pronounce State power as ahistorical as it has no specific beginning or end, and also because power and power structures are not contained and governed by a single historical era. Through pressure and terror, the populace is forced to participate in the building of the inevitable structure of power which becomes the source of their oppression. The subjugation of the populace via power apparatus transforms the subjects into docile bodies, thus, restricting them from any freedom of thought and eliminating their affiliation with any other aspect of life other than the magnificent power machinery that oppresses them. However, on analysing the selected fiction of Kadare, the dominant power edifice is also seen as an expression of a certain ideology. In *The Pyramid*, the heads metaphorically holding together for one ideology, as in the case of the skull-stacks and for another ideology during Communist Albania through the bunkers, represent the role of ideology in state power. Although it cannot be physically seen, ideology is depicted through its influence, the way it manipulates the masses to act in accordance with that ideology, and the fear it inspires in the populace.

Ismail Kadare's texts especially the ones under study are undoubtedly products of historical consciousness and are majorly influenced by Albanian life and landscape. Kadare's texts revolving around the history of Albanian people centre on their ethical, cultural, social, and political affiliations. One of the main features of Kadare's works is the presence of elements that are either parts of certain cultural systems or have played a significant part in giving birth to specific cultural convictions. Ancient archetypes, dogmatic rituals, unsighted beliefs, the impact of myths, legends, and rumours, the genesis of ballads and folklore- all these motifs are vividly present in his texts. At times Kadare enunciates his dissident standpoint on the same; on other occasions, he uses the same to convey his critical stance on his contemporary Communist regime blinded by the lust for power by unveiling their role in the propagation of dominant ideology based on the politics of plausibility.

Kadare uses ancient times as an analogy to modern culture. Myths are frequently employed to cover criticism of the society, which had to appear to be flawless for communist propaganda objectives. As a result, myths are used as a metaphor in the novels, allowing for considerations of morality, ethics, and tradition. Collectively, myths, legends, and folklores can be labelled as stories that emerge in a particular culture or nation in due course of time. These stories get embedded in a culture, thus, playing an essential role in defining the thought process of a particular community. Those stories or narratives turn out to be persuasive and have varying amounts of "retrievability, rhetorical force, resonance, institutional retention and resolution" (Schudson 89). Each is linked to whether a claim will become culturally embedded and enduring. One of Ismail Kadare's talents is his capacity to rewrite myths and incorporate them into his tales. Kadare is able to use myths to hide the political objective of his books when he wrote and published them during the communist rule. According to Morgan, this might be seen as a form of resistance in his writing as

Kadare's life serves as a sharp reminder that, in some situations, "engagement can … be a matter of life and death" ("Translation" 41). As per the analysis of Rainey, in Kadare's writings, mythological allusions serve as dynamic tools for navigating the dictatorship and the changes that followed" (Rainey).

The usage of mythology and mythological themes is important *in Agamemnon's Daughter*, just as it is in all of Kadare's selected novels for the study. However, the author does not openly conceal his argument in this book by using myths. As will be clear from the debate that follows, Kadare freely compares his criticism of aspects of Albanian society under the Communist Regime to mythological themes in the book. This is in contrast to the other works that are the subject of this chapter's analysis, where the use of legendary themes or components is done so in an effort to subtly criticise the regime. The author continues to use legendary aspects as parallels, something that has been a staple of his literary style, despite the overt attacks on the Communist Regime.

In order to learn more about what Kadare is criticising, an investigation of the myths he uses in this context is still crucial. The mythological and literary allusions that will be discussed in this chapter are ancillary to the plot and significance of the text and are all given from the narrator's perspective. The perspectives of the narrator and the suggested narrator are likely to be extremely similar because majority of them are observed through a lens of mythical references, and because the speaker is not portrayed from an outside perspective. The narrative is recounted as the narrator wants it, with references to mythical analogies, and the literary allusions are the shadow he lays over it.

To Schöpflin myths can be defined as "sets of simplified beliefs, which may or may not approximate to reality," yet they help us in understanding "our origins, our identity" (21). From this, Shirley F. Staton goes on to explain that the myth is the primary informant that gives "the ritual and archetypal narrative" their archetypal significance" (120). In a

way, a specific view of reality and politics can also be implied by myths. Geoffrye Miles explains that by transforming the divine into human and the human into divine, myths obfuscate the boundary between the spiritual and physical realms (313). Kadare equates the myths to cosmic dust, that creates and establishes new worlds (Terziu 16). Terziu further contends that "mythical identity" is not a distinct identity, but rather "cultural constructions" incorporated into via "repetition and representation" into the matrix of power (16).

Kadare frequently returns to historical periods in his writing, analysing the myths and their components. It is obvious that Kadare combines aspects of his native culture with mythology from other parts of the globe. Even though the foundation of these stories is mythology itself, the events in *Agamemnon's Daughter* are similar to those in other stories from various eras. In order to infuse the narrative and its characters with a certain level of aesthetic sensibility, it appears that the author is motivated by a spirit of universal mythology. It goes without saying that the archetype of Iphigenia is specifically named, and it is obvious that this archetype also occurs in Kadare's text although her name is changed to Suzana due to her function in the story.

To put it otherwise, an archetype can reach "conditional universalism," however, it cannot do so by imposing a particular viewpoint or by taking us back to the beginning (since the fundamental significance, once established, is perpetually lost) (Gould, *Mythical Intentions* 35). In order to accomplish this, the archetype implies that it is constantly amenable to exposition. While transmitting a meaning that is archetypal in nature, myth cannot be regarded as factual or objective, nor is it the centre of the universe or a fundamentally instructive image. It is not a matter of acquired knowledge, but rather a proposition, a reveal of understanding that persuades one to believe and accept its logic. It

is necessary to examine how the act of interpretation works to imbue the symbols with archetypal qualities.

Understanding myths is necessary to comprehend *Agamemnon's Daughter's* story since each character's voice hints at secret meanings and unexpressed intentions, making that character the one who discovers the hidden meaning. The ritual of sacrifice for power becomes universalized by reviving the archetype of the tyrant from all times. Through the use of tales passed down through cultural memory, Agamemnon's Daughter recreates the mythical element of sacrifice. The "body of reusable texts, images, and rituals particular to each society in each epoch" is what is meant by the term "cultural memory" (Assmann 132). Themes of sacrifice are used in Kadare's works to portray cultural memory since they are "defined as referring to founding myths of an absolute past" (132). These sacrificial practices, which are discussed in the text, are typical of Albanian cultural memory.

The terrible love story of *Agamemnon's Daughter,* which is abruptly pushed into the workings of the state's icy machinery, symbolises the ritual of sacrifice. According to Carol Herman, the novel is an updated version of a traditional sacrifice ceremony. The central theme of the book is the narrator's realisation that Suzana sacrificed their love for the sake of her father's career, reminding him of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia. As a result, the myth of the Trojan War is entwined with *Agamemnon's Daughter*. In order to call for the ultimate sacrifice from his troops, the head of the Greek army, sacrifices his own daughter, according to Kadare it meant that there would be no sympathy for anybody else if the ultimate ruler had given up his own daughter; "the axe's blade was already smeared with blood" (104). The novel also gives the readers one more illustration taken from a sacrifice carried out for political interests. Stalin's son was "sacrificed," according to Kadare, who writes through the narrator that "Stalin sacrificed his own son Yakov to … to be able to …

say that his own son had to share the same destiny … the same fate … as any Russian soldier?" (70-71).

These tales are mirrored in Kadare's book. Suzana, the narrator's lover, is presented with a heart-breaking choice that seems to be her only option in the narrative plot. For saving her father's political career, she must end her relationship with the narrator. Suzana, the daughter of one of the regime's top officials, must put her feelings aside because her relationship with the narrator threatens her father's political aspirations. The sacrifice appears straightforward at first, but Suzana actually makes the offering in order to appease her father. But in the narrator's mind, the sacrifice is difficult. Suzana's sacrifice makes him think of a dreadful contrast as he watches the May Day Parade from the main stand. He is reminded of Agamemnon's sacrifice in Greek mythology by Suzana's offering. He is reminded that before his army started its battle to capture the city of Troy, the Greek king gave up his own daughter as a sacrifice to goddess Artemis in order to placate her. In the end, Suzana's father acted in the same manner. In an effort to improve his career in the shadows of the tyrant, he has chosen to murder Suzana's heart. The fact that Agamemnon's sacrifice was fruitless, however, makes it even worse and increases the narrator's feeling of dread. As a result, ending his relationship with Suzana might also be a meaningless gesture.

Moreover, Suzana's act of selflessness is devours the narrator, who is unnamed throughout the whole narration. He starts to question why she had to be sacrificed at all. At this point, the analogy to the legend of Iphigenia becomes relevant. The narrator muses on the circumstances surrounding Iphigenia's sacrifice. According to the tale, Artemis became enraged with Agamemnon after his soldiers hunted a pregnant hare, and thus, caused ships of their fleet to capsize as they sailed towards Troy. As an act of deference to Artemis, Iphigenia was sacrifice. The myth has several alternative interpretations, but the majority

of the early accounts indicate that Agamemnon went on to sacrifice her after he was advised to do so as it appeared to the best way to compensate for their blunder. Suzana is either the story's heroine or its victim, a question that the tale poses initially.

These traits also apply to Mehmet Shehu, the former prime minister of communist Albania. The events of the years 1980–1981 in that country are organised and rearranged into the narrative. The novel's original character, the Heir, is created by fusing components of the character of Agamemnon and the former prime minister of Albania:

> The serried ranks of the procession stretched out into the far distance. The only thing missing was a portrait of Agamemnon. Of Comrade Agamemnon MacAtreus, a member of the Politburo, and grand master of all sacrifices after him. As the founder and classic example of his kind, he presumably knew better than anyone else how the springs and levers of this affair had been set. (101)

The only way communism could have persisted in Albania, as will be explored later in the chapter, was by demanding that its citizens give up their rights and needs. In *Agamemnon's Daughter*, Suzana, the sacrifice of common Albanians living under the Communist Regime in Albania is symbolised by the repurposed archetype of Iphigenia. The narrator is urgently attempting to comprehend what the word "sacrifice" means in his head: "True sadness" makes him feel "sluggish and slow" (Kadare 11). The narrator starts to think of everything in terms of *sacrifice*, and the communist rule as a whole appears to him to be a colossal structure asking the people to sacrifice their demands "for the sake of oil;" even it asked for "the sacrifice of [their] cattle breeders," and so on (10). According to the narrator the State claimed that as per the policies prioritised maintaining the status quo, the populace needed to be ready to subsist on grass. But would not they be transforming people into herbivores if they started eating grass (as the Party had instructed them to do). He wonders about the use of those "principles whose purpose is to turn [them]into cattle;" likewise "a

flock of Circes" (47). In this metaphor, Kadare uses black comedy by alluding to Circe's time in ancient Greece, when the populace was composed of similarly uncivilised hordes that were simple to manipulate.

Agamemnon's Daughter's narrative makes it apparent that the Communist Party is seeking to create a new collective identity for Albanians that serves its purposes. In one of his essays titled "The Balkans: Truths and Untruths," Kadare claims that the Communist Regime cloaked its policies in nationalistic notions to attain their agenda, but the administration, police, and academia's current support of nationalism has produced terrible beliefs that are on par with the most offensive concepts ever imagined by humankind (7). According to Kadare, the Communist Party utilised the concept of nationalism as justification to impose controls on the populace. These remarks demonstrate how the Communist Regime attempted to adopt the position of an oppressor by attempting to mould the collective identity of the population under its control. In the novel, the arguments between the narrator and his uncle start after the narrator disapproves one of the Guide's speeches where he asserts "We shall eat grass if we have to but we will never renounce the principles of Marxism-Leninism!" (*Agamemnon* 47). The narrator expresses his disappointment by saying telling his "brain-dead" uncle that instead of glorifying it they should be wailing at their present condition (45).

Kadare paints disturbing and compelling pictures of Albanian society's condition under communism and the struggle to elude tyranny through the legend of "the Bald Man and the Eagle." In the legend, a bald man is riding an eagle that will carry him back from the underworld but which needs to be fed human flesh in order to take flight. Therefore, during the flight, the man must feed the eagle his own meat. Ironically, the man has consumed all of his flesh by the time the eagle reaches the realm above, and only a skeleton is brought back. This anecdote is another example of how the novel's central topic of

sacrifice, that is, sacrificing oneself in order to succeed, is symbolically represented. Herman interprets the depictions of the eagle as symbols of the oppressive rule of the Albanian state (Herman 10). As a result, Herman describes the "Bald Man" fable as "a disturbing story within a disturbing story" (10). The narrator argues that they had chosen a path without really knowing where it would take them or how long it would be. Even on realising their error it was too late for them to retreat or turn back; as a result, each of them had begun "slicing off pieces of [their] own flesh" in order to avoid being engulfed by the darkness (Kadare 42).

The narrator further reuses the myth as an extended metaphor by his remarks that while being "far away, in a dark and bottomless shaft," all of them perched atop their eagles and ready to go to any direction the wind would lead them (42). Kadare is likely making an attempt to defend his own position as a writer under the Communist Regime by pointing out that in order to safeguard himself, he was demanded to make his own sacrifices, as such adapting his works to adhere to communist values.

In order for the leadership to survive in *Agamemnon's Daughter*, the sacrifice is sought; it appears that a real ceremony, like in Tauris, is necessary. The activity taking place is actually necessary for maintaining the political status quo. In the Strait of Euripides, which divides the island of Euboea from mainland Greece, the forces from all around the nation met before going to fight against Troy, and Kadare accurately captures that moment:

> Two thousand eight hundred years before, Greek soldiers had probably left the scene of Iphigenia's sacrifice in a similar state. Their faces had blanched at the sight of blood on the altar, and in their hearts they felt a gaping hole they didn't think would ever leave them. They said not a word, and in any case they had hardly anything to say, except for the same few thoughts that kept on going around in their heads. (Kadare 103)

Nevertheless, the comparison allows the narrator to instantly see a completely other side of the mythological story, in light of Suzana and her father's current position. The relationships between Agamemnon and the other leaders, their power struggles and fallback positions, their justifications for acting as they did, their use of exemplary penalties, and their use of terror are all given new meaning by this.

In *The Blinding Order,* a "Blinding Decree" is pronounced by the state stating that, acting in its own and its citizens' best interests, it feels compelled to take a variety of actions as the cases of the evil eye are surging and "the risk of *misophthalmia"* may turn it into a true plague. However, Kadare through his mouthpiece, Gjon remarks, "this whole thing is a setup designed to keep people's minds off our economic problems" (155).

The subjects are interpellated by spreading plausible narratives about people like Abdurrahim who are said to have willingly confessed about their possession of evil eyes, thus, making the whole narrative about sacrificing their eyes acceptable and credible. Newspapers quoting Abdurrahim interpellate the masses to the extent that they accept the proclamation of Sultan as just and in their interest: "I'm sacrificing my eyes very gladly. Apart from the satisfaction I feel at being able to do something that is useful to the state, I am grateful to the *qorrfirman* for having freed me from the awful pangs of conscience I felt at the thought that my eyes might be a cause of further misfortune" (*Blinding Order* 156-7).

Knowing the level of unquestioned reliability that people have on their belief system, religion is used as a tool by the state to exploit the masses. Referring to the impact of beliefs, Althusser quotes the statement of Pascal: "Kneel down. Move your lips in prayer, and you will believe" (114). News-criers are employed for this purpose who keep on moving from place to place announcing, "The Prophet declared that being born with an evil eye is not a

sin in itself! … Guilty is only he who hides that power!" (158). It infuses the sense of guilt among the subjects, thus, leaving no scope for resistance or rebellion.

A reference is again made to the powerful yet most vulnerable Qyprili clan (here spelled as "Köprölü") who, because of their Albanian origin, are suspected to be not truly loyal to the Sultan. The narrator hints at the politics of plausibility behind the whole affair of blinding innocent people through the rumour that the "whole hullabaloo over the evil eye is really aimed solely at getting rid of the grand vizier" because of his affiliation with the potentially rebellious Köprölü clan (160). It is elucidated by the remark that "Nowadays they don't only use knives to deal with matters of state. It also takes a bit of skill" (160). It proves to be true as on the basis of an "anonymous letter," (160) the grand vizier is fired, and eventually, liquidated by blinding him, in the name of sacrifice for the sake of the State as well as the citizens.

The subject of sacrificial ritual has been thoroughly explored in Kadare's *The Three-Arched Bridge* in which it becomes evident that the reader is travelling across a bridge with three arches, in which one may observe three historical periods and three eras of the Albanian country. The journey through each arch is depressing and eerie; one almost becomes caught in the curses of those sacrificed. Kadare has first and foremost portrayed the medieval ambiance of the time shortly before the Turks arrived in the area amid a complicated creative chronology. The monk Gjon, the son of Gjorg Ukcama, tells the story in the first person, convincingly capturing the atmosphere of the fantastical events to the point where it nearly appears like an ancient text, a lost manuscript that has been accidentally discovered.

The construction of the bridge occupies a central position in the narrative framework, albeit it is entwined with myths and legends as well as issues and circumstances that both underscore the period's demonization and foreshadow the Turkish takeover. The narrative

serves the purpose of investigating how myths and legends are misrepresented; in this case, making the bridge only a justification for learning about the contradictions, larger conflicts, and far-off goals of the novel's central characters. Given that the bridge in question was constructed by foreigners (i.e., people not of Albanian descent), the job's viability is immediately questioned. As per the legend related to foundation sacrifice, in order for a building to be finished, it was customary to offer a sacrifice into the building's foundation in order to placate the spirits that frequently wreak havoc by tearing down newly constructed structures. Murrash Zenebisha is the victim of the construction, but his walling into the bridge's foundation is not an offering to ensure the project's success; rather, it is a murder committed to terrorise the populace.

The narrator in a blunt manner remarks, "All great building[s] resemble crimes, and vice versa" (94). One may easily observe "blood spattering the marble" when looking at columns. If tall buildings are crimes, then the state is a tool used to carry out more crimes. This goes in accordance with René Girard's narrative that starts in buildings and ends with human sacrifice, recapitulating the process by which cities develop into polities. Girard asserts that all mythical and religious genesis is shaped by the "scapegoat mechanism," which "suppresses or disguises collective murders" (qtd. in Gould 209). The immurements that Kadare mentions in this text serve as a great example of this type of planned murder. Kadare contends that acts of glory demand sacrifices.

Kadare claims that when dictatorships "don the mask and dissimulate their crimes," they are at their most dangerous (qtd. in Gould 210). Dictatorial nations blind their public to the causes of its suffering by erasing their genealogies and establishing new forms of amnesia. By creating fictitious but nonetheless incriminating genealogies for state power, Kadare's novels about dictatorships collectively rewrite the state's chronicle.

When authoritarian power is viewed through the prism of Kadare's narratives, the myths, and rituals of sacrifices play a significant role and this is what René Girard considers "a generative principle which works unconsciously in culture and society" (266). Mythic sacrificial mechanisms function by masking "their generative centre" (267). The real misery that sacrificial myths cause is undeniable, but their abundance is more mysterious and astounding. Similar to this, in Kadare's world, political governments conceal the origins of their existence while simultaneously (re)creating the social order. When the Albanian author examines the methods nations employ to cover up their misdeeds, the similarities between myths and states become most apparent.

Totalitarianism, especially in its communist form, serves as the ideal example of the process of making sacrifices. According to Girard, there are two types of totalitarianism. The first form "tries to openly and directly destroy the concern for the victims." "Communism in many of its forms" is included as one of the variants of the second kind, which Girard refers to as "insidious totalitarianism" (275). Despite the fact that socialist tyranny skilfully rewrites its history and modifies the sacrificial mechanism to suit its purposes, it is not unique to communist states. Similar to this, Kadare's examination of state authority has consequences that go well beyond his own country's political system.

The foundation sacrifice is one of the sacrificial rituals' most obvious expressions. The Albanian variant of the Serbian foundation sacrifice includes an innocent sacrificed victim (Schwandner-Sievers 6-7). It talks about Rozafa's murder at the name-bearing castle. Rozafa's sacrifice was necessary, according to an elderly woman who was sent to visit the three brothers who were responsible for erecting the castle on the banks of the Buna River close to the town of Shkodra. As soon as they finished their work each evening, the castle's walls would crumble, requiring them to rework everything.

The old woman told the brothers that the only way they could be sure that the walls erected by them would be strong was to immure or lock a woman amongst their wives inside. They thought about it and finally arrived at a consensus that they shall sacrifice the one who would bring the lunch the following day. Each brother consented to hide their oath from his spouse to let the fate decide it. However, all of them except one broke their oath. It results in the walling of his wife, Rozafa. One could argue that the literary trickery used to portray the punishment of Zenebisha as a foundational sacrifice replicates the rationale behind state sovereignty, which allegorises a political action as a metaphysical imperative.

In *The Three Arched Bridge*, a new threat materialises as the bridge is being constructed. Damage is discovered on the main pillar. The locals think that the river's demons are defending themselves. When a folktale collector shows up, he learns information about the Rozafat legend from the monk. The monk believes that once he left, he worked for the people who built the bridge. Shortly after this, bards show up singing a modified version of the legend. In the new immurement tale, masons construct a bridge that is demolished at night by water spirits rather than three brothers building a castle wall.

> Let someone come who is willing to be sacrificed in the piers of the bridge, the bards sang. Let him be a sacrifice for the sake of the thousands and thousands of travellers who will cross that bridge winter and summer, in rain and storm, journeying toward their joy or to their misfortune, hordes of people down the centuries to come. (*The Bridge* 96)

The discussion of sacrifice spirals out of control. "Clearly the ballad portended nothing but blood" (*Bridge* 97). The sacrifice becomes the most natural and easy thing to discuss about. People start debating on who will offer himself and under what circumstances is the only question that remains:

> To [the monk] this all resembled a bizarre dream. This was something [they] had never heard of before, a kind of death with accounts, seals, and percentages. It made [him] dizzy sometimes and [he] didn't understand anything of it…. This business of calculated sacrifice confused [him] completely. (*Bridge 102*)

The only thing unexpected about the predetermined victim, Murrash Zenebisha, is how commonplace he is. It was challenging to find someone more ordinary than he. When Gjon Ukcama learns of the incident, the body has already been walled up in the stonework, leaving only the head and shoulders exposed. Although many theories and rumours are float around, the monk is confident that Murrash was killed by the bridge constructors after they discovered him committing a sabotage act. The monk had heard conversations concerning the sabotage between the Count and the bridge-builders:

> Murrash Zenebisha's fate had been sealed on that day. The road builders had found out that the water people were paying someone to damage the bridge at night. This person was the ordinary Murrash Zenebisha. He had done his job three times without being caught. The fourth time they had caught him redhanded and killed him. (112)

The new ballads depict the bridge builders' desire to fabricate a legend involving human sacrifice that will both sanctify and justify the building and forewarn against further sabotage. They support the notion that Murrash was imprisoned alive, aligning this current situation with the exaggeration of mythology. As Gjon Ukcama mentions, "The crime had only one purpose- to inspire terror" (114). Murrash is cynically used as a symbolic sacrifice victim immured in the bridge's main column. Falsehoods surround the story. Questions of accountability, guilt, and obedience are equally difficult in this strange detective story's investigation of the crime as those of sacrifice, loss, and gain. Through the monk, the folklore collector, and the master mason in charge of the bridge's design and building, Kadare presents three distinct perspectives on the sacrifice. According to Gjon Ukcama,

the legend serves as a metaphorical declaration of the general understanding of the nature of self-sacrifice in productive human labour:

> The true kernel of the legend was the idea that all labour, and every major task requires some kind of sacrifice …. What was new, and peculiar to the ballad of our people, was that the sacrifice was not connected with the outbreak of war or some march, nor even a religious rite, but concerned a wall, a simple work of construction …. I wanted to say that in truth the drops of blood in the legend were nothing but streams of sweat. But we know that sweat is a kind of humble nameless servant in comparison with blood, and therefore nobody has devoted songs and ballads to it …. alongside his sweat every man sacrifices something of himself, like the youngest brother, who sacrificed his own happiness. (89)

The Rozafat narrative serves as a metaphor for the advancement and sacrifice of the monk. By viewing the legend's barbaric practice of human sacrifice as a metaphor for a person's self-sacrifice for the good of the whole, he makes it innocuous. In this modern interpretation of the myth, sweat changes into blood, representing the organised, collective loss of individual freedoms, without which civilization or advancement are impossible. The brutality is not a reflection of reality but a literary construct. The folklorist gathers data regarding the offering in order to twist it into a rendition of the well-known Rozafat legend for the benefit of his employers, the bridge-builders.

The monk is shocked by his cynicism in using the tale of the anonymous, nameless servant to further his own agenda. The former seeks to comprehend the complexity of human circumstance, and the ambivalence of sacrifice and advancement, whereas the folklore collector simplifies the tale to a collection of theories that may be used to the benefit of bridge-builders and presented as advancement. The bridge represents the coming of the new order of things for the master builder. Nothing less than "a sign of life and death,

of the birth of a new world and the death of the old" can be said about the building (93). As a result, the immurement also becomes for him a part of the mythology of growth and change: unfortunate but essential, therefore it is not something to dwell on.

The totalitarian state murders its population and more covertly silences them to keep its grip on power, just as humans kill to build bridges and are killed when they attempt to prevent their construction. Both times, the desired outcome is attained by flipping the generating principle. Kadare dismantles the state's sovereignty via the myth of the foundation sacrifice.

It has largely been forgotten that sacrifice, by definition, denotes a sort of violence, an uninvited gift and that its ethical complexities are frequently hidden. Girard hypothesises that "foundational violence must remain hidden" in order to maintain its structuring effect (qtd. in Gould 214). In other words, violence only works when it becomes accepted as a necessary evil. These are the created conditions that Sinfield refers to as the conditions of plausibility.

The Palace of Dreams by Kadare was published in 1981, not long after *The Three-Arched Bridge*. The author reveals the rationale that underlies the foundation sacrifice in this later piece, that he referred to as his "most ferocious attack" against tyrannical authoritarianism (Gould 214). This logic is obscure in the earlier book. The main character Mark-Alem documents the history of his family toward the book's conclusion in an attempt to perceive his past clearly. He naturally gravitates toward this legend around the sacrifice made for the bridge. His family name, Qyprili, is a Slavic adaptation of the Albanian term for "bridge" (ura), which also carries Ottoman Turkic connections, already hints towards the plot.

> His pen was still again, and he thought of the distant ancestor called Gjon who on a winter's day several centuries before had built a bridge and at the same time edified

> his name. The patronymic bore within it, like a secret message, the destiny of the Quprilis for generation after generation. *And so that the bridge might endure, a man was sacrificed in its building,* walled up in its foundations. And although so much time has gone by since, the traces of his blood had come down to the present generation. *So that the Quprilis might endure.* (201-2)

Peter Morgan adds another layer to the claim of the narrator that Qyprili alludes to the early connection of the family to a three-arched bridge that lies in the central region of Albania that was constructed while the people of Albania were following Christianity and a man was buried in its base. This bridge, according to Morgan's analysis which connects the Qyprili family to the numerous historical outcomes of "South-Eastern Europe," may be derived from "a Christian Trinitarian symbolism" ("Between Albanian Identity" 367). Equally important is the Ottoman undertone, in which the family name of historical Köprülü is Slavicized as Qyprili (through the Slavic versions qyprija and kuprija on the term for "bridge"). The significance of Mark-Alem's revelation, however, rests in its reference to the bridge-sacrifice for the time being. Kadare's book depicts sacrifice as an evil that enables the good, not as a spontaneous act to placate the gods. The amoral but nevertheless necessary relationship between good and evil that permeates all of Kadare's writings is paradoxical. Kadare's depictions of this conduct equate to a series of covert disclosures without directly challenging the reasoning behind foundation sacrifice.

Although sacrifice is unavoidable, Kadare's fictions demonstrate how the state "manages" the implicit violence it entails. The objectives and tactics behind the rationality of an authoritarian State are inherently as perplexing as violence's motives and methods. When it comes to rational justification for its practice, the fact that it can take control without the state makes it both the most effective and essential; the most onerous answer to the logic of the violence. Besides, Weber reported this, calling the institution's peculiar

logic at the time. He epigrammatically described it a century ago as a "monopoly of legitimate violence" by the state comparable to the priesthood's exclusive control over the genuine means of salvation (27-8).

In *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim made a classic case for how social structures- rather than crimes' inherent morality or immorality- become challenged when they take place. Kadare's fictions propose that without persecution, society would collapse internally, so state power kills innocent lives for no reason whatsoever- either ethical, moral, or even practical, recapitulating in reverse the circular logic of the Durkheimian account of punishment (Gould 216).

The sacrificial mechanisms that thrive inside state power are revealed in Kadare's Albanian novels, not as ossifications of pre-modernism but as a direct result of modern sovereignty. In *The Palace of Dreams*, Mark-Alem suggests that the Ottoman Empire is required to explain its actions verbally. Typically, a speech is an assurance that they have been conveyed to the newly blinded for societal benefit (121). Folk songs do not explain the reasoning supporting a form of capital punishment. Instead, the ritual of sacrifice is to blame for the divine plan, predetermined, in a sense, before the world was created.

According to Peter Morgan, Kadare's *The Pyramid*, the "most subtle portrait of the dictator as both modernizer and tyrant" also resides in oppression and tyranny for the use of sacrifice to strengthen governmental power (Morgan, "Ismail Kadare," 9). In this text set in the time of Pharaoh Cheops, one of the High Priests of Egypt recalls historically significant sacrifices in a speech hoping to persuade him to construct the Great Pyramid of Giza:

> Egypt also needed to find some means of consuming the excess energy of its population. To launch works colossal beyond imagining, the better to debilitate its inhabitants, to suck them dry. In a word, something exhausting, something that would

> destroy body and soul, and without any possible utility. Or, to be more specific, a project that would be as useless to its users as it would be crucial to the State. (9)

Here, Kadare refers to construction as the hallmark of the totalitarian regime. The Enver Hoxha mausoleum, which is ironically dubbed "The Pyramid" and was built four years before Kadare's book of the same name, is allegorically indexed by the Egyptian pyramid in Kadare's work. Hoxha's pyramid is still standing, according to Harold Segal, although "the red star of plastic" that had adorned it was discarded following the fall of the dictatorship (129).

The pyramids erected to elevate the state also served to crush the citizenry, as Herodotus argued millennia ago. The description of Cheops' terrible act by Herodotus implies that Kadare's conception of Cheops as a despot was influenced by the histories. Herodotus, who practised much the same mythology as his Albanian counterpart, said, Cheops:

> brought the people to utter misery [κακότητα]…he shut up all the temples, so that none could sacrifice there; and next, he compelled all the Egyptians to work for him…They worked in gangs of a hundred thousand men, each gang for three months. For ten years the people were afflicted in making the road whereon the stones were dragged, the making of which road was to my thinking a task but a little lighter than the building of the pyramid. (qtd. in Gould 218)

The assessments of Herodotus, which were written long before the formation of the nation-state nevertheless document the paradox of dominion, show the repressive aspects of Cheops' acts. In turn, this argues that building and sacrifice are connected in a transtemporal orientation that leads to sovereignty. Kadare's and Herodotus' portrayals are similar. The Egyptian Pharaoh treats the Egyptian populace as his slaves, much like a latter-day communist tyrant. He employs them to labour in the quarries, move stones across the

Nile, roll them up the mountain, and then utilise them to construct the pyramids. Likewise, Herodotus, in a significant way, views such forced work as a calamity. Thus, Greek antiquity already records the structural unjustness of the authority that upholds the charade of the state. As Herodotus and Kadare recognise, pyramids depend on the killing of innocent people, just like bridges and structures that depend on foundation sacrifices; one's punishment becomes more necessary the purer one's nature is. As such, *The Three-Arched Bridge* is a tale of violence consecrated holy by blood sacrifice.

The most private areas of one's private life are regulated by the state in *The Palace of Dreams*. Every citizen has a responsibility to submit their dreams to the Tabir Sarrail (also known as the "Dream Bureau") because they are regarded as public property. In *The Pyramid*, the government views all citizens as property to be used solely for building monuments. Even the interests of society as a whole are unimportant to the state. Despite the fact that the pyramids' main purpose is to validate state sovereignty, or perhaps exactly because of this, these physical monstrosities ultimately crush human subjects:

> [the pyramids] had not given rise to hatred among these people. They felt in a muddled way that as long as the pyramid was there, blocking the horizon of their lives, then neither hate nor love would ever manage to form in their breasts. An unhealthy evenness of temper and a wretched listlessness had taken the place of all other feelings, just as tasteless beans had long since replaced the more succulent dishes of bygone days. (120)

The ancient Egyptian state seeks to automate its people and subordinate each person's volition, which is uncannily similar to Albanian communism. The autocrats of antiquity parallel the authoritarians of the present communists, a theme Mahfouz has been investigating since the 1930s, and this is also true of *The Pyramid*. These authors contend that because states are fundamentally parasitic, their sole objective is to consolidate and

amass power. As they are completely unyielding and unproductive, pyramids are "the ultimate embodiment of bare power" (*The Pyramid* 90). Because it is morally impossible to compare costs and advantages, the state's only concern is what Kadare refers to as self-replication and self-perpetuation. Girard's argues that even when one just selectively condemns it, the ultimate target of scapegoating is scapegoating itself and the same can be used to rephrase Kadare's argument (Girard 208).

Thus, Kadare's works under consideration, specifically explore oral traditions relating to immurement, a folkloric subgenre that is prominent in Balkan folklore, especially Serbian and Albanian culture. Dundes cites around 700 works that follow the ballad's narrative structure. The walled-up wife tale is historically documented, and human enslavement was a common practice in antiquity, according to archaeological research. From archaeological investigations, Paul Brewster has compiled an astounding collection of immurements, all of which had human remains buried in their foundation (38). The Hooghly Bridge built over the Ganges, the fortress at Nieder Manderscheid, the city of Rome, Bridge Gate in Bremen, and the Muenster Cathedral in Strasbourg are among these places (Gould 220). Such texts, according to Girard, are descriptions of actual violence that are frequently collective, told from the standpoint of the persecutors, and as a result, are subject to certain distortions (qtd. in Gould 221). Walled-up wife songs argue that evil is necessary in order to be justified. Kadare's works ironize the need for sacrifice, in contrast to walled-up wife songs that passively ignore the sacrifice of the innocent. Their representational tactics query some political standards without explicitly pronouncing judgement. In the age of multinational capital, Kadare disentangles the dictatorial, statist, and colonial injustices that hold the social order together by relying on the poetics and politics of allegory. This reasoning claims that innocent victims are a fair price to pay for security.

It has been maintained so far that Kadare rewrites literature about persecution from the viewpoint of the victim in his political allegories. This alteration is aided by the blood that blots the bridge and the murky waters that mix with the waterway in *The Three-Arched Bridge*. The chronicler focuses on graphic details meant to elicit disgust, such as the nauseous workers, and also describes the river's odour and the population's illnesses (37). As Gjon the narrator of the tale analyses the Albanian version of the ballad concerning the immured wife, which places the walling up of Rozafa's in the Cathedral of Shkodra, his initial inclination is to read the sacrifice as merely a metaphor for the sacrifice that all labour entails. According to Gjon, the myths of many different communities include this astonishing concept that every major effort "requires some kind of sacrifice" (96).

The sanctification and approval of sacrifice are achieved through such stories. *The Three-Arched Bridge* unveils how such stories normalise the death of innocent lives. The use of "paid bards" (78) to propagate the myth that the water spirits will not approve the bridge is one example of how this naturalisation is tinged with ambivalence and makes the reader wonder how bards may be paid for their services. A group of bards that had returned from some unfinished war somewhere along the borders of the northern regions is also mentioned in the novel (104). These mercenary bards emerge just as the builders are beginning to accept the idea that a human sacrifice is necessary for the bridge they are building. The notion of the poet as being removed from political intrigue is reinforced and subverted by the fact that the bards are returning from battle.

To make the unreasonable bridge sacrifice make sense, a plausible narrative is required. The mechanism behind the sacrificial ritual starts to fall apart when the discussions concerning a sacrifice become a normal and a natural topic to talk about even though this point also foreshadows the mechanism's eventual rebuilding. From a community that has openly embraced the sacrificial ritual, Gjon feels great alienation. He

laments that the concept of sacrifice, which had previously been a reality contained in a ballad, “move[s] among [them], alive and on equal terms” like the remaining daily concerns, as if it had just crawled out of its “cocoon” (111). The generative principle has not fully emerged yet, though, because it is assumed that a sacrifice of a human being is required if the bridge is to stay standing. Once Gjon has seen the underlying workings of the ritual of foundation sacrifice, he is even more disturbed by his community’s passionate adoption of sacrificial ideology.

Kadare examines another kind of sacrifice in his novel, *A Girl in Exile,* which tells the terrible story of a young lady, Linda B. who is exiled politically by the Communist government. The text enumerates the struggles faced by women compelled to live in political exile, including their daily struggles, unfulfilled goals, and transformed passions. These ladies were ultimately killed in order to advance the Party’s political goals. Moreover, the entire setting of the novel is nearly based on the geography of Albania and its capital Tirana in the 1980s, a period that Kadare personally witnessed.. The notorious dictator Enver Hoxha still held control of the nation at that time in its history. Under Hoxha’s more than 40 years of communist administration, Albania made headway in recovering from the devastation of World War II, but the nation remained firmly under the dictator’s tight control. His secret police ran an oppressive political campaign and carried it out via executions, extrajudicial killings, and forced labour camps. Due to the contentious political character of Kadare’s writing and the campaign’s stringent commitment to the realist aesthetic of socialism, Kadare came under the scrutiny of the state. And like Kadare, Rudian Stefa constantly worries about his job and his life since the Albanian regime hangs over him.

Keeping to his famous style of using allegory and myth to cloak meaning and elude censorship, in *A Girl in Exile,* he repeatedly intertwines the narrative with Greek

mythology. He alludes to the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, such as the time Orpheus added two strings to the standard lyre, which, in Kadare's opinion, was a radical development that caused chaos in Olympus' bureaucracy. Although the author does not connect his own tale too closely to the classical one, there are clear parallels between Rudian Stefa and his forbidding ghost and Kadare, who once smuggled his letters past Communist censors. However, the two extra strings could mean more than just writers' difficulties. Maybe they produce a sound that is completely different from what humans can hear. The vibration is what ultimately calmed Cerberus, the hound of Hades, and freed Eurydice, the beloved of Orpheus, from the underworld.

According to legend, Orpheus was granted permission by Hades to recover his deceased beloved from the hereafter under the provision that he should not glance back at Eurydice while they made their way back to the world of mortals. Orpheus, who thought it would be easy, accepted and proceeded to leave the underworld with Eurydice close behind. However, on his way back, Orpheus, unable to resist his yearning for his love, turned to look behind him, as a result, her shadow swept away amid the dead. Labelling it "the Deception of Orpheus," Kadare calls it "humankind's darkest myth" (106). He goes with a dissident perspective on the myth, according to which:

> the whole deal had been bogus. No Eurydice had been following Orpheus when he crossed over from hell. This turning of head had been a diabolic trick. As long as she was unseen, Eurydice was supposedly there, and Orpheus won credit, but as soon as he turned to look at her, she melted away, and for this he was to blame. So, either way, there was nothing there and Orpheus lost" (106)

Stefa lacks Eurydice, in contrast to Orpheus. His meagre affection for Migena is lost, and his futile attempts to transform the late Linda into his own Eurydice are futile. Stefa goes to the underground to make a deal for her life, but no one even gives him a chance to speak.

He then sees that the only thing separating his Albania from the underworld is life itself as he returns to his world. Still, he turns to face the past. Once again, the narrative suggests that the archetype reaches conditional universalism but not by forcing us to choose a particular viewpoint or by taking us back to the beginning.

Much often do folklorists place rumours "on a continuum with myth, folktale, contemporary legends, memorates as the genres within which they are considered" (Turner 169). The royal courier of heads, in *Traitor's Niche,* replicates the mechanism and politics of plausibility employed by the larger power structure (in this case, the Ottoman Empire), by exploiting the belief of naïve and ignorant people of the doomed villages. Acknowledging the fact that, "for remote, buried hamlets, this spectacle [of a head without a body] was at the same time their literature, theatre, art, philosophy and perhaps love," he turns it into a profitable business for him (61). One day, Hata whose chest was embellished with royal emblems, stops to show the villagers something for free; a human head. The second time, besides displaying the head he narrates the story about the significance of the head which was the head of a Pasha. As the rumour about something previously unknown and unheard-of spreads among the folk, it attains a mythical form. In this way, he plays upon their psyche by arousing the "feeling of expectation, something they had never experienced in their lives" (178). It is followed by his demand for money in exchange for the sighting which they willingly agree upon for now the head sightings have transformed into "heavenly signs, like eclipses, comets or meteorological disasters" (179). Alan G. Fine and Irfan Khawaja contend that rumour depends on "the *politics of plausibility,*" as it "speaks to the audience's interpretation of events- the content and the referents" (190). Thus, Hata uses this condition of plausibility for making his narrative credible to the audience.

The account of various characters as depicted in Kadare's *Broken April,* placed in the highlands of Albania, allude to the inscrutable allegorical language typical of Kadare. Byron contends that the narrative is set "in a remote, pre-socialist period" which obscures the fact that it goes against the optimism of socialism (Byron, "Albanian Folklore" 42). The underlying contrast between the enduring ideology of Enver Hoxha's new Albania and the ancient past, which might be read as "historical distancing" or a need to "step outside" the present, can be regarded as both a survival strategy and a means of expressing disapproval (Morgan, "Ismail Kadare" 9). The novel represents Kadare's ongoing fascination with "the harsh traditions of the Balkans" along with its epic mythos (Pali 168).

When asked how this local tale managed to affect so many readers who are unfamiliar with the Kanun, Kadare responded:

> The code you are talking about isn't just Albanian, and contrary to what is sometimes claimed, it didn't come from the cultures of the Caucasus. It originated in ancient Greece, and the most ancient of the Greek tragedies deals with the Kanun. The world has forgotten Agamemnon and the vengeance that led to his death. Hamlet is also a tragedy about the Kanun: The father's ghost demands that his son avenge him. (Izikovich, "Juraselem")

Kadare often aligns the history and folk tradition of Albania with Homeric epics (Raducanu, "Myth"). Kadare argues Kanun has a noble side and a ruthless side, which are hard to distinguish from one another. That is why literature finds it to be so fascinating (Izikovich). Considering the fascination of Kadare with "myths, legends, and tragic traditions," the novel *Broken April* is categorised, simultaneously, as a "historical novel, as epic and universal," as well as "ethnographic fiction" (Pali 169).

Some fundamental moral and ethical principles serve as the foundation for the Kanun's social customs and laws out of which *nderi* (honor), (*besa)* word of honor/truce,

mikpritja (hospitality), *gjaku* (blood), *hakmarrja* (revenge) and *gjakmarrja* (revenge killing) play a significant role. The blood tax, which is paid after each killing due to blood feuds, is collected by the ruling family, making blood feuds a significant and lucrative industry for them. The prince heading the ruling party, responds to anyone who attempts to disparage the region and its tradition by boasting about the invincible nature of Orosh as it is still standing after hundreds of years, though meanwhile, numerous "kingdoms have been swept from the face of the earth" (Kadare 132).

However, given that things are undoubtedly changing, this assurance cannot be entirely justified. The prince's primary source of income, the blood tax, is dwindling. The steward of the blood is accountable to the prince for the decreased income. By promoting retaliation and acts of revenge and reminding people that they have broken their commitments to the Kanun, he is supposed to maximise revenue (Kadare 136). Thereby, people of these highlands are interpellated into believing and following the Kanun, using cultural constructs like their beliefs in honour, vengeance, hospitality, etc.; thus, making it acceptable and plausible to them.

Looking at the steward of the blood, the prince asserts that numerous people including "university men" are looking for the job that he is appointed for, and reminds him of his insecurity (Kadare 150). The claim that graduates from universities are interested in this position demonstrates the duality of the blood feud custom in Albanian society, which is viewed as both heroic and barbarous. Kadare mostly uses conversations between Diana and Besian, a highly educated metropolitan couple, to show this ambivalence. While idealising the highlands along with the Kanun and comparing it to other locations legal codes and structures, and locations, Besian declares that as Albanians they should be happy to have given birth to the Kanun, one of the most significant constitutions to ever exist (72).

The kindness of the mountainous residents toward visitors is one of the keys draws for Bessian. The romanticised notion of traditional Albanian hospitality, according to Tarifa, the country's pioneer in cultural studies, "explain[s] why foreigners are fascinated by this Albanian tradition" (qtd. in Sadiku 105). Kanun's seventh book gives particular attention to guests and hospitality. A visitor is highly valued, according to Sadiku, to the point that he becomes an essential part of the Albanian household and is compared to God. The value of the guest transcends all ties and even transcends familial heritage (105). Accordingly, Bessian makes the following statement in the novel:

> The fact that anyone at all can suddenly become a guest does not diminish but rather accentuates his divine character. The fact that this divinity is acquired suddenly, in a single night simply knocking at a door, makes it even more authentic. The moment a humble wayfarer, his pack on his shoulder, knocks at your door and gives himself up to you as your guest, he is instantly transformed into an extraordinary being, an inviolable sovereign, a law-maker, the light of the world. And the suddenness of the transformation is absolutely characteristic of the nature of the divine. (78)

Kadare, however, emphasises the negative aspects of this tradition in his book by viewing it in a dissident manner. The blood feud that the Gjorg family finds itself in was not caused by a murder, but rather by this custom of hospitality. An unidentified visitor who was staying with the Berisha clan was once assassinated by a Kryeqyqe family member as they were leaving the Berishas. The Kanun states that you must exact revenge on a visitor who was killed in front of you if you were his host (32). The Berisha family is forced to join a blood feud as a result, which eventually lasts for many generations. When thinking back on this tragic incident, Gjorg occasionally wonders:

> If, by magic, those knocks could be blanked out from reality, then, oh, then…, one would see the heavy stone slabs lifted from forty-four graves, and forty-four dead

> men would rise… and return to the living; and with them would come the children who could not have been born, then the babies that those children could not bring into the world, and everything would be different, different. (33)

It draws attention to Gjorg's sense of loss because, like many other young boys, he is an unwitting victim of this bloody battle, as well as to the archetypal misconception of the so-called friendly society and civilization. Being a foreigner, Bessian is drawn to the thought of being treated like a god, though. Having the idea that an ordinary person, at any time, can be elevated to the exalted position of a guest excites him. Anyone can access the temporary deification at any time (82). He uses it way to "escape into some divine reality from everyday life" (82). It highlights how a specific view of reality and politics can be implicated by something having mythical nature. By blurring the difference between the physical world and the spiritual world, myths turn the human into a divine being and the divine into a human being (Miles 313). Although he refuses to acknowledge that it is more tragic than divine, it is obvious that his wife Diana considers it to be dreadful and ludicrous. She eventually comes to the conclusion that "it has a fatality to it" (77).

Contrary to common belief, which portrays the blood feud as a heroic and passionate process, *Broken April's* universe is impersonal and automated, running because of dark customs and traditions, where people are compelled "to kill those whom they do not hate, to perpetuate feuds that began centuries before," and which they might have completely forgotten otherwise (Llewellyn, "Review"). There is a cold and calculated ideological apparatus behind the romanticized law of justice. In the same vein, Sinfield wonders "[h]ow else are we to explain how people can be persuaded to kill and be killed in the name of beliefs that are neither true nor in their interest?" (*Shakespeare* 10).

The second objective of the research work, that is, to study myths, folklore, legends, and politics of plausibility in the select novels of Ismail Kadare, has been achieved in this

chapter. While analysing the texts of Kadare, it has been explored that there is undoubtedly a crucial relationship between cultural constructs and politics of plausibility. Moreover, the third objective of the research work is to analyse subjectivity, ideology, and power apparatus in the select novels of Ismail Kadare and it has been partially achieved in this chapter as the impact of power and ideology has been highlighted.

As such, the aforementioned discussion undertaken in the chapter deduces following outcomes and findings. Instead of being discrete in nature, the archetypal and mythical identities are cultural constructions. Through repetitive representations, these constructions have been embedded into the matrices of power. The pharaoh Cheops mentioned in the narrative of *The Pyramid* serves as an archetype and symbolises a tyrant who in the pursuit of power and supremacy puts up a whole massacre. Besides, mythology provides archetypal significance to different rituals and practices of a particular culture by persuading people of its logic through interpellation. For instance, the allusion to the sacrifice of Iphigenia symbolises the ritual of sacrifice that has been practised for ages and even continues in the modern era; although in varied forms. The practice of sacrificing their dear ones has been continued by the powerful rulers in order to provide a plausible narrative to the masses that there would be no pity for anyone else either. Following the precedent set by Agamemnon, Suzana's father sacrifices her love life for the sustenance of his power position. Similarly does Stalin sacrifice his own son, Yakov. In this way, people yield to the ideology that demands them to give up their rights and needs.

It further throws light on another aspect of the icy machinery of power structures, that is, the concept of nationalism is used to justify the subjection of people to various controlling impositions. In addition, religion being one of the predominant and reliable parts of a culture's belief system is also used to justify and give meaning to unjust acts,

exemplary penalties, and the use of terror by despotic rulers. For instance, in *The Blinding Order*, mass blinding of people is carried out using the justification supported by religion.

In addition, to sustain and prolong their stay in the power structures, the powerful need to launch different methods for exhausting the masses by consuming their energy and keeping their eyes off the powerful position enjoyed by the ruling ones. Likewise in *The Pyramid*, Cheops launches the project for the building of a colossal pyramid, so that, it could destroy the body and soul of the people, without being of any use to the latter.

Evenmore, the study triggers the intellect to question the origin and reliability of legends, ballads, and folklore which evolve in a particular culture in due course of time, and eventually, get embedded in the belief system of the people, thereof. The same is depicted in *The Three Arched Bridge* through a dissident perspective as the origin of the legend of immurement is described as a narrative built for hiding heinous crimes and murders. The monk Gjon registers his dissidence through his attempt at unfolding the falsehoods around legends and myths of sacrifice by narrating the tactics exercised by the powerful using conditions of plausibility. However, before ending his narrative, he suggests his own inevitable sacrifice that his narration might demand.

To sum up, the chapter highlights how socially acceptable behaviour is sanctioned by culture in order to consolidate, strengthen, transmit, and sustain the constructed meaningful world over generations. In due course of time, different cultural constructs get embedded in a culture, thus, playing an essential role in defining the thought process of a particular community. In addition, in a particular cultural setting, different plausible patterns and conditions are usually created by the dominant forces of the society wherein they justify to secure and ensure their existence through the means of different cultural constructs such as myths, folklore, and legends. For instance, in *The Three Arched Bridge*, the legend of immurement serves the interest of the builders making the murder of

Zenibeshi acceptable. Conforming to the same notion, in *Broken April* it is highlighted how the legendary nature of the Kanun helps it maintain the blood-feud mechanism and the blood merchandise without getting questioned. Likewise, the impact of mythology on the strategy of the modern-day despots is emphasised in *Agamemnon's Daughter*. Thus, the significance of such cultural elements in normalising the injustices done by the power structures cannot be overlooked. In addition to the cultural constructs discussed in this chapter, the concept of gender is also viewed as a product of cultural construction. Keeping in view its crucial role in the social hierarchy, the upcoming chapter shall analyse the role of norms constructed based on gender in stabilising and maintaining the structure of dominance and subjugation in a particular society.

Chapter 5

Hegemonic Masculinity and Social Hierarchy

A considerable number of men joined what can be called the first wave of the men's movement in the early 1970s. They made an effort to "forge non-sexist masculinities" and redefine their roles in "patriarchal institutions" (Adams and Savran 4). The initial wave of the men's movement, which was "avowedly profeminist and dedicated to personal and institutional change," was fuelled in part by the writings of Joseph Pleck, Marc Fasteau, Jack Sawyer, and Gay Rubin in the 1970s (5). The males who were a part of this movement examined the influence that men have over women and homosexual men and criticised patriarchal structures and masculinities. These academics investigated masculinity through the lens of feminism. The 1980s saw the emergence of the second wave of the men's movement, which was "sort of a backlash against feminism" (5).

The men who participated in the second wave organised under the "aegis" of poet and activist Robert Bly felt that they had been "emasculated by feminism and an effeminizing culture" and tried to "recuperate their own innate, masculine power" (Adams 5). In order to emphasise the "multidimensional and socially constructed aspects of male dominance," scholars devised ideas like "hegemonic masculinity" during the 1980s as the study on men and masculinities proliferated (Brod 42). In his book *Manhood in America*, Michael Kimmel makes the point that feminist theories of gender have largely ignored men. He contends that feminist scholars have prioritised the perspectives of women, ignoring "how the experience of being a man, of *manhood*, structured the lives of the men who are their subjects, the organizations, and institutions they created and staffed, the events in which they participated" (l). He argues that masculinity defined by the feminist critics as

"the drive for power, for domination, for control" is based on the point of view of women, theorised, "from the way women experienced masculinity" (4). He further remarks that manhood is "less about the drive for domination and more about the fear of others dominating us, having power or control over us" (4).

The term "masculinity" is suggestive of the use of power in different aspects of life. It implies not just sexual power but social, political, and economic power as well. It is, therefore, the social, political, economic, and cultural expression of maleness. While *masculinity* is associated with men's ability to exert power and control, the word *emasculation* suggests powerlessness. Emasculation signifies any practice that strips men of their manhood. The concept of masculinity has been described as "a social and historical construct" (Dutta 42). The idea is not static since it is constantly subject to change. Masculinity must be learned; it is not biologically innate. In his book *Manhood in America*, Michael Kimmel notes that "manhood is not the outward expression of an inner essence; it is socially manufactured. Our biological makeup does not naturally produce manhood; rather, culture creates it (3). It should be highlighted that masculinity suggests power relationships between distinct groups of males as well as men's dominance over women. It is created in connection to a larger power system and only exists in the context of gender relations. Studies on "masculinity" today place more emphasis on male relationships than on men's dominance of women (Gardiner 14). In relation to this type of masculinity, marginalised or subordinated masculinities are defined. Gardiner contends that this type of masculinity is always elevated in culture.

One should be aware that hegemonic masculinity refers to the kind of masculinity that is valued in a culture. It is a type of masculinity that has social standing and is accepted as the standard and serves as the benchmark for comparing and contrasting other masculinities. Hegemony is a key idea in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* and his most

important contribution to Marxist thought. It is focused on acquiring and maintaining power as well as the creation (and dissolution) of social groups during those processes (Donaldson 645). Therefore, understanding where the ruling class emerges from and how it maintains its power is essential. The ability to enforce a definition of the circumstance is necessary for this process to determine the parameters in which events are recognised and concerns are raised, to define morality and develop ideals. Hegemony entails influencing the majority of the population by various means, such as structuring social institutions in ways that seem natural and acceptable. For instance, the state plays a major role in this negotiation and enforcement by punishing nonconformity (Connell 107). It goes without saying that the phrase "hegemonic masculinity" refers to its primary emphasis on the critique of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity, in the terms of Connell, is the masculinity which holds "the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations," however its position "is always contestable" (76). With regard to this type of masculinity, marginalised or subordinated masculinities are defined. Antonio Gramsci's study of class relations served as the inspiration for Connell's idea of "hegemony," which he used to describe the "cultural dynamic by which a group claims and maintains a leading position in social life" (77).

To put it more clearly, hegemonic masculinity centres on "how particular group of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships," resulting in their domination (Carigan et al. 92). The majority of males profit from the rule of both men and women thanks to hegemonic masculinity. To put otherwise, hegemonic masculinity differs from other masculinities in that it is represented as "universal social advancement," to borrow from Gramsci, rather than the subjugation of women (104). In *Faultlines*, Alan Sinfield, considers the norms proposed for genders and sexualities as the "principal constructs" and the main mechanisms "through

which ideologies are organized," differently in different cultures but always in relation to power systems that are much larger than people and their consciousness (128). To him, these are the primary cites of "ideological production" where inferences of various types are grounded (128). Sinfield believes that the reason for the negligible role of women in history lies in how men have defined themselves against other men (128). In his analysis of gendered power and men's relationships to power and dominance, Jeff Hearn makes a distinction between various forms of male dominance. In his words:

> What is at issue here is the persistent presence of accumulations of power and powerful resources by certain men, the doing of power and dominance in many men's practices, and the pervasive association of the social category of men with power. Men's power and dominance can be structural and interpersonal, public and/or private, accepted and taken-for-granted and/or recognized and resisted, obvious or subtle. It also includes violations and violences of all the various kinds. (51)

By investigating the idea of hegemonic masculinity, Hearn provides a thorough analysis of masculinity and how it is handled within the field of critical studies on men.

While analysing the select fiction of Ismail Kadare undertaken in this study, this chapter shall consider the issues like how the positions of power are inhabited by a particular group of men by the way of controlling men as well as women. It shall further investigate the role of gender in subjugating the weaker sections of a society. The role played by the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in the alteration of subjectivity rather social behaviour of men shall also be encapsulated. Moreover, the different modes which assist in the maintenance of the ideals set by hegemonic masculinity shall also be analysed, with reference to gendered power and dominance.

Acknowledging Gardiner's argument about hegemonic masculinity as the kind of masculinity that is valued in a culture, and has social standing and standard, the hegemonic

masculinity in the Albanian highlands as depicted in *Broken April* can be analysed. The novel revolves around the Kanun of Leke Dukagjini which "constitutes a centuries-old code of behaviour, regulating both the individual and collective conduct" (Sadiku 94). The Kanun is made up of an actual statute that governs various facets of life. Out of the various moral and ethical concepts associated with the Kanun, honour (*nderi),* virility (*burrnija),* revenge *(hakmarrja),* revenge killing *(gjakmarrja),* and blood *(gjaku)* are the ones which play a major part in Kadare's novel under discussion. The code is essentially patriarchal whose foundation is based on the standards of hegemonic masculinity.

Broken April primarily focuses on the life of Gjorg Berisha, a 26-year-old man caught up in an ongoing blood feud, an essential practice for the execution of the Kanun. According to the law, if a person is killed, the victim's closest kin must take the murderer's life in vengeance. The killer should then be put to death by his own closest family members, and so the cycle continues. This begins a seemingly endless string of cold-blooded massacres that kill hundreds of innocent men and even wipe out some tribes. Blood feuds, honour, and virility might be considered practically symbiotic because of the Kanun's strong regard for honour. Acts of revenge for the sake of honour of the male community result in endless and vicious violence. As the head of the household, Gjorg's father exhorts his son to uphold the honour of the family by fulfilling his duties by killing Zef, his brother's murderer. Gjorg is reminded of the Kanun's laws, which state that "two finger breadths of honour have been stamped on our foreheads by Almighty God" and is mocked by his father for delaying his duty, by saying "whiten or further besmirch your dirty face, as you please. It is up to you to decide to be a man or not" (Kadare 46).

The pursuit of avoiding dishonour looks to be restoring honour and his manhood, although it demands his own death. Despite the fact that Gjorg has no actual alternatives, as was previously discussed, even the few options that he does explore are disregarded

since they would be dishonourable and would label him as *effeminate*. Others in the community will serve coffee to him and his family under the knee if he does not exact retribution on his brother; this practice demonstrates that they would be dishonoured in the sight of the neighbourhood. Therefore, he is more afraid of this public communal humiliation than of his own death.

However, there are times when Gjorg feels like a murderer, but because of the deep-rooted hegemony by the dictates of masculinity, he does not "want to admit to himself that he hated to kill a man" (45). Gjorg sees his life as being starkly divided into two parts: the time period before he was 26 years old and the subsequent one-month he is granted to perform his duty; thereby, claiming his honour and virility within his community. He thinks the previous one is long and dull while the subsequent one is brief, intense, and stormy. The community has been hegemonized to such an extent that, for the highlanders, blood feuds provide a young man a meaning, a purpose, and a heroic and manly stature that he would lose if the Kanun vanished, turning existence into an intolerable aimlessness. It gains its significance by one more condition that it is gender oriented; it is applicable only to men who embody the masculine virtues contrary to the feminine ones. Males are prized because they are the ones whose blood is used to settle disputes and because virility and honour are closely related. Gjorg is frequently compared to various heroes and gods, as well as a youthful Hamlet. Bessian asserts that the main distinction between Hamlet and Gjorg lies in the fundamental difference between them, that is, the former commits the murder with passion, whereas the latter lacks both passion and decision-making.

Mark Ukacierra, the manager of the revenue collected in the name of blood taxes, is involved with the political and economic aspects of the Kanun. The position of Mark is subordinate to the Prince of the Castle of Orosh who governs the Highland. The prince represents the dominant masculine authority and he has the power of dismissing Mark in

case he fails to fulfil his duty. As such, Mark in order to validate his manhood and save himself from humiliation by losing dignity at his workplace resorts to the subjugation of his subordinates. The Highlanders serve as his subordinates as they are subjected to the blood feuds set by the Kanun. In order to maintain his own power position, in the castle of Orosh, he resorts to various methods which result in a surge in the number of men involved in blood feuds. Ironically, the mountainous people yield to the system in a consensual way because it asserts their manliness among their community members. Therefore, blood feuds are run by the conventions of hegemonic masculinity which here refers to an automated mechanism of established codes and conducts that are set up; nevertheless, they are also a profoundly entwined industry in the economic sense which supports the power relations in the Albanian highlands.

The sacrifice of Suzana's love for the sake of maintaining her father's dominant status in the patriarchal world, an analogy is drawn with "the legendary sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter" taking us back to the roots of the deeply established edifice of patriarchy. The scene wherein Iphigenia is sacrificed, for appeasing the goddess Artemis, necessary for her father's advancement in the war, is recreated:

To launch the ancient Trojan Wars

They offered up Iphigenia

For the sake of our great cause

I'll carry my darling to the pyre (11)

It is also noteworthy that "war is a site where masculinity could be proved" (Dutta 54). Men demonstrate their manhood in the battlefield by showcasing their physical strength and bravery. On the front lines of battle, individual lives are on the line, and survival calls for extraordinary physical and mental fortitude which Alan Sinfield labels as "masculine aggressiveness." On the contrary, women are expected to be submissive and

yielding illustrating "feminine passivity" (Sinfield 127). The pathetic scene describes the "men set on war" having "stony hearts":

> O *Father, hear me! she implored*
>
> *Young and innocent though she felt*
>
> *Her sobs and cries could not melt*
>
> *The stony hearts of men set on war! (62)*

Agamemnon, being the king of Mycenae and the leader of his fleet, has to comply with the same standard. Hegemonic masculinity demands him to exhibit mental fortitude alongside physical strength, resulting in him making him sacrifice his daughter.

Michael Kaufman contends, "[if] manhood [is] about power and control, not being powerful means you are not a man" (546). He asserts the "men's contradictory experiences of power," or the "paradoxes of men's power" (544). Men feel helpless when they fall short of achieving the symbols of manhood. They use violence to feel strong and masculine. For some men, using violence becomes a way to express and validate their manliness. Violence then turns into a "compensatory mechanism" for a gender identity that is uneasy and insecure (Kaufman 545). It has been argued that "it is primarily men who are more alienated and repressed than women" (Dutta 56). Furious wrath results from the guilt and fear that are suppressed. It results the constant pressure on their psyche coming from the humiliating anxiety of failing to meet the standards and demands of hegemonic masculinity.

The novel *A Girl in Exile,* centres on the miasma of confusion and mental torture that Rudian Stefa, a playwright undergoes in a communist regime. He gets caught up in a maze where he finds it impossible to find a way out because of the suicide of a girl named Linda B. whom he does not know, but among whose possessions the investigating officials find his signed copy of one of his plays. Life seems impossible for him in a place where there is no scope for freedom of expression.

He loses his sense of self-dignity and feels like he is stripped of any kind of authority over the aspects of his own life, be it personal or public. He finds "snares and treachery everywhere" (13). His plays are continuously put to a halt; a premiere has been temporarily postponed, and a play is awaiting approval due to the strict policies of the Artistic Board. He is not able to express himself anywhere as he is apprehensive of the "phones being tapped" (29) and "microphones under the tables" (32). All these things leave him "emasculated" and strip him of his manliness.

Unable to validate his manhood in the public realm he turns to validate it in his domestic space. According to Joseph Pleck, many men rely on women to affirm their manhood (60). They reaffirm their power by exerting control over their family members, especially the women. Though unwillingly, he finds himself hitting his girlfriend:

> He had stretched out his hand as if to seize a girl by hair two or three times in his life, but he had never actually done it. Now it happened with unexpected ease. He thought his grip would loosen at once and he would let go of these strands as if they were flames, but his hand did not obey him and angrily he pushed that lovely head, which he had caressed so sweetly only a short time ago, against the bookshelves. (2-3)

Interestingly, Connell emphasises that violence plays a significant role in masculinity (83). In his analysis, masculinities are "deeply implicated in the global violence" resulting in the dominance of certain cultures, on a global level (186). Violence and masculinity are related to one another on both a personal and a global scale. It is critical to comprehend why men frequently use violence. Men's suppressed anger and shame in their own unconscious are expressed through violence when they are unable to establish their manhood in public. Violence turns into a method of male protest, a need to be in charge and keep control.

Many men make blatant demonstrations of their physical prowess, aggressiveness, and sexual dominance in an effort to define what it means to be a man. They develop toxic

sexual tendencies and may engage in illicit behaviour in an effort to show off their masculinity. They also use a variety of violent methods to retain their power and control. The acts of beating and torturing are designed as symbols of dominance. The definition of "beating," according to Julie Peteet, is crucial to contemporary ideas of what it means to be a male. It is regarded as a societal construction of masculinity with historical roots. A cultural definition of manhood includes the act of beating. As Peteet notes, beatings "reproduce a masculine identity" (331). In the domestic realm, it denotes men's "authority and physical dominance" (Peteet 331). When some men are subjected to defeat and torment in the outside world, which they regard as the ultimate manifestations of power, they return home and bash their wives and children in overwhelming wrath and misery; so, the power of beating is within.

Fighting is also the "hegemonic representation of masculinity," as noted by Ann Ferguson (91). It is a symbolically masculine practice. The events in *The Traitor's Niche* take place in the early 1800s during a harsh winter when Albania was on the periphery of the huge Ottoman Empire. The chopped skulls that fill a tiny, orderly niche in one of Constantinople's great squares serve as the main protagonists of the novel. The references to severed heads loom around the whole narrative integrating it with violence and viciousness. The Sultan, in order to assert his power which is a symbol of manhood in the public realm resorts to violent and brutal means. Any threat to his authority is nipped in its bud and the heads of dissidents are put to display for leaving an impression of an invisible sultan on the public.

As discussed already, violence and masculinity are related to one another on both a personal and a global scale. Thus, making it important to comprehend why men frequently use violence. In the narrative, the vizier Bugrahan Pasha's head is the first one put to display, pumped with embalming fluid and sitting in a cup of honey. After failing to subdue

Albania's rebellious octogenarian governor, Black Ali Pasha Tepelena, his head was cut off. Hegemonic masculinity offers no place to the men who are not able to assert their manliness, as such, Burgrahan Pasha meets the same fate.

It follows the rebel Black Ali losing his head. Preceding that Ottoman armies are seen advancing across the icy Balkan region. Ali having vowed to extricate Albania from the imperial rule, threats the Sultan's power position. As a result, Black Ali provides the Constantinople niche with a second head. *The Traitor's Niche* is still ravenous. Shortly after crossing arid terrain to bring back Ali's head, red-bearded Tundj Hata returns to Albania to retrieve the third: Hurshid Pasha, the "man" who murdered Black Ali. Hurshid Pasha's "star, unfortunately, became too brilliant" (Qualey "Review") because now the Sultan sees him as a threat. Thus, he is put in silence and plays a part in demonstrating the Sultan's manly strength by his displayed head in the niche.

The Pharaoh Cheops depicted in *The Pyramid* is typically modelled after the well-known historical figure from ancient Egypt who, according to Herodotus, was a brutal dictator. But unlike conventional historical fiction, Kadare does not attempt to paint a historically accurate portrayal of the Egyptian tyrant. He is more interested in the psychology of the tyrant as such, whether they are from antiquity or the present era. The Cheops mentioned in the narrative is more of an archetype than a specific person. He symbolises a tyrant who in the pursuit of power and supremacy puts up a whole massacre; thereby exhibiting his invincible masculine authority. His every decision is driven by the imprudent desire for power as a goal in itself. The Pharaoh's archetypal personality is perfectly consistent with the ideal masculine figure depicting his physical portrayal as a strongly and largely built, nearly two-dimensional iconic figure that resembles a sphinx more than a real person. In reality, Kadare's Cheops is not portrayed in the typical mimetic

method of historical books, but rather in the iconic manner of allegory, which hides an unchanging universal core behind the concrete and specific.

The account of Cheops' transformation from a young, inexperienced ruler to a ruthless dictator who eventually becomes a representative masculine figure has all the distinguishing features of a parable with universal meaning. As he ascends to the throne, to everyone's surprise, he reveals that he would forgo the ancient pharaonic custom of having a pyramid constructed as his tomb. However, on understanding the significance of a pyramid as "power…, repression, force, and wealth" his decision takes a different direction. What appears to be a sincere desire of reforming and modernising zeal, however, is nothing more than a childish fantasy on the part of the young monarch, who changes his mind and resolves to construct the largest pyramid in Egypt as he becomes more familiarised to the dynamics of power. The sustenance of his power demands the assertion of his masculinity. Alan Sinfield contends that principally, "assertive masculinity is oppressive" since it justifies itself by successfully "intimidating others" (134). Cheops' abandonment of what appeared to be an idealistic impulse is indicative of his acceptance of the hegemonic masculine ideal of repressing others for validating his power and manhood.

In *Blinding Order,* hegemonic masculinity is shown to be flourishing in the empire of the Ottomans. Any decree proclaimed by the sultan is considered to be irrefutable for the people are consensual to the "inconvertible fact that only the sovereign is just" (167). Being an epitome of masculinity, virility, strength, and power, his actions are unquestionable. However, there is a reference to the Koprülü clan who have a reputation for having rebellious ideas against the sultan. As the mentioned clan holds a powerful position in the hierarchy of power, though subordinate to the sultan, it poses a threat to the ruling authority. As such, its annihilation becomes one of the main aims of the Sultan. Taking cognizance of the fact that he is the incumbent authority, he employs a diabolic

method for the clan's annihilation. For achieving his purpose, he pronounces a proclamation labelled "Blinding Decree" which would be applicable to all citizens irrespective of their social or political status. It serves as an unquestionable method for eradiating the grand vizier who is backed by Köprülü clan.

In order to "liquidate the vizier," he resorts to the violent and brutal strategy of blinding people on the accusation of possessing "evil eyes" (172). Eventually, the radar falls on the grand vizier who is accused of the same, resulting in the dissolution of his powerful position. In this way, the sultan validates his manhood in public and keeps his subordinates under control.

The royal courier, Tundj Hata is assigned the horrid but crucial task of carrying severed heads of rebellious high officials including princes, viziers, pashas, etc. to the niche built in the capital of the empire. The atrocious nature of his job distances him from the mundane world. In the pursuit of ascendancy, he accepts and adapts to the unpleasant but only source of his livelihood and in the process, his psyche gets implicated by the hostile nature of his job. The unfulfilled desire for power and ascendancy takes its shape in the aberrant behaviour of Tundj Hata as he starts getting obsessed with heads without bodies. The thought of receiving and carrying "a head" arouses feelings of excitement inside his mind which he finds "more powerful" than "the lure of women, and the higher the rank of the head, the more thrilling the sensation was" (43). The mere idea of having the power of carrying heads of the previously powerful pashas and kings recompenses his otherwise insignificant role in the mundane world and it helps him proclaim his masculinity.

However, hegemonic masculinity refers to the masculinity which is defined in relation to others for it requires the validation of culture. Due to the lonely state that he is subjected to during the course of his journey, he is not able to display his powerful position or his accomplished manliness to others- the marginalised and subordinate ones; as such,

"the head" serves as the best substitute for the same. The impact of the sinister nature of his work on his psyche gets manifested in his almost paraphilic behaviour. It becomes ostensible when once "without realizing it, he … draw[s] [the head] close to the ear and for the first-time whisper[s], 'My bride.' …. That had been his first taste of this intoxication. It recurs on his later missions until it became something he could not live without" (44). The presence of the head on his side validates his powerful position. On touching the head, "the first involuntary gulps escaped him: 'Huhuhu, hahaha'" (64). Then everything went back to as it was the night before. His brain had the inner brilliance of "a glow-worm" and resembled some kind of clinging insect, "whose slime smeared … the wombs of women awaiting insemination" (64). Hegemonic masculinity centres on power relations between distinct groups of males as well as men's dominance over women. As such, he enters the realm of ecstasy and manliness by comparing the head with the subordinate "other" by endowing it with both masculine and feminine features.

Abdullah, the keeper of the niche is under the obligation of safeguarding the niche and taking care of the severed heads of the rebels. He compares the significance of the severed head, in the sight of the foreigners, visiting that place as well as in that of the Sultan to the insignificance of his own existence. Although the heads put on display are devoid of life, they seem to taunt him for his lack of masculinity. Despite being around the head, performing his duty, he seems invisible to the people coming to visit that place. Unable to validate his masculinity, makes him question his own existence. It makes a deep impact on his psyche as well as his sexuality, resulting in his impotence. Turning his head toward the niche, he thinks, "They all had multiple graves and … multiple wives. But he himself, a week ago … his first wife … no doubt his last and what was worse, not even with her … not even with her …" (75). His despair turns into "torture" on the fourth night of his marriage which was celebrated as "the Night of power. On that night, according to a

centuries-old tradition, the sultan-emperor slept with a virgin" (78). The festivities taking place on that night symbolise "the manly vigour of the sultan;" all this results in increased anguish in Abdullah. The double standard concerning "virginity" is again elucidated here. As the night is labelled with the term "power," it validates the argument made by Joseph Pleck that many men rely on women to affirm their manhood (60).

However, Abdullah is not able to affirm his manhood; thus, the standards of hegemonic masculinity leave him "emasculated," on both physical as well as metaphorical levels. Both social and psychological aspects of the idea of masculinity have their roles to play. Men have a psychic inclination toward demonstrating their manliness in public. The sense of being emasculated gets increased, at his workplace, in the presence of the lifeless heads of pashas and viziers

> Their lifeless eyes seemed to mock him. Bugrahan Pasha, the vizier of Trebizond, had had thirty-eight women in his harem, and his face was said to have turned yellow from endless orgies. Ali Pasha's second wife Vasiliqia was twenty-two years old, while the rebel vizier had been over eighty. They had all had so many wives, while he himself … (79)

Kimmel talks about how males constantly feel the need to prove their manliness. Men work hard to accomplish the culturally set standards regarding strength, dominance, wealth, or success. In his article "Masculinity as Homophobia," Kimmel observes that the "hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man *with* power, and a man of power" (184). Manhood is equated with strength, success, capability, reliability, and control. He makes the argument that because hegemonic masculinity serves as normative masculinity, any man who does not fit into this description is frequently not regarded as a "real" man (Manhood 19).

He contends, “if manhood could be proved, it had to be proved in the eyes of other men” (*Manhood* 19). Furthermore, he emphasises that “the public sphere, specifically the workplace” serves as the “proving ground of manhood” (19). Man’s world lies within the domain of a “manly” work place. As, such, men who do not fit into this standard are subjected to humiliation, affecting their self-dignity. It results in them being positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy. In order to “achieve,” “demonstrate,” and “prove” one’s masculinity, Kimmel claims that the “quest for manhood” has “been one of the formative and persistent experiences in men’s lives” (Manhood 3). Males who have their manhood rejected at work go through a crisis of gender identity and feel a psychic need to validate their manhood. Robert Staples contends that “the real symbols - political and economic power,” are the symbols of manhood, and “sexual conquest” and “dominance of women,” are significantly “important to them” (160).

Alan Sinfield in his work, *Faultlines* quotes Jean Howard who contends that a monarch’s legitimacy is constantly in doubt, and is influenced by the monarch's construction of “gender difference” and the forceful subjection of “the feminine to masculine authority,” among other factors” (qtd. in Sinfield 132). Hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell, is the masculinity that holds the dominant role in a certain pattern of gender relations, a role that is constantly up for debate (76). Ismail Kadare’s texts under study illustrate a likewise pattern concerning the subordination of women in different cultures which is actually rooted in the intricate dynamics of hegemonic masculinity. John K. Cox claims that in Ismail Kadare’s works various “social and political problems of women in various epochs in the Balkans and, by extension, in other traditional societies,” are highlighted (Cox, “Waterloo”). In another article, “What’s Behind the Veil?,” he argues that the portrayals of oppressed women are used by Kadare for representing Albania, which emphasises the writer's frequent expressions of opposition in his works of fiction and non-

fiction to the isolation that Albania was subjected to by imperialist forces, particularly those in the East (Cox 52).

Kadare's *The Palace of Dreams* offers a controlling, authoritative and masculine view of the empire. In order to safeguard and sustain its legitimacy, it employs various methods of subordinating those who threaten its very existence. The Tabir Sarail is one such device that serves as the empire's incontestable tool as it bestows on the empire the power of controlling its subjects by monitoring not only their conscious actions but also keeping an eye on their unconscious mind. Moreover, the essence of Tabir Sarial is crucial to the sustenance of the empire in one more way; it lends an irrefutable power to the empire for eradicating the elements- masculine as well as feminine that threaten its existence. As it becomes ostensible in the narrative that "the Master-Dream is sometimes a complete fabrication," and thereby, it can be put to use by the empire in the way it meets its demands (116).

In his text, *The Caraven of veils,* Kadare refers to the "intelligence service" running at the heart of the *The Palace of Dreams*, and it is mentioned that "the Padishah, or sultan," had a dream from "a Bosnian *hodja*, or religious leader," whose interpretation spurred the ruler to issue the decree on women's veiling" (Cox 52). Kadare associates the concept of:

> sexuality with authenticity and opposition to political oppression strongly represented in his later works such as "The Albanian Writers' Union as Mirrored by a Woman" (2005) … He represents Albania itself by the subjugated women of this tale, underscoring his frequent protestations in his fictional and nonfiction writings against the isolation imposed on Albania by imperialist powers, especially from the East. (52)

Alan Sinfield asserts how history witnesses the events that hint at the convictions of monarchies regarding the control of women by men as crucial to the countries' sustenance

(*Faultlines* 132). The proclamation of law regarding the veiling of women in the Ottoman Empire as depicted by Ismail Kadare's texts goes in accordance with the same assertion. The novel *The Three-Arched Bridge,* is more than just an Ottoman account. It adopts a factual and realistic stance toward the sultan's expansion of power, highlighting how regional Christian leaders cooperated and how Ottoman influence gradually and in various ways, rather than through dramatic military means, increased. By employing the Balkans both literally and conceptually as a connecting link to European continent, the symbolism of the bridge and the Ottomans are connected, suggesting that any social order is based on victimhood and abuse of men as well as of women.

The highest level of worry is raised by Kadare's peculiar account of individual Turks who start to enter and travel across the bordering states well before any approaching army. Whether they are travelling musicians, traders, diplomats, spies, mystics, or other types of envoys, they give the endow the people of Albania with the feelings of anxiousness by their outward appearance and dresses. It does not happen by chance that:

> their silken garments, turbans, breeches, and robes have no straight lines, corners, hems, or seams. Their whole costume is insubstantial, and cut so that it changes shape continually. Among such diaphanous folds, it is hard to tell whether a hand is holding a knife or a flower. (Kadare 46)

The most pertinent part of this uncanny portrayal by the monk for the topic at hand is the last one: "But after all, how can straightforwardness be expected from a people who hide their very origin: their women?" (50). It is yet one more instance of the veil or the clothes that conceal the majority of the physique- being worn by women being specifically mentioned. To the narrator, Gjon, the monk, the arrival of the Turks signifies not political enslavement, imperialism, and the abolition of the clans and princes of Albania but also the shaping of the national character and identity of Albania as per their own laws and edicts.

The reference to the subordination of the subordinate gender is again made in *The Traitor's Niche* when Tundj Hata, a representative character of the Ottoman Empire, on his way back to the capital, looks at the snow-covered earth and remarks, "why wasn't snow black, like the veils of women?" (53). John K. Cox rests his arguments on the observations of scholars like Donald Quataert and Suraiya Faroqhi which emphasise on changes in "sartorial and sumptuary" rules that show the material evolution of Ottoman society as well as how ideas of ranking and appropriateness were connected to the concerns of the affluent classes related with religion and economy (58).

All racial and religious groups, as well as both genders, could be impacted by sumptuary laws. Women's dress was generally more varied and ornamented than that of the male members, however, they were obligated to maintain a higher level of religious modesty. The state and establishments concerned with religion like "Sheikh-ul-Islam and the ulema" attempted to encrypt signs of social standing, including religion and hierarchical position, in clothes, especially those of women. The Turkish writers did not write about women. Many prospective resources on the lives of women during the Ottoman Empire are either non-existent or misrepresented due to the combined weight silent or twisted due to the twin weight of global male dominance and Western Orientalism (Cox 58).

Authorities occasionally required non-Muslim women to wear specific colours. In Persia, as mentioned by Cox, to shame the males in their families, they occasionally had to affix particular symbols onto their "chadors" or even go out in public without covering themselves. More specifically, documentation of numerous Ottoman regulations governing women's attire and appropriate public behaviour is available, starting with Suleiman the Magnificent's household who reigned from 1520 to 1566. In the eighteenth century, they were very prevalent; Faroqhi, for example, recalls five occurrences or phases of such laws at this time. Even the "carsaf," a very significant sort of head covering, was outlawed in

1892, not long after its invention, by Abdul Hamid II (reigned 1876-1909). Several instances of control regarding women's dressing from the fifteenth to the 19th century have been listed by historians. Furthermore, it has been noted that "non-Muslim women dressed like Muslims," in Ottoman Armenia, Greece, and other places, and that their attire reflected the geographical variety and social divisions (59).

The significance of the subjugation of the subordinate gender for masculinity to maintain and sustain their stay in the higher echelons of social and political power is once again illustrated in Ismail Kadare's *Agamemnon's Daughter.* In order to secure his power position and ascend the ladder of masculinity, Suzana's father makes her renounce her love affair with the person who does not fully comply with the Party's directives. In one of his essays, Michael Kimmel points out that "white, middle-class, early-middle-aged, heterosexual men" who fit the definition of masculinity in a "dominant culture" set the bar for other men's behaviour, and other men are frequently judged against this standard and found inadequate ("Masculinity as Homophobia" 184).

Hegemonic masculinity as defined by him is the "image of masculinity of those men who hold power" (184). Here Suzana's father is the man holding power, and thereby dominant, while her lover is the one on the weaker side. The men, whose "masculinity is not of a hegemonic variety, suffer oppression at the hands of men who hold hegemonic power. Because of the inequalities of power within the dominant culture, there are oppositions and tensions between multiple masculinities" (Dutta 45). The inequalities of power between Suzana's father and her lover result in conflict and tension between the two.

It is crucial to understand the role of both class politics and gender politics in the construction of masculinity. Gender relations and class relations intersect in complex ways within the context of a power structure yielding many unjust situations, where powerful men always hold hegemony over subjected men. As the narrator, who is Suzana's lover is

running for Vienna Scholarship, any undesired action on his part may ruin his career because of her father's affiliation with the ruling party. Keeping in view his vulnerable and subordinate status, he does not make any effort to stop "the sacrifice" that Suzana is supposed to make (9). The oppression that Suzana undergoes is expressed by his imagination where he views her "buried in the ground" and "[listens] to her complaining from the grave;" at the same time, his own oppression and subordination gets manifested by his feeling that "[he] was the one who was buried, but could still hear her moans through the clay soil and over the racket made by the upper world" (78). He loses the battle without even attempting to fight. Alan Sinfield argues that there is no room left for a manhood that is not combative. Naturally, those who disagree with strongly held beliefs often feel pressured, but "assertive masculinity" is inherently "oppressive" because it justifies itself by successfully frightening and overpowering others (134).

Alan Sinfield further holds that the "price of male failure is greater oppression of women" (133). In the narrative Suzana is rendered voiceless, and this is her first sacrifice since her limited voice range prevents her from speaking her own truth. The narrator is certain that he lost Suzana to the more powerful symbol of masculinity in the patriarchal milieu. Together, the part played by these two men reveals the pathetic state of a woman as she does not hold any authority over her own life decisions. In a social setting defined by the standards of masculinity, she is constantly obliged to "make the sacrifice" for the benefit of the men (Kadare 9). Even the narrator is not able to decide "whether it was [him] or Suzana's father who was performing the sacrifice. Sometimes it seemed to be [him] and sometimes him [her father]; more likely, it was the two of [them] in tandem" (12).

Hegemonic masculinity acknowledges the distinctive gender relation of dominance and subordination between groups of males and legitimises the practice that permits men to continue to dominate women. Connell and Messerschmidt note that hegemonic

masculinity represents "the currently most respected way of being a man, it [requires] all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically [legitimises] the global subordination of women to men" (832).

In *Broken April,* Mark recalls his encounter with Diana who belongs to the urban parts of Albania where the dictates of the Kanun are not applicable, and refers to her as "a witch" rather than "a woman," despite the fact that she is "beautiful as the fairies of the high mountains, but evil," (134). In the course of the novel, Kadare depicts Diana as a personification of strength and bravery that Mark Ukacierra is unable to comprehend due to his male pride. Because he perceives Diana's power as a danger to his manhood, he associates it with evil. Mark compares Diana to a witch rather than a lady because he thinks ladies are weak and that fairies of the high mountains are a weaker mythological creature. By likening Diana to high mountain fairies, it is also emphasised how Mark is familiar with ladies who are actually from the highlands. The women from the high plateau to which Mark is accustomed are fragile and lovely rather than threatening and powerful like witches, emphasising the effect of Albanian men's pride on the oppression of Albanian women.

When Mark Ukacierra, contemplates the reduction in blood retribution and its negative impact on the Kanun, he claims that he had crazy thoughts but would not admit them to anyone including "if only the women as well as the men were subject to the rules of blood-letting" (144). Mark enlists more killers in an effort to protect the honour of the Kanun as well as to maintain his manly dignity. However, Mark imperils the reputation of the Kanun by excluding women from its laws because he believes they are "mad things," and because he "dared" not express his views. He is ruled by and subject to hegemonic masculinity through the laws and traditions of the Kanun.

One section of the Kanun is dedicated to regulation concerned with family matters like the responsibilities, rights, and obligations of the females as well as the male head of the household. The family structure described in the code is very authoritarian and patriarchal in essence, with the oldest member- typically the father or, in his absence, the first male son- ruling over the rest. Another section examines marriage, covering issues like matchmaking, betrothal, marriage, the law pertaining to the spouse, the family, inheritance, and bequests. According to the Kanun, a woman is merely "a shakull" (sack) for carrying things. The woman is in her husband's house to bear his children.

However, it is also acknowledged that she needs to actively participate in the tasks related to the farm and the house. Women are placed in a submissive position and are expected to submit to authoritarian fathers, brothers (if they were not married), or husbands after marriage. According to customary law, the husband was the wife's head and may punish her for misbehaviour. Parents are supposed to give a "trousseau bullet" to the husband of their daughter so that "he might kill his wife if she left him" (28). Moreover, there is no provision for postponing a wedding. The code dictates: "Even if the bride is dying, the wedding party sets out, if necessary, dragging her along to the bridegroom's house" (29).

In his book, *The Gender of Desire: Essays on Male Sexuality,* Michael S. Kimmel describes objectification as a "homosocial enactment" (Kimmel 33). David A. Benge proposes that "men use objectifying language or behaviour" against women in order to gain the affirmative acceptance of their male audience, which then elevates them in the social hierarchy determined by hegemonic masculinity (35). Alan Sinfield, in the context of Shakespeare's play, *Henry V,* depicts how "both the English and French men figure their countries as women requiring masculine control" (132). In addition, "the charge of effeminacy is made by both sides- by the French against the English and by the play against

the French" by using a "series of misogynist puns," in order to "establish their superiority by bragging continually of their manly strength," like comparing their horses to their "mistress[es]" as well as "to as a 'palfrey,' suggesting a lady's mount" (133).

Likewise, Tundj Hata, in *The Traitor's Niche,* refers to "the soil" as "nothing but a fertile woman. An old whore. That was why high officials went even crazier for land than for women" (53). Tundj Hata nearly mutters this aloud as he stares at the layer of frost that covers the field's somnolent surface like a fine layer of white powder. He slowly realises that his second fit regarding his obsession with "the head" which occurred just before daybreak, has fully exhausted him. To him, it is "like mounting a woman in the morning" (53). Even Ali Pasha thinks "as if Albania were a woman" and wonders about what was Skanderberg's "appeal" that enabled him to control the whole of Albania for such a long period of time. (116)

Masculinity is produced in part by the intricate power dynamics that develop around various categories like those of class and gender. A group of "others" like women, homosexual men, men belonging to weaker sections of society like the working class, etc., are used to define hegemonic masculinity. While expressing his disappointment at the villagers who fail to give him a satisfactory amount of money for exchange of a glimpse of the severed head, Tundj Hata reproaches them: "All you deserve is the head of some thief or sodomite or adulterous wife. The sort you find in prison yards. That's all you deserve" (57). His reference to "some thief," "sodomite," and "adulterous wife" categorically make it explicit as to how women, homosexual men, and men belonging to weaker sections of society are perceived as the "other" while defining hegemonic masculinity. Further, when workers fail to find the dead body of Hurshid Pasha, hegemonic masculinity is again manifested by his use of curses against "the mothers that bore them" (171).

According to Joseph Pleck, many men rely on women to affirm their manhood (60). Unable to validate his manhood with reference to the Guide a representative of the dominant masculine standard in hegemonic masculinity, the technical supporter in *Agamemnon's Daughter,* flings mud at the Guide's wife. He describes her "as the true inspiration for her husband's crimes, a real Lady Macbeth - Lady Macbeth of the Backwater, he'd said, the Qiang Qing of Albania, and so forth" (75).

The absence of female characters in *The Pyramid,* highlights the nullification of women. Alan Sinfield argues that it is frequently claimed that women are underrepresented in history plays because the males there identify themselves in relation to other males. This is partially accurate, but men accomplish this by making frequent "references to ideas of femininity and femaleness" (128). Nevertheless, the narrator in *The Pyramid* mentions Hentsen, the only daughter of Cheops who is banished from the palace because of her rebellious conduct which did not conform to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. As a part of her resistance, she builds her own pyramid which people refer to as "the female pyramid" (92). However, the female pyramid turns out to be the first one to be profaned and broken by the robbers. As they were accustomed to violating women anyway, an attack on the tomb of a woman seemed more natural to them.

It has been argued that "many men identify manhood primarily with one aspect of maleness - that of sexuality" (Dutta 48). *The Agamemnon's Daughter,* the narrator, time and again, mentions Suzana with reference to her sexuality. Even while mourning for her sacrifice to the dominant masculine system, he turns out to be an evaluator of her sexuality. Despite the realisation of the tragic end of their relationship, he is not able to resist his temptations as he keeps on "staring at the naked parts of her body," during their last meeting (8). In her pity state, she is not able to articulate her feelings through her words referring to which he compares the half meaning of her words with her being "half-undressed" (6).

The way men assert their manliness by sexually objectifying women is illustrated by the reflections of Tundj Hata as he sees a veiled bride, on a horse back in a wedding procession. He views the bride as nothing but a sex object and begins to evaluate her sexuality (53). In addition, as Ali Pasha's 20-year-old widow is brought to the capital after his execution, Hata once again makes derogatory comments regarding her female anatomy (193). Hegemonic masculinity views women as subordinate beings in comparison to men. One of the features that "masculinity" is credited with is that of reason and intellect and "feminity" is believed to be devoid of the same. While responding to Vasiliqa's query about why he wants to rebel against the Sultan, he simply comments: "You won't be able to understand" (103).

Alan Dundes highlights the patriarchal roots of the myth of sacrifice by referring to its being labelled as "a male edifice complex" (200). Ruth Mandel elaborates on Dundes' argument and recognises legends of foundational sacrifices that show men's concern for women's reproduction. The Albanian version of the legend mentions Rozafa as an innocent female victim. Rozafa's offering is considered to be necessary as evidenced by an old lady visiting the three brothers who had been given the job of building the fortress on the Buna River's banks. After finishing their work for the day, the castle's walls would fall apart, forcing them to begin construction all over again. The old lady explained to the three brothers that in order to guarantee that the walls they constructed would be sturdy, they had to wall up one among their wives. They debated this idea among themselves and reached the conclusion that they must make a sacrifice of whichever of their wives brought them food the following day. Each brother agreed not to tell his wife about the scheme.

However, this pledge was broken by the brothers excluding one who was Rozafa's husband. When her husband informed her that she was in a circumstance where her sacrifice was needed, Rozafa volunteered to be sacrificed. Her only demand was that her

right breast be revealed so she could use it to feed her son, her right hand to touch him, her right foot to rock the crib of her son, and her right eye to watch him. Rozafa is at a place that is both walled in and exposed, because of her ability to reproduce. A woman is an ideal choice for the sacrifice due to her liminality as a mortal life-giver.

Despite the fact that Kadare rewrites the sacrifice by designating the victim in *The Three-Arched Bridge,* a male identity, the wall in which Murrash Zenebisha is immured is gendered as a female. The wall is described as if she is pregnant with Murrash. The scene, as described by Gjon, "the bulging wall looked as if it were pregnant. Worse, it looked as if it were in birth pangs carrying a baby" (105). Gjon explains the "perversion" of this seemingly pregnant wall as:

> The wall indeed looked pregnant… But this was a perverse pregnancy…No baby emerged from it, on the contrary, a human being was swallowed up…It was worse than perverse. It would have been perverse if, in contrast to a baby who emerges into the light, the man who entered the darkness were to shrink and be reduced to the size of an infant and then to nothing…But that was not to happen. This was a perversion of everything. It was perversity itself. (116)

In compliance with the hegemonic masculine precepts, the wall is metaphorically compared with a female victim because that sounds more acceptable. Women are majorly associated with "feminine passivity" (Sinfield 127). Sinfield holds that, essentially, there is no "woman or man, but there are ideas of women and men and their consciousness," which appears in depictions (63). So, the wall becomes the representative of females who are expected to be passive. However, the female wall shows perversity in that it does not comply with the reproductive role set for the female identity; as no baby emerged from it.

The double standard of hegemonic masculinity becomes ostensibly visible when it comes to the concept of *virginity*. One approach to defining one's sexual identity is based

on one's virginity status. Carpenter argues that virginity is frequently seen as a stigma, a gift, or a stage of development and growth. In addition, Humphery contends, "viewing virginity as a stigma is congruent with hegemonic masculinity and cultural-level masculine sexual scripts of using heterosexual sex to define manhood" (qtd. in Zajdel, "Stigmatized Virginity and Masculinity"). The sexual double standard of hegemonic masculinity explains how the same sexual activity by men and women receives different evaluations.

In order to claim their manhood, men are encouraged to "get it over with;" on the contrary, women need to "save themselves" (1). Suzana's lover while describing her sexuality, employs hyperbolic metaphors when he reflects that the "Champs-Elysées of her thighs led all the way to her Arc de Triomphe with its immortal flame" (8). On the basis of her being a "beginner," giving him the credit of being the first man to claim her physically, he finds gratification in terms of the manly standards of sexuality set by hegemonic masculinity. He compares her with his other girlfriends and regards her as "different in every way" (76). Having lost their virginity before meeting him, he expresses his contempt regarding his earlier girlfriends; at the same time, ignoring his own status with reference to the same aspect. It illustrates the double standard of hegemonic masculinity embedded in his psyche.

Besides acknowledging the subordinated state of Suzana and her powerlessness in making her own decisions, her lover, in *Agamemnon's Daughter,* projects himself as a person victimised by the inconstant nature of a woman. In hegemonic masculinity "femininity" is adjudged as being inconstant, fickle, and prone to the change of heart. Justifying his own position wherein he is not masculine enough to contest the dominant masculine power, he blames Suzana for his downfall: "Isn't it altogether simpler- a woman naturally pulling back from an affair when an official engagement is imminent? I was the victim of what was, after all, a quite ordinary change of heart" (69). It seems to be the only

way by which he can overcome his feelings of not being a man powerful enough to fit within the standards of hegemonic masculinity.

Most people who suffer from the promotion of masculinity, "notably including women," as well as those who benefit from it, agree on this (Rache Jewkes et al. S114). Women's interests, attentions, and efforts to imitate hegemonic masculinity in their male relatives and friends reward it as a societal "ideal of manhood for both men and women" (S114). Many instances of the consensus of women to the hegemonic masculine ideals are illustrated in Kadare's fiction under study.

The 20-year-old Vasiliqia, in *The Traitor's Niche,* lives a life of desolation and loneliness both as 80-year-old Ali Pasha's wife and later on, as his widow after his decapitation. However, the narrative suggests that she never attempts at encroaching on her husband's territory which remains ever mysterious and impenetrable for her. On her enquiring about the reasons for his obsession with war and fighting, Ali Pasha silences her by saying, "You won't be able to understand," to which she is "not offended at all" (103). She continues caressing him, content with the mere idea of being a part of a man's life whose "head contained reasons for war and even the decisions to start one" (103). It exhibits her consensus of the hegemonic masculine ideal of a man fighting for power and subjugating others.

In *Blinding Order,* Marie's sister-in-law projects her thoughts which go in compliance with the double standard of masculinity regarding the concept of *virginity*. On observing a difference in Marie's behaviour, she suspects her of having lost her virginity to Xheladin, Marie's fiancé, before their wedding. Mari, on the other hand, yields to the masculine authority of Xheladin and does not show her resistance as he makes love to her. She allows him to "take possession of her as her lord and master of the palpitating center of her being" (142). Being associated with him provides her with a sense of her existence,

which later seems to fade away as she gets to know about their inevitable separation. She expresses her feelings to him: “I’ll live only for you. If you don’t keep me engraved in your memory as I am today, I think I’ll die… I would fade away as a shadow” (178). She does not have any individuality or identity of her own and identifies herself in relation to her male partner whose presence surrounds her with a “masculine air” (148).

Furthermore, in the famous legend of Rozafa’s immurement, mentioned in *The Three Arched Bridge,* Rozafa agrees to be sacrificed for the promise that her husband has made to his brothers. Moreover, before getting immured inside the wall, she requests that one of her breasts should be left exposed in order that “she could feed her son, and that she retains the use of her right eye to see him, her right hand to caress him, and her right foot to rock his cradle” (Gould 211). Thus, she acquiesces to the hegemonic masculinity which gives significance to a woman only in terms of her reproductive capacity and her responsibility of taking nurturing the children of her husband.

In addition, Linda B., in *A Girl in Exile,* being exiled to a confined territory, by the Communist regime, finds her short-lived happiness when she falls in love with Rudian Stefa. Though she is not able to meet him in person, her imagination of meeting him lends her a sense of completeness. She even wishes for her breast scan to come out positive for breast cancer because only in that case she could be allowed to visit the Hospital of Oncology in Tirana; thus, giving her a chance to see her male consort.

As argued by Carigan et al., at times “women may feel oppressed by non-hegemonic masculinities and may even fins some expressions of hegemonic patterns more familiar and manageable” (185). The account of the myth of Iphigenia’s sacrifice narrated *in Agamemnon’s Daughter,* is largely based on the version of Euripedes’ tragedy, *Iphigenia at Aulis.* In that version of the myth, Iphigenia acknowledging the fact that she has been tricked by her father into the ritual of sacrifice, initially displays unwillingness through a

full array of emotions. However, on being told about how her struggle is necessary for all of Greece, her initial unwillingness transforms into total compliance. Similarly, Suzana embodies the archetype when she says, “It won’t be easier for me… But I simply have to make the sacrifice” (Kadare 9). The hegemonic masculine ideal about a female’s readiness to sacrifice her own desires for the sake of others, especially for the male authority, seems more familiar and manageable to both Iphigenia and Suzana. As such, they adhere to the same ideal of being subservient and subordinate to the more powerful manly authority.

Keeping in view the first objective of the study, that is, to trace dissidence as an emerging social and political will in the select fiction of Ismail Kadare, this chapter also highlights some of the dissident elements present in the society dominated by the ideals set by hegemonic masculinity. In *The Pyramid,* as a reaction to the contradictions created by the unfair division of power, on the basis of gender, Hensten, the only daughter of Cheops, registers here dissidence by building a *female pyramid*. Although it seems insignificant in comparison to the colossal edifice built by Cheops, a symbol of power and masculinity; yet, it affirms the emerging dissident elements that might in coming times subvert the conditions set by hegemonic masculinity. In *The Broken April*, Gorj’s mere intention of throwing away the *trousseau bullet* into the ravine brings to notice his contradictory opinions concerning the dominant system; thus, making him a symbolic representative of the upcoming generations who might subvert the patriarchal system prevailing in the mountains. Moreover, Diana, who finally leaves her husband and enters the forbidden tower of refuge registers her dissidence against the authority of her controlling husband as well as against the hegemonic masculine norms; although, it is bound to invite her own doom.

One of the objectives of the study is to analyse subjectivity, ideology, and power apparatus in the select novels of Ismail Kadare. The objective has been achieved in this

chapter in the way that the impact of power on the subjectivity of subjects with reference to the constructions of gender has been dileanated. The analysis of Kadare's texts undertaken in this chapter brings forth the findings which are outlined in the following section. Being elevated in culture, the concept of manhood plays a significant role in the formulation of the subjectivity of men in a particular cultural setting. In the pursuit of manhood, men are bound to follow the standards set by hegemonic masculinity which may at times manifest in their behaviour that is undesired and terrible. For instance, in *Broken April*, Gjorg, in the pursuit of maintaining the honour of himself as well as that of his family, in the eyes of their community, resorts to violence by murdering Zef. His readiness to take revenge, for the sake of his honour, affirms his manhood in his community. Even Mark Ukacierra, in order to validate his manhood, in the eyes of the prince, employs various methods for the propagation of the ideology that help in the continuation of blood feuds and hence serve his purpose.

Furthermore, on a larger scale, the validation of manhood may manifest itself in the forms of warfare, bloodshed, and violence at a large scale. The men set on the war in *Agamemnon's Daughter* are expected to possess physical strength alongside stony hearts devoid of emotions associated with femininity. Even Agamemnon sacrifices his own daughter in order to prove his masculinity among his troops. Similarly, in *Traitor's Niche*, the pursuit of manliness results in the decapitation of various pashas and viziers, the representative ones being Ali Pasha and Hurshid Pasha.

Moreover, violence and manhood are related on a global as well as a personal level. The fear of insecurity, in terms of their gender identity, gets expressed in the form of men's toxic, violent, furious, and controlling behaviour within their domestic spheres. This in turn results in the suppression of women at the hands of men who are unable to validate their manhood in the public realm. The anguish of Rudian Stefa because of being emasculated

by the excessively oppressive regime is articulated in the form of violence in his private life when he hit his girl-friend. In addition, the inability to exhibit manhood in the public realm may result in certain aberrations in the sexualities of men. Tundj Hata's paraphilic behaviour as well as Abdullah's loss of sexual potency followed by his loss of mental sanity go hand in hand with the same inference.

Besides, the subjugation of women is crucial to the sustenance of masculinity because it is rooted in man's threat of being encroached upon by their subordinate gender. The regulations regarding the dressing of women set by the Ottoman regime as highlighted in Kadare's texts go in the same vein. Also, the ideals determined by hegemonic masculinity expect women to exhibit readiness to sacrifice their own desires for the opposite gender. Suzana complies with his father's wishes and sacrifices her personal desires for maintaining his power position.

Hegemonic masculinity results in the objectification of women, in terms of their sexuality, as is highlighted through the analysis of sexuality of the female characters, like Vasiliqa, Suzana, and Hensten, at the hands of men. The roots of hegemonic masculinity being deeply intricated into the collective consciousness, results in its articulation through language whereby derogatory labels and terms are associated with femininity; it further results in the subjugation of women.

To conclude, the chapter has laid stress upon different patterns of hegemonic masculinity present in various cultural settings and the role of the same in helping the ruling class to establish and maintain its domination as is evident in the select texts of Ismail Kadare. In social as well as political spaces, the characters attempt at asserting their masculinity by subjugating the women as well as weaker section of men. It is further attained either by demeaning the female characters by objectifying their bodies and sexuality or by overlooking their existence. The way how female characters are not

supposed to have significant involvement in social, cultural, and political aspects of life furthers the significance of hegemonic masculinity. As such, the exaltation of masculinity helps them to stabilise a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order and social hierarchy as a whole.

Conclusion

The present thesis, in an endeavour to analyse the select fiction of Ismail Kadare, has explored varied dimensions of Kadare's literary genius. While searching for the roots of oppressive regimes, he takes his readers back to antiquity following an exemplary course of action. In an unparalleled manner, his narratives revisit various spaces and epochs encompassing Greek mythology, the age of Egyptian pharaohs, the Ottoman Empire, and the historical roots of Albania with final arrival at Albania under the Communist regime.

In his writings, Kadare proves to be an exemplary writer who through his imaginative faculty carves the vision of his own people; undoubtedly suffering, but always enduring. A steady stream of upheavals, wars, revolutions, and general instability have characterised Albania's history. Albania has struggled with the issue of ethnic identity, and more especially, religious identity, ever since its founding. Between the East and the West, between Islam and Christianity, Albania lies at a crossroads. Kadare through his works urges us to acknowledge Albania's incredibly complex and nuanced disposition. The only way to do so is to carefully examine the past, without regret or rejection, and with the willingness to practice candour, openness, and inclusivity.

Furthermore, Kadare's depiction of the interaction between the individuals, and the institutions with authority attempting to repress them, raises issues that go beyond Albanian circumstances and highlight designs of control over people on a global level. Kadare's oeuvre highlights fundamental human behaviours with reference to power structures, whether through allegory, symbolism, or fusing the past and present.

The research work has attempted at accomplishing three objectives which have been laid out in the introductory part of the thesis. One of the main objectives of the work, that is, to analyse subjectivity, ideology, and power apparatus in the select novels of Ismail

Kadare has been achieved in the undertaken study. The objective has been majorly achieved in the third chapter titled "Subjectivity and Power Apparatus," wherein the relationship between subjectivity and power apparatus in the selected fiction has been analysed. The issue raised about the nature of a subject as to how subjects are contrived resulting in their subjection has been examined, with reference to the effectiveness and interaction of power. Besides, the objective has also been partially achieved in the fifth chapter titled "Cultural Constructs and the Politics of Plausibility," in way that it evaluates the issues concerning the interdependence of power, and ideology with reference to different cultural constructs. The same objective has also been achieved in the fifth chapter titled "Hegemonic Masculinity and Social Hierarchy." While analysing the select fiction of Ismail Kadare, this chapter has undertaken the issues like how the positions of power are inhabited by a particular group of men by way of controlling men as well as women. It has further investigated the role of gender in subjugating the weaker sections of a society. The role played by the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in the alteration of subjectivity rather social behaviour of men has also been encapsulated. The analysis has arrived at the outcomes and inferences delineated here.

In their vie for supremacy, the opposing power structures and forces keep on continuously trying to integrate the subjects into their functioning. In *The Palace*, Mark Alem's subjectivity is continuously affected due to the conflict between the two opposing ideological forces, that is, his Albanian ethnicity and his Ottoman identity. Moreover, the powerful forces while creating the emotions of fear and terror, along with the threat of being surveilled, among the subjects, render them more disciplined. For instance, in *The Pyramid*, Cheops uses the same methods to subjugate his subjects and strengthen his power base. Similarly, the characters in *A Girl* are deprived of their free will because of the surroundings dominated by feelings of terror, fear, and surveillance.

Furthermore, in order to put an end to the apprehended uprisings and attempts of dissidence, harsh, irrational, and oppressive measures are taken by the authoritarian regimes, thereby, meddling the subjectivity of subjects. Likewise, in *Traitor's Niche*, the subjectivity of characters like Ali Pasha, Hurshid Pasha, Tundj Hata as well as Abdullah is meddled. In addition, even the most private aspects of an individual's personal life are intricated into the frigid machinery of power, as depicted in the narrative of *Agamemnon's Daughter* through the impact of the power apparatus on the narrator's and Suzana's relationship. Besides, under such circumstances, there is no scope left for the freedom of expression through any artistic or literary form. It is depicted through the impositions and restrictions faced by Th.D., the painter in *Agamemnon's Daughter*; Tahsin, the poet in *The Traitor's Niche*; and, Rudian Stefa, a playwright in *A Girl in Exile*.

Besides, subjects are implicated by the power apparatus to such an extent that they are left docile, thereby, serving as the functional units of the larger machinery of power just as the characters like Mark-Alem in *The Palace of Dreams*; Linda B. in *A Girl in Exile*; Xheladin in *The Blinding Order*; and Gjorg in *The Broken April* function as the cogs and wheels of the larger system. Therefore, it results in the alteration of subjectivity. Finally, considering their vulnerable positions in the echelons of the power structure, even the oppressors or the powerful are implicated by the power dynamics. It is manifested through the character depiction of Cheops in *The Pyramid*, Ali Pasha in *The Traitor's Niche*, the vizier in *The Palace of Dreams*; and, the king Agamemnon and Suzana's father in *Agamemnon's Daughter*. Thus, while unfolding the relationship between power and subjects, it becomes clear that the suppressor as well as the suppressed, the killer as well as the killed, the sacrificer as well as the sacrificed, all are played upon by the exchange of power dynamics.

Moreover, being elevated in culture, the concept of manhood also plays a significant role in the formulation of the subjectivity of men in a particular cultural setting. In the pursuit of manhood, men are bound to follow the standards set by hegemonic masculinity which may at times manifest in their behaviour that is undesired and terrible. For instance, in *Broken April*, Gjorg, in the pursuit of maintaining the honour of his own self as well as that of his family, in the eyes of their community, resorts to violence by murdering Zef. His readiness to take revenge, for the sake of his honour, affirms his manhood in his community. Even Mark Ukacierra, in order to validate his manhood, in the eyes of the prince, employs various methods for the propagation of the ideology that help in the continuation of blood feuds and hence serve his purpose.

Furthermore, on a larger scale, the validation of manhood may manifest itself in the forms of warfare, bloodshed, and violence at a large scale. The men set on the war in *Agamemnon's Daughter* are expected to possess physical strength alongside stony hearts devoid of emotions associated with femininity. Even Agamemnon sacrifices his own daughter in order to prove his masculinity among his troops. Similarly, in *Traitor's Niche*, the pursuit of manliness results in the decapitation of various pashas and viziers- the representative ones being Ali Pasha and Hurshid Pasha.

Moreover, violence and manhood are related on a global as well as a personal level. The fear of insecurity, in terms of their gender identity, gets expressed in the form of men's toxic, violent, furious, and controlling behaviour within their domestic spheres. This in turn results in the suppression of women at the hands of men who are unable to validate their manhood in the public realm. The anguish of Rudian Stefa because of being emasculated by the excessively oppressive regime is articulated in the form of violence in his private life when he hit his girl-friend. In addition, the inability to exhibit manhood in the public realm may result in certain aberrations in the sexualities of men. Tundj Hata's paraphilic

behaviour as well as Abdullah's loss of sexual potency followed by his loss of mental sanity go hand in hand with the same inference.

One more objective of the research work, that is, to study myths, folklore, legends, and politics of plausibility in the select novels of Ismail Kadare, has been majorly accomplished in the fourth chapter titled "Cultural Constructs and the Politics of Plausibility". Encompassing various concepts including belief systems, rituals, customs along with myths, folklore, and legends, cultural constructs in relation to the politics of plausibility have been evaluated herein. In addition to the cultural constructs discussed in the chapter mentioned above, the concept of gender is also viewed as a product of cultural construction. Keeping in view its crucial role in the social hierarchy, the fourth chapter titled "Hegemonic Masculinity and Social Hierarchy" has also helped in the accomplishment of the above-mentioned objective of the thesis. It has analysed the role of norms, constructed on the basis of gender, in stabilising and maintaining the structure of dominance and subjugation in a particular society. As such, the study has deduced certain inferences and outcomes some of which are enumerated in the following section.

To begin with, it has been deduced that instead of being discrete in nature, archetypal and mythical identities are cultural constructions. Through repetitive representations, these constructions have embedded into the matrices of power. The pharaoh Cheops mentioned in the narrative of *The Pyramid* serves as an archetype and symbolises a tyrant who in the pursuit of power and supremacy puts up a whole massacre. Besides, mythology provides archetypal significance to different rituals and practices of a particular culture by persuading people of its logic through interpellation. For instance, the allusion to the sacrifice of Iphigenia symbolises the ritual of sacrifice that has been practised for ages and even continues in the modern era; although in varied forms.

In addition to this, the practice of sacrificing their dear ones has been carried on by powerful rulers in order to provide a plausible narrative to the masses that there would be no pity for anyone else either. Following the precedent set by Agamemnon, Suzana's father sacrifices her love life for the sustenance of his power position. Similarly does Stalin sacrifice his own son, Yakov. In this way, people yield to the ideology that demands them to give up their rights and needs.

It further throws light on another aspect of the icy machinery of power structures, that is, the concept of nationalism is used to justify the subjection of people to various controlling impositions. In addition, religion being one of the predominant and reliable parts of a culture's belief system, is also used to justify and give meaning to unjust acts, exemplary penalties, and the use of terror by despotic rulers. For instance, in *The Blinding Order*, mass blinding of people is carried out using the justification supported by religion.

In addition, for sustaining and prolonging their stay in the power structures, the powerful need to launch different methods for exhausting the masses by consuming their energy and keeping their eyes off the powerful position enjoyed by the ruling ones. Likewise in *The Pyramid*, Cheops launches the project for the building of a colossal pyramid, so that, it could destroy the body and soul of the people, without being of any use to the latter.

Even more, the study triggers the intellect to question the origin and reliability of legends, ballads, and folklore which evolve in a particular culture in due course of time, and eventually, get embedded in the belief system of the people, thereof. The same is depicted in *The Three Arched Bridge* through a dissident perspective as the origin of the legend of immurement is described as a narrative build for hiding heinous crimes and murders. Therefore, in order to consolidate, enforce, transmit, and preserve the built meaningful world over generations, normative behaviours and other socially acceptable

ways of conduct are sanctioned by the culture. Moreover, in a particular cultural setting, different ideologies, plausible patterns, and conditions are usually created by the dominant forces of the society wherein they justify to secure and ensure their existence through the means of different cultural constructs such as religious beliefs, myths, folklore, and legends. Conforming to the same notion, in *Broken April* it is highlighted how the legendary nature of the Kanun helps it maintain the blood-feud mechanism and the blood merchandise without getting questioned.

In addition, while examining the select fiction of Ismail Kadare, different patterns of hegemonic masculinity present in various cultural settings have been delineated and the role of the same in helping the ruling class to establish and maintain its domination has also been highlighted. In social as well as political spaces, the characters attempt at asserting their masculinity by subjugating the women as well as the weaker section of men. It is further attained either by demeaning the female characters by objectifying their bodies and sexuality or by overlooking their existence. The way how female characters are not supposed to have significant involvement in social, cultural, and political aspects of life furthers the significance of hegemonic masculinity. As such, the exaltation of masculinity helps them to stabilise a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order and social hierarchy as a whole.

Besides, the subjugation of women is crucial to the sustenance of masculinity because it is rooted in man's threat of being encroached upon by their subordinate gender. The regulations regarding the dressing of women set by the Ottoman regime as highlighted in Kadare's texts go in the same vein. Also, the ideals determined by hegemonic masculinity expect women to exhibit readiness to sacrifice their own desires for the opposite gender. Suzana complies with his father's wishes and sacrifies her personal desires for maintaining his power position.

Hegemonic masculinity results in the objectification of women, in terms of their sexuality, as is highlighted through the analysis of the sexuality of the female characters, like Vasiliqa, Suzana, and Hensten, at the hands of men. The roots of hegemonic masculinity being deeply intricated into the collective consciousness results in its articulation through language whereby derogatory labels and terms are associated with femininity; it further results in the subjugation of women.

Another of the three objectives of the thesis has been to trace dissidence as an emerging social and political will in the select novels of Ismail Kadare. The objective has been achieved in all the three chapters mentioned in the preceding discussion. The term *dissidence* used in the research work goes in accordance with Alan Sinfield's connotation of the same wherein he distinguishes it from *subversion* by arguing that the latter implies that something has been subverted while the former refers to an ongoing contest which in most of the cases appears to have been contained, but still, has some tendency to make the dominant lose its ground at some point of time. The present study has explored that the characters of Kadare's narratives are not successful in subverting a dominant system but some of them do carry dissident ideas or intentions, in the least. Thus, asserting the point that the contest, though contained for the moment, shall be continued, eventually making the dominant lose its ground and the subordinate hold its position. Kadare through his narratives, highlights the faultlines in the system which might lead to a tendency of giving rise to subversive elements, though not strong enough to withstand containment.

In the study, it has been explored that Kadare's select fiction specifies dissident elements present in the political, social, and cultural domains of various power structures. The dominant system's resorting to the use of coercive or ideological strategies for the containment of rebellious elements makes it obvious that a will for dissidence does reside within the layers of different hierarchical structures of a particular social order; that is what

threatens the power positions of the dominant authorities. Both in *The Palace of Dreams* and *The Blinding Order*, the threat posed by the Qyprili family on the empire headed by the Sultan signifies the will for dissidence germinating within the echelons of power. In *Traitor's Niche,* the oppressive strategy of displaying the heads of decapitated pashas and viziers hints at the continuous attempts of dissidence, howsoever unsuccessful, in the political order. Both Uncle Kurt and Mark Alem in *The Palace of Dreams* are subverted by the dominant system: Kurt ends up being assassinated and Mark-Alem's subjectivity is compromised by making him a part of the Tabir Sarrail; however, they symbolise the budding urge for dissidence among the masses. Even in *The Traitor's Niche,* Abdullah after losing his sanity frantically abuses "the offices of state, the sacred monuments, everything, and then he [yells]: I am a rebel, do you hear, cut off my head, cut it off and put it [in the niche]" (196). By doing this he invites his own perdition; but it undoubtedly points up the will for dissidence residing deep in the hearts of the masses, though in suppressed form. Similarly, in *The Three Arched Bridge,* the monk Gjon registers his dissidence through his attempt at unfolding the falsehoods around legends and myths of sacrifice by narrating the stratagems exercised by the powerful using conditions of plausibility. However, before ending his narrative, he suggests his own inevitable sacrifice that his narration might demand.

The research work has also explored various elements present in the narratives of Kadare which express dissidence against the cultural system dominated by the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. In *The Pyramid,* as a reaction to the contradictions created by the unfair division of power, on the basis of gender, Hensten, the only daughter of Cheops, registers her dissidence by building a *female pyramid*. Although it seems insignificant in comparison to the colossal edifice built by Cheops, a symbol of power and masculinity; yet, it affirms the emerging dissident elements that might in coming times subvert the

conditions set by hegemonic masculinity. In *The Broken April*, Gjorg's mere intention of throwing away the *trousseau bullet* into the ravine brings to notice his contradictory opinions concerning the dominant system; thus, making him a symbolic representative of the upcoming generations who might subvert the patriarchal system prevailing in the Albanian mountains. Moreover, Diana, who finally leaves her husband and enters the forbidden tower of refuge registers her dissidence against the authority of her controlling husband as well as against the hegemonic masculine norms; although, it is bound to invite her own doom.

At times, Ismail Kadare has been accused of being a collaborationist because his texts do not openly confront and contest the oppressive Communist regime. However, Alan Sinfield's remarks that "dissidence operates, necessarily, with reference to dominant structures;" as such, in order to oppose the structures, they must be first invoked (47). Even Foucault in *The History of* Sexuality, says there is no "great Refusal," but envisions "a plurality of resistances" which according to him are are dispersed across different time periods and locations, with varying levels of intensity, occasionally prompting certain groups or individuals to take decisive action (qtd. in Sinfield 47).

In dictatorships, it is difficult for intellectuals to survive. Alan Sinfield holds that our conception of "who we are" is intertwined with the notions and ideas that "we have of proper authority and of the potential for dissidence" (*Faultlines* 26). He further asserts that every system of authority requires unwavering "vigilance," and in most of the cases the price of "dissidence may be high. But it is not constructive to suggest that if you try to make the world better you [have to] sacrifice your integrity and probably make things worse" (14). Kadare opts for an alternative to heroic dissidence, unlike the predicament of the dissenting intellectuals in totalitarian contexts. Truthfulness to oneself is preferred over heroic dissidence, which was frequently accompanied by great bodily agony or death.

Ismail Kadare does not take recourse to "suicidal role of the heroic outsider," nor does he support the dictatorship; he decides to make a compromise in order to be able to live and write in Albania (Morgan 307).

His rebellion is not blatant like that of other dissidents who openly refused to submit to intimidation tactics, leading to their imprisonment, harm to their bodily and mental health, and eventual death. However, it is a way of speaking out, refusing to be silenced, and maintaining one's faith in the viability of an alternative to authoritarianism's megalomania. He has written "normal literature in an abnormal country" (Morgan 308). His literary practice in itself has been an act of dissidence. Nevertheless, he still has paid a high price in terms of his personal life due to his not-so-blatant criticism of the authoritative regime. As Kadare was a representative literary figure of Albania at the international level, it was not feasible and appropriate for Hoxha's regime to annihilate him directly. However, he himself claims that his works have been subjected to mutilations, and deficiencies, much like all the creative works produced under panoptic surveillance.

While describing the state as the "most powerful scriptor," (34) Alan Sinfield confirms that it is not possible for cultural producers including, "dramatists, copywriters, and literary critics" to "jump out of ideology, but they [still] do have a certain distinctive power- an ideological power- to write some of the scripts" (14). As such, he emphasises that in order to subvert the dominant oppressive power structure, there is a need to "shift the criteria of plausibility" (34) which can be best done by the humanities intellectuals and literary figures as they can "contribute to the contest to make some stories, some representations, more plausible than others" (26). In a similar vein, Kadare believes that artists have a significant role to play in both assisting the oppressive authority as well as slowing down the cancerous growth of their ideology by creating a counter-ideology.

A condemnation of the artists especially writers, who support and glorify the workings and measures taken by the despotic rulers, by lending air to their vicious ideologies, surfaces through the narrative of Kadare in *The Broken April,* as the doctor remarks that the books and art of such artists "smell of murder" (195). Instead of helping the people to come out of their sufferings, they "help death" and look for exalted themes;" thereby, encouraging "a whole nation to perform in a bloody drama," while they themselves along with their "ladies watch the spectacle from [their] lodges" (195).

Moreover, the narratives of Kadare represent the dictator as the principle of closure, order, death, and control, while the writer serves as his foil, nemesis, and alter ego, speaking of hope, of coming to terms with the past, and of opening to the new future. The spheres of human existence of literature and dictatorship are mutually exclusive, as Kadare himself claims: "A writer is the natural enemy of dictatorship" (qtd. in Morgan 308). As such, literary exile is a possible way to rebel against dictatorship and everything it stands for; no matter how much it is distorted and mutilated.

It needs to be acknowledged that abrupt revolutionary changes are rare as dissident opportunities are limited often resulting in great personal causes. However, it does not end here; as due to the complex nature of society a dominant culture cannot be homogeneous. Pointing toward the layered nature of a society which reflect various "interests within the dominant class (e.g., an aristocratic versus a bourgeois outlook)" and contain multiple "traces from the past (e.g., religious ideas within a largely secular culture)," alongside the "emergent elements in the present," Stuart Hall and his colleagues theorise that such layered society would not be in "open conflict" with the "subordinate cultures." There is a probability for their coexistence wherein by negotiating "the spaces and gaps in it," they eventually, pave their own way, threatening the system from within (qtd. in Sinfield 45).

For that reason, howsoever inevitable a dominant system may appear to be, there is always a scope left for its subversion which ultimately leads to its downfall. There is always a reason for hope; so, the higher the position of a despot is in the pyramid of power, the greater shall be the fall. However, for making it possible the subordinated sections need to come together and unite which could lend them potency to fight against the oppressive rulers. There is no dearth of *rulers*, however, the world is in need of *leaders* who can take out the oppressed from the darkness and guide them toward the light. As the prisoner, bound in chains, while confronting Ali Pasha, retorts by telling him the "simple truth," that is: "Leave off being a pasha, become a leader, and [the nation] will love you. Do it before it's too late" (Kadare, *Traitor's Niche* 113).

To sum up, the study has analysed that power concerning political or social ascendancy is connected to the conceptions of authority, domination, control, and rule. These terms and their implications frequently appear in ideas and dynamics of power and aid in defining power relations. The concept of power is also used to describe the realm of decision-making, hegemonic influences over cultural forms, and the content of ideologies. Its roots can be traced back to antiquity as well. The combined emotional and intellectual elements that made up the power of monarchs and kingdoms are the forerunners of the ideological systems that have persisted throughout history and into the present. From antiquity, the king's authority over the people has been accepted in close proximity to the divine, as has been his power as their head.

Keeping in view the contemporary world, in the relational frameworks of social and political systems, whether they be global, national, or local, as well as affiliations and groups of different kinds, including families, workplaces, and business firms, power can be positioned as one element. Depending on the causal connections between various authorities, power may be relatively concentrated or diffused, and the amount of power

possessed by various people, social classes, racial or ethnic groupings, and other groups may be relatively small or large. Therefore, the exercise of power by one person or group depends on the tactics and actions of other people and groups, thereby establishing interpersonal control among the participants in the power interactions. The different power resources, abilities, prices, and motivations that agents bring to the power play further complicate power relations. In order to limit discussion, debate, and decision-making to the ostensibly safer themes, power holders may also restrict discourse to topics that do not constitute a threat to their interests. It has been assumed that there are a set of dominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional practices that serve as rules of the game that consistently and methodically work in favour of particular groups and people.

To conclude, the mechanisms of economic production, class conflict, ideological structures, and their reciprocal relationships with other forms of oppression all play a role; thus, "[i]nstead of attempting to free each individual from the state and its institutions, the political, ethical, social, and philosophical challenge of our time is to free each of us from both the state and the particular individualization it fosters" (Foucault, "The Subject and Power" 216). The implementation of power redistribution can be started through new communication norms if continued to operate with the purpose of balancing power in all relationships in societal, workplace, political, and interpersonal contexts. What is additionally required is a continuous re-examination of one's thinking, values, and positions in relation to everyone else around them; empathy and ongoing communication of the issues and problems; an open and honest expression of one's thoughts and views; and a sincere effort to uphold peace under all circumstances through the balancing and humanising of power relations. This is the only possible way so that all problems are dealt with critically and creatively resulting in the transformation of the world around us.

In addition, the present world is caught up in a mess of ideological differences and conflicts, in terms of nationality, religion, ethnicity, gender, region, etc. As such, the study in hand is an attempt at providing an objective, critical and deeper insight into the basic dynamics and genesis of the same. In other words, the proper understanding of the present world issues is the basis for the resolution of the same thereof. It is worth mentioning over here that literary works usually do not put forth the resolution of problems directly; they instead portray the issues in an objective and artistic manner. In this regard, the present work is merely a humble attempt at understanding the issues which might pave the way for an amicable resolution of the same.

Although this research work has attempted to analyse Ismail Kadare's select works keeping in view most of the required parameters and aspects needed for the study, however, it is undeniable that there might be certain lacunae due to the limitations encountered during the course of the study. To begin with, the works of Kadare have been translated into English from Albanian; eventually, the cultural, political, and social differences might have made the translated version less efficient than the original one. As such, despite prior documentation and tireless efforts, the translations might be considered less than stellar. Besides, all the works of Ismail Kadare have not been translated into English, thereby, leaving scope for the absent meanings and connotations due to the vast literary creed unavailable to the majority of the readership in the English version. Furthermore, the present work does not claim to be the last and final word on the subject due to its limited range and nature.

It is beyond any doubt that with the changing times dominated by the internet boom, new challenges are emerging in the field of literature as well. The younger generations are taking recourse to Flash fiction or micro-fiction, Twitter fiction, and internet blogs due to which it is getting much easier to spread opinions and unverified information making false

narratives or fake news much more plausible, influencing, and impactful. It is high time that a critical analysis and overview of the process be undertaken, and in this regard, Alan Sinfield's approach of Dissident Reading has the potential to facilitate the critique of the same. Furthermore, considering the wide range of Ismail Kadare's literary works, they can be analysed and evaluated through the lenses of diverse critical theories including Existentialism and Liminality, Psychoanalysis, Surrealism, Postmodernism, and so on.

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List of Publications

Sno.	Title of Paper with Author names	Name of Journal / Conference	Published date	Issn no/ vol no, issue no	Indexing in Scopus/ Web of Science/UGC-CARE list
1.	Archetypical (Mis)Construal of Tradition and the Aspect of Plausibility in Ismail Kadare's *Broken April* (1.Dr. Balkar Singh, 2.Tawqeer Un Nissa)	International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR.ORG)	25-11-2018	ISSN: 2349-5138 E-ISSN: 2348-1269/5,4	UGC Approved
2.	Exploring the Dissident Narrative of Pyramid-Politics in Ismail Kadare's *The Pyramid* (1.Tawqeer Un Nissa, 2. Dr. Balkar Singh)	Shodh Sarita: An International Bilingual Peer Reviewed Refereed Research Journal	29-03-2021	2348-2397/ 8,29	UGC-CARE
3.	Exploring the Traces of Panoptic Surveillance in	Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)	July, 2021	1309-6591/12,8	Peer Reviewed

	Ismail Kadare's A Girl in Exile (1. Tawqeer Un Nissa, 2. Dr. Balkar Singh)				
4.	Interrogating the Narrative of Monumental Insignia and the Proffered Dissidence in Ismail Kadare's *The Pyramid* (Tawqeer Un Nissa)	International Conference on Power, (In)Equality and Cultures of Resistance: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Humanities and Social Sciences organized by School of Humanities and Social Sciences, held at Sharda University, Greater Noida, India,	28th -29th January, 2021	ISBN: 978-93-90818-09-9	Conference Proceedings

List of Conferences

S.No.	Title of the Paper	Name of the Author(s)	Title of the Conference	Date of Conference
1.	Interrogating the Narrative of Monumental Insignia and the Proffered Dissidence in Ismail Kadare's *The Pyramid*	Tawqeer Un Nissa	International Conference on Power, (In)Equality and Cultures of Resistance: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Humanities and Social Sciences organized by School of Humanities and Social Sciences, held at Sharda University, Greater Noida, India,	28th -29th January, 2021
2.	Demythifying Social and Cultural Constructs: A Study of Ismail Kadare's *Broken April*	Tawqeer Un Nissa	International e-Conference on Environment, Literature and Culture organized by Higher Education and Research Society, Mumbai, India	11th -12th September, 2020
3.	Panopticim as a Disciplinary Tool in Ismail Kadare's *A Girl in Exile*	Tawqeer Un Nissa	International Conference on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: Issues and Concerns organized by School of Education and School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab.	25th of September, 2021