

Memory as a Narrative of Resistance: On the Narrative of the Self in *Born Backwards* by Rita Petro

Dr. Mirela Shella

*Department of Literature and Journalism, Faculty of Humanities, University of Elbasan "Aleksandër Xhuvani",
Albania*

Abstract

This paper examines the novel *Lindur së prapthi* (*Born Backwards*) by Rita Petro through the lens of feminist theory and memory studies. At its center is the first-person narration, interpreted as an act of *écriture féminine*, in which the voice of an Albanian girl—a—female subject “born backwards”—is articulated as a form of resistance against the patriarchal symbolic order and the official historical narrative. We argue that in this novel, individual memory, intertwined with collective memory, serves not only as a testimony with autobiographical undertones, but also as a catalyst for the creation of a social memory that emerges in a new, gendered form within Albanian literature.

To give space to the experiences of women excluded during Albania’s communist dictatorship, the novel confronts the personal memory with the collective structures of remembrance. Drawing on the theories of Maurice Halbwachs, Hélène Cixous, and Rosi Braidotti, this analysis argues that *Born Backwards* is a narrative that challenges the conventions of historical literature and traditional autobiography through its fragmentary structure, the figure of the child as narrator, and the writing of the female body as a site of memory and politics.

In this way, feminist memory appears as an act of reimagining history and as a space for inscribing the silenced fates of women, transforming autobiographical narrative into a network of identities and experiences that transcend the individual and embrace the collective.

Keywords: autobiographical fiction, female subjectivity, postmemory, Albanian literature, narratives of resistance, female subjectivity