

Abstract: *Studies of Albanian literature, particularly in the realm of poetry, generate numerous discussions, especially concerning authors who have been studied with bias or marginalized, either intentionally or unintentionally, during certain periods. There is ample opportunity for reflection and new interpretations, which in turn highlight the need to revive or re-evaluate the creative works of various poets. Bards, who have offered significant literary value to their readers, have often been forgotten or inadequately represented in official institutional contexts.*

*Gasper Pali, a poet who remains understudied, enigmatic, and largely unknown to younger generations of readers, appears to have developed his poetics from an emotive-reflexive perspective. His work transitions rationally from external observations to inner contemplations, revealing a meditative and dramatic state marked by keywords such as the soul, shadows, and dreams. This paper focuses specifically on his published collection of poems *Prendimi i Andrrimeve*, Eng. *Twilight of Dreaming*, aiming not only to interpret his poetry but also to delve into the underlying essence of his work, characterized by longings, sorrows, cravings, nights, and moonlight. The investigation centres on his realm of fantasies and desires, rather than tangible realizations in the physical world. Through textual analysis and interpretation, the unique nature of this contemporary poet emerges. Despite potentially unjust comparisons to Migjeni, who has perhaps overshadowed Pali's poetics, it is crucial to recognize that each poet is distinct in their art, even when their bleak life journeys may show similarities.*

A unique communicative code echoes throughout "Twilight of Dreaming", engaging the poet with his inner dimension. Critics from the mid-20th century (1945-1990) often viewed this approach as indicative of Pali's disinterest in social issues and as an alignment with Italian hermeticism. Both interpretations were at odds with the ideological orientations of the regime, leading to his exclusion from collections of the time. By analyzing and interpreting his poems through a semiotic lens (examining communicative signs), the paper aims at reintroducing this poet to a new audience.

Keywords: *Gasper Pali, poetry, signs (dreams, shadows, soul), poetic identity, semiotics.*

Gaspar Pali's Reception in Albanian Literature (1940- 1990)

The institutional history of Albanian literature continues to face challenges in achieving stabilization, despite numerous proposals and initiatives by researchers aimed at supporting this process. When considering the history of Albanian poetry, the criteria for its construction or models require even greater attention, as poetry is one of the most elaborated genres in our literature. Statistical data from the online catalogs of the National Library of Albania (BKSH), responsible for recording and describing every published title in Albania, indicates that poetry still accounts for the largest share of publications even in the first two decades of this century. In this context, a dedicated historiography of Albanian poetry would elucidate the processes behind literary phenomena specific to poetry and the interpretations and issues concerning individual poets. Focusing on Gaspar Pali, a poet who entered the realm of poetry early and remained a youthful figure in its historicity, we see an example of such a phenomenon.

As a promising poet of the 1930s, Gaspar Pali¹ quickly attracted the attention of critics. Q. Draçini, a critic of that time, wrote: "The poet is a weary traveler in search of a light that would dispel the dense darkness of his spirit. And not a 'faint torchlight,' but a long-lasting and powerful light that responds to his soul's thirst, 'for I need an endless light'" (Draçini, 1995: 80). However, not everyone embraced him quickly, as novelty often meets with scepticism. In the 1940s, scholar Ashta commented on Pali's work: "To some, G. Pali's poetry seems incomprehensible. That is natural. Anything new in literature, any new poetic style, is initially met with indifference". (Ashta, 1942).

This objective perspective was not further elaborated by the criticism in the subsequent years. The poet's early demise, coupled with historical and political changes in Albania, and the establishment of a totalitarian regime that dictated the reception of literature according to predetermined ideological frameworks, resulted in Gaspar Pali's limited recognition. His recognition was mainly confined to a publication in 1959. It was prepared by Nasho Jorgaqi and Filip Ndocaj, presenting a portion of Gaspar's works under the title "Stars above the Abyss." Although this volume brought the poet into the public eye through a notable publication, it cast him as an

1 Gaspar Pali was the youngest child in a large family from Shkodra. He quickly made his mark in the literary field but tragically passed away before the age of 26. Educated within the Franciscan tradition under the mentorship of prominent figures from this school, Gaspar gained extensive knowledge and skills, particularly excelling in music and playing the flute. His academic journey provided him with a solid foundation in philosophy, and he showcased his multilingual abilities during his studies in Florence, Italy.

unfortunate figure in the literary domain by suggesting that he should have been more deeply embedded in the social milieu. The preface contains the following statement: "... In the verses he left us, we find more impressions and lyrical memories than aspects taken from real life for a specific purpose. He is still far away from social issues" (Jorgaqi & Ndocaj, 1959: 11). According to this assessment, Gasper "does not fit well" into the era's prescribed framework of purpose-driven poetry. Even when he somewhat approaches this aspect with the poem "Cradle of Poverty," he does so indirectly.

Regarding the existential questions and personal concerns that permeate his poetry, critics of that period argued that the poet was influenced by various -isms, namely the confused ideologies of the time, and, worse, the negative influence of Italian poets and a sense of pessimism (Jorgaqi & Ndocaj, 1959: 11). Meanwhile the critics before the installation of the regime, such as Kolë Ashta, stated that: "as for influences, Pali was impacted by the "new spirit" primely introduced to Albanian literature by Ernest Koliqi. In one of their usual conversations, when Gasper was a student, he spoke extensively about it (Ashta, K., 1942).

Although there is an acknowledgment of Gasper Pali's artistic demands as a poet, the interpretations and critiques of his verses (Jorgaqi & Ndocaj, 1959:10) have remained rigid, failing to fully embrace his poetic vocation. This critical stance limited the reception of his work by neglecting a deep textual analysis and instead seeking a revolutionary dimension in the poet's social engagement. When Pali's poetry focused on personal, meditative themes and metaphysical exploration, this criticism diminished its significance, dismissing it as unsuitable within the regime's framework of "dignified representations." Such an orientation not only restricted the reception of Pali's poetry but also imposed an ideological interpretation on his texts. This practice stripped the texts of their deeper layers, emphasizing only their social aspects. Elements of hermeticism and pessimism in his poetics were labeled by ideological criticism as limitations. This approach effectively marginalized the profound and introspective qualities of Pali's work, reducing its overall appreciation and understanding of the literary landscape.

Gasper Pali, a talented young poet recognized by M. Gurakuqi, did not gain widespread recognition during the period from 1945 to 1990. This lack of recognition was partly due to the absence of his works in textbooks and anthologies. According to L. Smaqi's study, *although Gasper Pali was not entirely 'denied' during this period and did have some writings published in the second half of the 20th century, the infrequency of these publications and their omission from school anthologies contributed to his obscurity.* Smaqi notes that Pali remained largely unknown to the general readership

due to these factors (Smaqi, 2016: 57-72). The exclusion of Pali's works from anthologies and the limited critical discussion about his literary contributions significantly weakened the readers' connection to him, resulting in his status as an unknown and neglected poet.

"Revoicing" and Re-reading Gasper Pali

After the 1990s, the collapse of ideological interpretative frameworks led to a reconsideration of excluded, censored, and misread authors in literary studies. In the case of Gasper Pali, however, few researchers have shown interest in his poetics, and his body of work remains limited. Researcher Vjollca Osja highlights the need to bring attention to Pali, arguing that his work offers significant premises for reevaluating the history of Albanian poetry (Osja, 2016: 101-102). Osja notes that Pali was not appreciated for his coherence as a poet, nor his introspective profile or his refined and solid forms. In the year 2000, the volume "Bisedë me vedvedin" ("Conversation with Oneself") was published, followed by the monograph "Gasper Pali: Jeta dhe Vepra" ("Gasper Pali: Life and Works") in 2002, edited by A. Çapaliku. In 2015, "Prendimi i Andrrimeve" ("Twilight of Dreaming") was published (Pali, G. 2015). Despite these publications and a few sporadic articles in various periodicals, studies on Gasper Pali remain scarce today.

In the case of G. Pali, a comprehensive analysis has been conducted, culminating in a final assessment. This examination has primarily focused on delineating the discernible characteristics of his poetry. Notably, unjust comparisons have often been drawn between Gasper Pali and Migjeni, leading to a diminishment of Pali's artistic merit. Nonetheless, Pali's thematic explorations, although akin to those of his contemporaries, manifest distinct nuances within Gasperi's oeuvre. His poetry illuminates a concealed inner essence, skillfully articulated amidst shades of darkness, thus rendering his work emblematic of modern poetry's key attributes. As elucidated by Friedrich (2002), these attributes encompass elements such as suggestion, linguistic enchantment, repetition, thematic originality, nuanced treatment, and profoundness, all of which Pali adeptly integrates and conceals within his verses uniquely.

Pali's poetic output is a synthesis of innate talent and erudition cultivated through a specialized education, endowing him with a profound cultural acumen and a nuanced understanding of musical concepts. This amalgamation is evident in the pervasive sense of tranquillity and musicality that permeates his poetry. Positioned as a sensitive poet amidst the tumultuous milieu of a new century, Gasperi's poetic endeavor does not seek to proffer salvation or facile solutions. Instead, it delves into a profound observation of existence's myriad facets—its vastness,

complexity, possibilities, impossibilities, and unattainability. Pali emerges as a poet of his time and a poet in progress. (Elsie, R., 1997: 225).

G.Pali's initial curated collection comprised 16 poems centered on introspection, encapsulated in "Bisedë me vedvedin" ("Conversation with oneself"). This collection serves as a foundational exploration of Pali's poetry from a deeply personal standpoint, distinct from other contexts. The introspective lens is crafted through an imaginative perspective that establishes a significant interplay among *the soul, shadows, and dreams*, forming a cohesive thematic triad. This methodological approach enables a departure from conventional readings and interpretative paradigms. Beyond the scholarly fascination with Pali's human dimension, his brief yet impactful life, and his intriguing intellectual persona, our focus lies in delving into the profound depths and intentional symbols he embeds within his verses.

Gasper Pali's poetic signs

Analyzing Gasper Pali's poetry necessitates a semiotic approach: understanding how his poetic symbols surface and deepen, and how we can interpret them by moving from their referential linguistic meanings towards a hermeneutical understanding. As Rifaterre posits: just as readings are unstable, interpretations are not definitive; thus, they are a game of oppositions and revelations, a 'detour' (Rifaterre, M. 1978:5). He contends that poetry embodies instability through displacement (figurative language), distortion (ambiguity, contradiction, paradox), and the construction of meaning (interpretation). Furthermore, Rifaterre delineates a process wherein a poem's meaning emerges through readings: first, a heuristic reading precedes a retroactive or hermeneutic reading, given that poetry often conveys concepts indirectly. Secondly, he introduces the concepts of the matrix, model, and variant. According to Rifaterre, signs are produced through a hypogrammatic derivation, where the hypogram serves as a system of signs, encompassing statements as long as a text itself (Rifaterre, M., 1978: 23). Activation of the poetic sign about the hypogram occurs when it serves as an extreme variant of the text matrix. The word gains poetic vitality through the hypogram, with its "souponrail" being the surface activation, as the hypogram comprises the potential (implications of the linguistic meaning) and actual (statements and contradictions) aspects. In our analysis, this identification process is paramount, with the matrix representing a series of recurrent keywords crucial for interpretation; the model signifies the alteration of the matrix, while the variant embodies the poetic description. Let's embark on unraveling these signs by exploring the matrix and its transformative potential.

In Gasper Pali's collection "Prendimi i andrrimeve" ("Twilight of

dreaming”), a thematic cluster of poetic expressions emerges prominently, featuring words such as *soul*, *shadow*, *dream*, *dusk*, *twilight*, and *solitude*, among others. These recurrent motifs encapsulate both the strengths and vulnerabilities inherent in Pali’s poetic repertoire. While the extent of Gasper’s potential in poetry remains speculative, his profound immersion in themes of dusk and dreams is palpable.

In the realm of poetry, attempting to elucidate the clarity of the world and the self serves little purpose, as such an endeavor would reduce poetry to mere sensory description, devoid of its intrinsic aesthetic essence. Gasper Pali’s aesthetics are shaped by intellectual contemplation of experiences. He navigates from emotional perception toward analytical scrutiny, abstraction, and the attribution of meaning to abstract concepts. This process mirrors the philosophical notions of Spinoza and later Nietzsche, who posit that abstract concepts often serve as veils and disguises for underlying emotions. Pali’s synthesis of mature thought, rooted in emotional depth and culminating in conceptual abstraction, resonates with this philosophical trajectory.

In the poems comprising the collection “Prendimi i andrrimeve” (“Twilight of Dreaming”), Gasper Pali unveils a poetic landscape characterized by a juxtaposition of light and darkness. These poems encapsulate a range of themes, including the poet’s palpable affection for his birthplace, the city of Shkodra, his experiences of migration during his years as a student in Italy, as well as themes of longing, solitude, reminiscence, and a return to childhood, all intertwined with various emotional states. The essence of Pali’s poetry resonates through a carefully curated selection of words that he deems suitable for their ability to evoke, resonate, and reinforce the themes he explores. The deliberate choice of words, their repetition, and the interplay between them hint at self-awareness within Pali’s poetic process, culminating in the formation of a distinctive personal aesthetic. This interplay among words and their arrangement serves as a playground where meaning emerges, allowing for a rich exploration of signs and their interconnectedness. Like many poets, Gasper also feels a kind of loneliness and opens the play between *soul*, *shadow*, and *dream*, which, depending on the lyrical impulse, chooses to go towards light or darkness. This trinity does not stand alone. It is supported by other complementary signs.

In “Prendimi i andrrimeve” (“Twilight of Dreaming”), both dreams and light play significant roles. Gasper himself embodies a duality of fading and lingering light, exemplified by the metaphorical “Twilight,” symbolizing the coexistence of remaining and departing light embraced by dusk.

Similarly, dreams facilitate transitions between these contrasting states, seamlessly shifting between them. Statistically, the most activated words of this volume allow the identification of the shades of the spiritual states of G. Pali. The following table reflects the frequency of repetition of the poetic signifiers in the mentioned poem collection. This statistical analysis provides insights into the recurring themes and emotional states depicted in Gasper Pali's poetry collection "Prendimi i andrrimeve."

Poems ² / codes	soul	shadow	dream/ -ing	moon	dusk	girl	night	vision	sadness	lips
1. Bisedë me qytetin t'im	1		4		1		3	1	2	1
2. Muzg mërgimi	1	5	1	6	1					
3. Andrrime florentine		3	3			1	1	1	1	
4. Udhash së vetmueme	7									
5. Psalm murgu	5	1			2					
6. Tingllim	1									
7. Natë Shtregllash	1	2		1		2		1		
8. Cordium Donum			1							
9. Prendimi i andrrimeve	1	1	2			1		2		
10. Kanga e poetit	1					1	1			1
11. Vjeshtë						1				
12. Vegim mërgimesh	2		2	4	1			1		
13. Hyjt mbi greminë	2	2	1							3

- 2 The paper's authors translate the titles by preserving formal equivalence (not as literary translation) 1. "Conversation with My City"; 2. "Dusk of exile"; 3. "Florentine Dreams"; 4. "The Journey of Solitude"; 5. "The Psalm of the Hermit"; 6. "Sonnet"; 7. "Night of vibrations"; 8. Cordium Donum"; 9. "Twilight of dreaming; 10. "The Song of the Poet"; 11. "Autumn"; 12. "Yearning of Exiles"; 13. "Stars above the abyss: 14. "Dreaming Heart" 15. "Nights of Shkodra"; 16. "Mornings of S.George", 17. "Cicadas' song"; 18. "Unknown girl"; 19. "Cradle of poverty"; 20. "The death of love"; 21 "Dusk of thoughts"; 22. At Vigile's war: 23. "Swampy voices"; 24. "Hidden Lights" 25. "Florentine dusk".

14. Zemër andërrtare			2							
15. Natë shkodrane		3		2		2				1
16. Mëngjese Shngjergjash			1			2				1
17. Kangë gungallash		1	2							
18. Vashë e panjohun	1	3	1	1	2	4	1		2	3
19. Djepi i vorfën										
20. Zane stuhish (Vdekja e dashunis)	5		4			6	1	2	1	1
21. Muzgu mendët	4	2			3		2			
22. Pranë luftës	1									
23. Zane knetash	3	1		2		1	1			1
24. Dritë të mshehuna	4	1				1				2
25. Muzg Fiorentin	4	1				1				
Total	44	26	24	16	10	23	10	8	6	14

Soul, shadow, dream (and complementary signifiers)

Gaspar Pali's poetry transcends mere self-expression; it evolves into a profound dialogue with oneself, intricately intertwined with self-awareness as both action and reaction. This dialogue delves into the self's interconnectedness with the broader world, navigating from surface observations to profound introspection, particularly through conversations with shadows and dreams that evoke spiritual sensations. The recurring motifs of soul, shadow, and dream in Pali's poetry are consistently activated, playing dual roles through their *presence* and *absence*. This duality imbues specific words, particularly among the top ten most frequently used, with a dynamic strength that fluctuates depending on the poetic subject at hand—be it a fragment of reality, desire, possibility, or impossibility. The interplay between presence and absence generates

an oscillating energy between light and darkness, where light remains veiled within shadows, and shadows find existence owing to the presence of light. This interdependence between light and darkness underscores the complexity and depth of Pali's poetic exploration.

In the poems of Gasper Pali, there is a journey that unfolds between a youthful dreamer, an explorer, and an evaluator of what is most significant to him as both a human being and a poet. This journey is marked by desires and their unfulfillment. These desires emphasize a quest to revive the nostalgia of a glorious city or simply the unconditional love for his city, as seen in the poems "Conversation with my City," "Night of Vibrations," and "Nights of Shkodra." On the other side, the impossibility of turning back time is poignantly expressed in the poems "Dusk of Exile" and "Mornings of St. George." The sadness of exile is palpable in poems such as "Florentine Dreams" and "Yearning of Exiles." Elsewhere, there is deep contemplation in search of clarity when the inner self is disturbed, inspiration is sought, or experiences deepen. This introspection is evident in poems like "Journey of Solitude," "The Psalm of the Hermit," "Twilight of Dreaming," "The Song of the Poet," "Stars above the Abyss," "Dreaming Heart," and "Cicadas' Songs." Through these poems, Pali navigates the complexities of his inner world and the broader human experience, reflecting his profound sensitivity and nuanced understanding of life's intricacies. Gasper Pali's poetry also explores dreamlike experiences, perceptions in solitude, unfulfilled love, and yearning for love, as manifested in the poems "Unknown Girl," "The Death of Love," and "Hidden Lights." These emotional, thoughtful, reflective, and desirous states of mind and mood are crafted through a distinctive stylistic approach. This deliberate invocation of a specific corpus of words serves to create an identifiable authorial poetics.

The concept of the *soul*, mentioned approximately 44 times in this collection, becomes a central dominant in Pali's poetics. The activation of this word across various poems is linked to its profound, hidden meaning. Since Plato, the soul has been regarded as a non-material, non-corporeal substance, an entity that transcends the physical body and belongs to the realms of change and formation, existing both before and beyond death. According to Plato, the soul comprises three parts: reason (the regulator), emotionality, and desire (Platoni, 1999). For St. Augustine, the soul represents the true self of an individual. In later philosophical discourse, it has often been associated with unity with the mind (Descartes) and the self ("the I" in Immanuel Kant). Generally, in philosophy and religion, the soul is perceived as an immaterial unity that possesses the conscious experience and controls emotions, desires, and actions. (Blackburn, S., 2008) . Pali's repeated emphasis on the soul in his poetry suggests a deep engagement with these philosophical and metaphysical ideas, providing a rich, reflective

layer to his work that invites readers to explore the interplay between the material and immaterial, the corporeal and the spiritual. Thus, in its many meanings and interpretations, the concept of the soul transcends the immediate context in which humans live. It is directly connected not only to reason but also to emotions and desires, as well as to the essence of one's being and self-knowledge.

In Gasper Pali's works, the soul is portrayed as an immaterial, eternal, and indivisible presence of the self. Pali's poetry presents the soul through various transformations, sometimes even within the same poem. The struggle is often depicted as occurring within the soul. For example, in "A Journey of Solitude," he writes, *"...The battle takes place with the soul. It seems as though it opposes the superficial... within the soul, a madness captivates me.* Similarly, in "Hidden Light," he observes, *"...without mercy, the storm is ravaging the soul."* Within the soul, there is both clarity and uncertainty, belief and doubt. This duality is evident in lines such as *"within my soul, a thousand doubts beat"* from the poem "Journey of Solitude" and *"... Can a doubtful soul be healed?"* from "The Psalm of the Hermit." Through these verses, Pali explores the complex and dynamic nature of the soul, portraying it as a site of internal conflict and introspection. Emotions lie dormant within the soul, as seen in lines. *.. but I don't know what overwhelms my soul,* but also *passion... because when sin occurs dark comes over* ("Hidden Light"). Similarly, he writes, *..your soul captures me immediately* and elsewhere, *...for in my soul / does the longing for your eyes arise.* ("Unknown Girl").

The soul is often perceived as both a locus of change and formation, undergoing turmoil even within abstraction. As the nurturer of emotions and passion, it can also harbor fear and insecurity. Pali captures this duality with lines like, *...fearing that hopes are nothing / more than flames in our soul,* and concludes poignantly with, *...and the soul remained cold like December dusk.* ("Death of Love"). Through these reflections, Pali's poetry emphasizes the soul's dynamic nature, illustrating how it navigates between emotions, desires, fears, and uncertainties, all while maintaining its core essence. His poetry invites readers to delve into the depths of their souls, recognizing the interplay of light and darkness within.

The soul accommodates sadness and loss, as illustrated in verses like *...in a room, then, the night descends / in my soul* and *...when a fragrance of sadness settles in my soul.* ("Florentine Dusk"). He continues with, *..in my soul, turbulence teases me.* ("Florentine Dusk"); or *...sadness has descended into my soul* ("Conversation with My City"); *...the soul is wounded* ("Florentine Dreams"), and *...dreams disappeared from my soul.* Through these lines, Gasper Pali vividly captures the soul's capacity to harbor and reflect profound emotions of sadness and loss. His poetry poignantly

portrays the soul as a space where emotional turmoil and melancholy are not only experienced but deeply felt, revealing the intricate layers of human vulnerability and introspection. To him, the soul is also the abode of darkness and the measure of depth. This essence is typified in the poetry where ... *The dusk clouds my thoughts / where in my soul dwells both fear and confusion, leading to bewilderment... because when shadows fall from the sky... then a curtain of darkness descends upon the soul... and I see that in my soul, the dusk has already begun, and I carry the night within.* Darkness is also present in "Psalm of the Hermit" with the verses, *Because tonight no light shines, / not even the smallest ray illuminates the soul... it seems as if the soul is a swamp.* Shattering carries a strong intensity even in the poem "Stars above the Abyss," where ...*The soul trembles and the songs vanish from the lips... / where they bright, the soul, as stars above the abyss.* Similarly, in "Twilight of Dreaming," he writes, ...*but a voice from the depths of the soul trembles me.*

The soul is also a source of light and tranquillity, as seen in moments when ...*the soul says: So I need the light* ("Journey of Solitude") or ...*this tranquillity descends upon the soul of the singer* ("Song of the Poet"). In "Night of Vibrations," he writes, ...*immersed the soul like the spring / with a sweet hope filled with joy,* and in "Sonnet," ...*a wave of feelings travels through the soul, bringing joy.* There are also moments when, after the darkness of the soul, a change comes, or at least the hope for change, as in the poem 'Psalm of the Hermit': ...*(God) makes each person find their own truth / and the soul is clear as the April sky.* So the soul becomes a vessel for hope, joy, and calm. This duality enriches Pali's portrayal of the soul, emphasizing its complex nature and its ability to hold both profound darkness and transcendent light.

Shadows are a recurring motif in Gasper Pali's poetry, appearing approximately 26 times throughout the volume. Usually, we perceive shadows as the absence of light, created when light is obstructed by a three-dimensional object. Consequently, shadows are not entities themselves but rather a result of the interaction between light and objects, contributing to the play of light and dark. From a broader perspective, shadows have been traditionally perceived as illusions and representations of unreal visions of reality within human culture. In psychological terms, they are often associated with facets of the personality that may remain unrecognized or hidden from conscious awareness. Considered non-material, shadows symbolically occupy an intermediate space between light and darkness, between good and evil. They embody the inner conflicts and struggles within human beings, representing the complexities of the human psyche and the constant battle between opposing forces.

In Gasper Pali's poetry, *the shadow* is not a constricting entity but rather

a multifaceted symbol that represents voices, reaching into the depths of the unconscious and embodying a formative and complementary aspect of being. It serves as a medium of communication, a source of inquiry, and a potential guide for the poet. Through dialogue with the shadow, Pali engages in an introspective process, exploring unknown facets of the self and constructing an alter ego within his poetic universe. The shadow, when placed in darkness, becomes complementary to light, offering the poet insights or aiding in the clarification of his thoughts. For example, in the poem "Stars above the Abyss," the shadow is depicted as murmuring, suggesting a subtle yet profound influence on the poet's contemplations. Similarly, in "Shkodra Nights," the ray of light embodies both shadow and light, symbolizing the nuanced interplay between contrasting elements. In certain instances, such as in the poem mentioned where "shadow falls from the sky and becomes curtains in the soul," the duality of soul and shadow takes on a particularly potent significance. This duality underscores the complex and dynamic nature of human experience, where light and darkness, soul and shadow, intertwine to shape our understanding of the world and ourselves. In the poem "Dusk of Exile," the shadow is not merely a symbolic presence but rather a tangible reminder of detachment and estrangement. It serves as a catalyst, prompting the poet to embark on a search for the lost fragments of his past. The lines *...tear your eyes from the books, come out as you used to, as a child...* indicate a yearning to reconnect with a simpler, more authentic self, urging the poet to break free from the confines of solitude and rediscover a sense of familiarity and belonging. In "Psalm of the Hermit," the shadow takes on a deeper significance as it penetrates the poet's heart, symbolizing a profound personal connection and introspection. This imagery suggests an intimate exploration of inner emotions and spiritual contemplation, where the shadow becomes a conduit for self-discovery and introspective revelation. Similarly, in "Journey of Solitude," the poet embarks on a quest for self-understanding and spiritual enlightenment, navigating through themes of loneliness and introspection. Here, the shadows intertwine with the poet's essence, representing both the echoes of the past and the uncertainties of the present. The poet finds himself caught within the complexities of solitude, grappling with the dualities of existence and the search for inner harmony.

In Gasper Pali's poems, variations of the word *dream*, such as "dreams," "dreaming," or "dreamer," appear approximately 24 times throughout the volume. These repetitions establish a nuanced and potentially contradictory relationship between reality and desire within the thematic fabric of the poetry. In each instance, the concept of a dream is situated within the realm of the intangible and the abstract, often realized through

symbolic imagery that necessitates interpretation through metaphor and metonymy. This portrayal suggests that dreams possess an independent existence within the world of the unconscious, often reflecting personal projections and innermost desires. Throughout Gasper's poems, the poetic play of the word "dream" is predominantly associated with notions of desire and impossibility, evoking a sense of longing for the past and imbued with shades of nostalgia, an intricate interplay between imagination and memory.

In Gasper Pali's poem "Bisedë me qytetin tim" ("Conversation with My City,") the title holds deeper significance beyond a casual exchange; it encapsulates a life journey marked by both glory and personal sorrow. The poet finds himself entrenched in this dialogue, hoping to resurrect a dream that has faded over time. *Thus, the misery of noon wells up with dreams,/ for you and me, Shkodra, are fond of dreams* The poem intertwines the misery of the present with the nostalgia of dreams, highlighting a shared fondness for dreams between the poet and the city of Shkodra. Similarly, in "Dusk of Exile," dreaming is associated with childhood—a time now distant yet sought after as a refuge to rediscover what is missing in the present. The imagery in "Florentine Dreamings" connects dreaming with notions of beauty and love, evoking a sense of longing and desire. In "Twilight of Dreaming," dreaming takes on multifaceted meanings, encompassing both wandering and a reconnection with reality. The poet navigates through lost dreams amid wanderings, seeking to reconcile truths rather than dwell on what has already passed.

In Gasper Pali's poetics, the dream holds a transformative power where one can immerse oneself completely, escaping into its intangible and timeless realm. However, this dream can also elude the poet at times, slipping away despite their fervent grasp, as depicted in the poem "Dreamy Heart" ("Zemër andërrtare"). Here, the dream represents a fleeting and elusive essence that tantalizes yet remains just out of reach. In "Cicadas' Songs" ("Kangë gungallash"), the dream takes on a different guise, symbolizing the loss of power within memories. It appears and disappears amidst a play of silence and noises, highlighting the ephemeral nature of dreams and their transient presence within the realm of memory. Similarly, in "Death of Love" ("Zane stuhish"), the dream embodies the projection of a love that is ultimately lost, underscoring themes of longing, nostalgia, and the inevitable passage of time.

Gasper Pali's poetic exploration is not limited to the codes of *soul*, *shadow*, and *dream* alone; it is complemented by several other signifiers that enrich the depth and structure of his poetry. One such complementary aspect is the connection between his themes of dream and dusk with ambiguity and indeterminacy. This ambiguity serves to nourish both concepts, much

like the role of memory in shaping our experiences and perceptions. In Pali's poetry, dusk, and dream are imbued with a sense of ambiguity, representing a blend of curiosity, mystery, and continuous discovery. *Dusk*, with its inherent ambiguity, evokes a curiosity to explore the unknown and discover the mysterious elements concealed within the transition between day and night. Similarly, the dream embodies a search for meaning, a continuous journey of discovery and effort that unfolds within the realm of the internal and the personal. The semantic indicators within Gasper Pali's poetry carry dual directional signs. Dream, night, sadness, wandering, and dusk are codes through which his poetry communicates. Thus, dusk seeks to encompass both day and night in an intermediate feeling. One implies the dream, dreaming, dreamer, therefore the dream is a process and state as part of the internal, conclusion, personal—a variation of desire. The other implies sadness, darkness as an absence to sign—reflecting the loss of past joys and the wandering of emotions. Dusk, in particular, serves as a bridge between day and night, encapsulating an intermediate feeling that resonates with the inherent ambiguities of life and human emotions.

In Gasper Pali's poetry, alongside the central codes of soul, shadow, and dream, other key indicators such as the *moon*, *vision*, *the girl*, and *lips* play equally significant roles in shaping the thematic richness and emotional depth of his poetics. The moon, for instance, emerges as a recurring motif symbolizing nostalgia, longing, and a sense of distance or rejection. In the poem "Exile's Dusk" ("Muzg mërgimi"), the moon is portrayed as a distant entity that no longer smiles at the poet as it did in childhood, reflecting a loss of innocence and connection with the past. *But the moon no longer smiles at me like it used to when I was a child.* Childhood memories, often associated with the birthplace, evoke a strong sense of longing and nostalgia, creating a mental journey through time that reimagines past events from a new, often bittersweet perspective. There is no more chance to run the kites, as he used to do when he was a child.

Vision another significant indicator, represents a journey of introspection and exploration within Pali's poetry. It signifies a quest for meaning, a search for one's identity and place in the world, and the complexities of human experiences. *The girl* and *lips* serve as evocative symbols of love, desire, and intimacy, adding layers of emotional depth and sensuality to the poetic narrative. These symbols contribute to situations of yearning, loss, and the transient nature of human connections. In "Florentine Dreams," the interplay between shadow and dream underscores the interconnectedness of these themes within Pali's poetic universe. Shadow represents ambiguity, mystery, and the hidden aspects of the self, while dream embodies aspiration, imagination, and the pursuit of inner truths. Overall, these indicators—moon, vision (imagination), girl, lips, shadow,

and dream—contribute to the intricate tapestry of emotions, memories, and experiences woven throughout Gasper Pali's poetry, enriching the reader's engagement and understanding of his profound explorations of the human condition. Certain poems are crafted around the amalgamation of soul, dream, and night, while others are shaped by the particular emotional states or inspirations experienced by the poet. These include a yearning for Albanian nights, finding inspiration in the dusk, utilizing the imagery of a leaf, harnessing the energy of the moon, exploring the mystical presence of a fairy, and expressing a tender desire to kiss the girl of his fantasy, among other themes and motifs.

Between light and darkness

There is an interesting outcome based on the combinations of keywords in the poetry of Gasper Pali. Some poems begin and conclude with a fervent longing for transformation and a hopeful outlook toward change. Conversely, certain poems depict somber closures, conveying a sense of stagnation and an absence of visible illumination, yet with an underlying faith in an unseen 'light' or force that may reside within the realms of the soul and dreams.

Closures with Light

The poetry of Gasper Pali often contains themes of hope and aspiration, where light symbolizes optimism and potential transformation. In the poem "Conversation with my City," the poet maintains hope for revitalizing a once glorious city, or at least envisions a return to its former glory. Similarly, in "The Journey of Solitude" light is transient, appearing through fireflies yet proving insufficient, ultimately prompting the poet to seek illumination within oneself. *Outside, you search for light in vain, poor man,/ up your eyes, search for it once in your soul.*

The poem "Night of Vibrations" exudes hopefulness, depicting a city that awakens from slumber, its residents, and surroundings bursting with vitality like blooming flowers. *...the city doesn't stay asleep for long,/ The bell rings all around,/ The awakened residents and other beautiful flowers, like/ as usual blooming at the door.*

In "Dreamy Heart," the poet portrays a desire to remain in a state of paradise-like happiness, reluctant for the dream to end. *The dream vanished diving in the expanded sky/ little chimney's smoke melted away/ I closed my eyes, for the dream that appeared/ I wanted there to stay.* This sentiment is echoed in "The Unknown Girl," where the mystery of femininity ignites the protagonist's energy and emotional fervor, signaling a desire for change or heightened emotions. Contrastingly, "Twilight of Dreaming" reveals a shift

towards realism and action, suggesting a departure from mere dreaming to proactive engagement with reality. ...*Voice signals me: sing for the time,/ voice tells me: sing to the truth.*

The poem "Song of the Poet" encapsulates the bittersweet nature of existence, balancing moments of joy with inherent pains. This interplay between light and darkness is also evident in "Shkodra Nights," where sweetness is found amidst nocturnal beauty, highlighting the poet's ability to find solace and inspiration even in the night's embrace. *Shkodra may you be praised/ .../ why the sweet nights, the girl knows how to sing.* Finally, in "Stars above the Abyss," the verses serve as both solace for sorrows and illumination for the soul, akin to stars piercing through the darkness of despair. ...*verses soothe the sorrows, / as they illuminate the soul, as stars above the abyss.*

Closures lacking Light

(*The impossibility to change*) Gasper Pali's poetry also delves into themes of desolation and the inability to effect change, where darkness symbolizes a sense of stagnation and emotional weight. In "Exile's Dusk," the poet grapples with the impossibility of returning to the past, facing the stark reality of irreversible loss. Similarly, in "Florentine Dreamings," there is a palpable powerlessness in confronting death and the void it leaves behind, accompanied by a profound feeling of emptiness and sorrow. One feels the sadness of the exile... *no one sings for me in exile.* In "Dusk of Thoughts" ... *I have the night in my soul/ I have the night outside me.*

The poem "At Vigile's War" metaphorically portrays the relentless search for illumination among souls yearning for light, yet encountering continuous obstacles ...*now another flame/ searches the souls thirsty for light....* Lastly, in "Mornings of St. George," there is a lamentation over lost dreams and vanished hopes, reflecting on the disappearance of guiding stars and the onset of a bleak dawn. ... *no longer can I dream/ why did my star vanish and dawned...* These poems collectively emphasize the theme of unyielding darkness and the struggle to find light or hope amidst overwhelming circumstances.

There are other poems without light but include faith and prayer, such as: "The Psalm of the Hermit", *Because tonight there is no light/ not even the smallest light to nourish the soul,* and in the end, light is sought in the verses, *God bless the eyes with light/ and the lips with joy.* The interplay of light and darkness, appearance/disappearance; yearning/dusk, night, and the loss of shadows, manifests a profound exploration of emotions and themes. This dynamic interplay moves seamlessly between the real and the imperceptible, the tangible and the hidden, thus, from this play between semantic signs, the reading of Gasper Pali's poetry receives light.

The imagery of shadows, the soul, and dreams in Gasper Pali's poetry is complemented by elements like the moon, dusk, and the girl, which collectively sustain a world of immateriality in a stable and desirable state. *The girl*, embodying the erotic core of his poetry, is portrayed as a figure of secrecy and mystery (Pali, G., 2015:7). She illuminates the poet's soul, sometimes with a dimmed light, other times with a visible or mysterious glow.

This poetics, comprised of such communicative codes, delves into the depths of the self, encompassing memories, longing, childhood, and unfulfilled yet desired love. Ultimately, it is an introspective dialogue, drawing light from the poet's existence and weaving it into expressions of the soul, dreams, or shadows—elements that are simultaneously present and absent, as complex as the human being who seeks self-rediscovery. Darkness and light nourish each other; both are intrinsic to Gasper. If shadows, dreams, and the soul constitute his essence, then the moon, yearning, and the girl represents his projections, escapades, and fantasies. This interplay between darkness and light, presence and absence, concealment and revelation, creates the "hidden light" within the apparent darkness of Gasper Pali's poetry.

Conclusions

Gasper Pali stands out as a unique poet in Albanian literature, necessitating a reevaluation of his work to move beyond the schematic criticism of the 1945s to 1990s and to address the limited interpretations that followed in the 1991s. This reevaluation aims to reestablish communication between his creative work and contemporary readers.

Pali's poetry communicates through carefully selected words used as codes, identifiable through repetitive structures that define his poetics in a broad semiotic direction, as well as through distinct stylistic choices. Keywords such as *soul*, *shadow*, and *dream* (dreaming) appear to serve as the central codes of communication of his poetry as if to convey to the reader a world constructed through oppositional binaries, such as visible/invisible, creating a dynamic interplay of presence and absence at various levels. In this framework, the invisible profoundly affects his psycho-emotional state, presenting a graspable world for those who can decipher the nuances of shadow, which becomes an integral part of oneself. Pali's poetic universe is one where dreams remain unfulfilled desires, representing both obstacles and hope. This spiritual triangle of soul, shadow, and dream allows the poet to express the burden of sadness, embodied in the imagery of darkness, night, longing, shadow, and the girl. Paradoxically, within this darkness where soul, shadow, and dream interact, Pali's poetic light finds liberation.

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