



Legacy of the Kanun as Cultural Schema: A Linguistic-Anthropological Analysis for Contemporary Albanian Social and Heritage Education

Anisa Kosteri^{1*}, Karmen Lazri¹

¹University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania

*anisa.kosteri@unishk.edu.al

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Abstract

This study presents a linguistic-anthropological analysis of Father Fabian Barcata's novel *Lule* (1924) as a historical ethnographic source for understanding the enduring legacy of the *Kanun* in contemporary Albania. The paper reframes the novel from a purely historical artifact into a pedagogical tool for social and heritage education. It addresses a critical gap in current research by examining how the cultural schemas of honor (*nder*), gender, and justice, embedded in the *Kanun* and vividly depicted in the novel, continue to inform modern social attitudes and present challenges for civic education. Through a critical discourse analysis of Barcata's narrative, the study demonstrates how historical literature can be used to deconstruct and critically assess the persistence of traditional norms. The findings argue that engaging with such texts in educational settings is crucial for fostering cultural memory, promoting gender equality, and navigating the complexities of legal pluralism in a post-communist society that aspires to European integration.

Keywords: linguistic anthropology, Kanun, cultural memory, heritage education, gender norms, legal pluralism, social schemas, post-communism

1. Introduction

In post-communist Albania, the tension between state-led modernization and the deep-seated influence of traditional customary law presents a significant challenge for social cohesion and education. This tension was thrown into sharp relief following the collapse of the Hoxha regime in 1991. The sudden disintegration of an all-encompassing authoritarian state control created a profound institutional and moral vacuum, particularly in the northern regions where the state's presence had always been historically weaker. In this void, the *Kanun*, the ancient unwritten legal code,

experienced a dramatic revival not as a complete legal system, but as a set of potent cultural scripts for managing disputes, especially those concerning property and honor (King & Vullnetari, 2020). This phenomenon revealed that decades of state-enforced atheism and modernism had suppressed, but not eradicated, the underlying cultural grammars that had governed social life for centuries.

While the unwritten legal code is no longer formally practiced, its underlying cultural schemas, the cognitive frameworks that shape perceptions of honor (*nder*), gender roles, and extra-legal justice, persist in social attitudes and behaviors, often in conflict with state law (Gjipali, 2021). This persistence raises a critical question for social science and education: How can a society critically engage with a cultural heritage that contains both valuable traditions of solidarity and deeply problematic norms, such as those sanctioning gender-based violence and blood feuds?

Current scholarship often examines the Kanun's legacy through sociological or legal lenses, focusing on its contemporary manifestations (Marsico & Pjeta, 2019). These studies provide invaluable data on the present-day impact of these norms, often linking them to challenges in establishing the rule of law and achieving gender equality. However, they often treat the Kanun as a static set of historical rules, sometimes overlooking the dynamic and linguistic ways in which its worldview is reproduced and transmitted across generations.

There is a significant research gap in exploring how historical-ethnographic sources, particularly those rich in linguistic and narrative detail, can be utilized within an educational framework to address this complex legacy at its root. This paper seeks to fill that gap by analyzing Father Fabian Barcata's novel *Lule* (1924), a unique ethnographic account of life under the Kanun at the turn of the twentieth century.

This study moves beyond a purely historical description to address the following research problem: How can the linguistic and anthropological analysis of a historical text like *Lule* provide a pedagogical model for deconstructing the cultural schemas of the Kanun and fostering critical cultural memory in contemporary Albanian education? We argue that by using such texts, educators can create a safe yet challenging space for dialogue about the evolution of Albanian identity, the historical roots of profound gender inequality, and the challenges of building a civic society where state law holds universal primacy.

This approach shifts the focus from a romanticized or wholly condemned view of the past to a critical, nuanced understanding of its complex and often contradictory influence on the present. This paper will first outline the theoretical and methodological framework underpinning our analysis. It will then proceed to a detailed critical discourse analysis of key themes in *Lule*, focusing on language, honor, gender, justice, and the collision of legal orders. Finally, it will discuss the profound implications of this analysis for contemporary heritage education, gender policy, and social cohesion in Albania.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design rooted in linguistic anthropology and historical ethnography, treating a literary text as a valid source of ethnographic data, particularly for accessing the subjective worldviews and normative structures of past societies (Hammersley, 2018). The primary source is Fabian Barcata's novel *Lule* (1924) and its canonical Albanian translation by Karl Gurakuqi (1930). The validity of using such a text rests on its "ethnographic realism" its detailed, observant depiction of social practices, linguistic patterns, and cultural logic, produced by an author who was a long-term, embedded observer. Such texts offer insights into the *emic* perspective, the internal logic of a cultural system, that official reports or purely legal documents cannot capture.

Our methodology acknowledges and incorporates a critique of the source itself. We recognize Barcata's positionality as a European Catholic missionary, and part of our analysis involves identifying how his own cultural and religious framework may have shaped his interpretation and representation of Kanun society. This adds a layer of critical reflexivity to our use of the text as a historical source.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The analysis is guided by a synthesis of three interlinked theoretical frameworks, each providing a distinct lens that, in combination, allows for a multi-dimensional understanding of the text and its context.

First, Linguistic Anthropology provides the core tools for analyzing the relationship between language, culture, and social life. We move beyond a simple view of language as a communication tool to understand it as a form of social action that reproduces cultural models or *schemas* (Duranti, 1997). Schemas are not just abstract ideas but embodied, cognitive shortcuts that make complex social worlds navigable and render certain actions seem natural or inevitable. The "honor schema" in *Lule*, for instance, dictates almost automatic, unthinking responses from characters like Marku when faced with a perceived insult.

We expand on this by incorporating the concept of language ideologies, which are the shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature and power of language in the world (Silverstein, 1979). In *Lule*, the belief in the absolute, world-binding power of a spoken oath (*besa*) is a powerful language ideology. This contrasts sharply with modern, secular ideologies where a promise is a moral commitment but not a metaphysical, unbreakable bond. Barcata's text is a rich site for excavating these ideologies, which reveal the fundamental assumptions of a society.

Furthermore, we draw on the concept of performance (Bauman, 1977), which posits that social realities like honor and authority are not pre-existing states but are actively brought into being through ritualized and framed communicative events. The elders' council in the novel is not merely a discussion; it is a formal performance of

judicial authority, marked by specific linguistic registers and interactional rules. The success of this performance is what creates the binding reality of their judgment.

Second, Critical Heritage Studies offers a framework for connecting this historical analysis to the present day. This field views heritage not as a static, objective relic of the past but as an active, often contested, process of meaning-making in the present (Smith, 2006). We approach the Kanun, as depicted in *Lule*, as a form of "difficult heritage"—a legacy that is simultaneously a source of identity and pride (often associated with resistance and loyalty) and a cause of profound social harm (misogyny, violence), requiring critical, rather than purely celebratory, engagement in educational contexts (Macdonald, 2009).

The Kanun is also a prime example of intangible cultural heritage, as its primary mode of existence is in oral tradition, social practice, and collective memory. This framework is crucial because it shifts the analytical goal from mere preservation to critical interrogation, asking how this intangible heritage can be managed in a way that supports contemporary democratic and egalitarian values (Bortolotto, 2017). This is particularly relevant in the Albanian context, where the post-communist "heritage boom" has often involved an uncritical revival of traditions as symbols of national identity, sometimes glossing over their more problematic aspects.

Third, Legal Anthropology and Pluralism provides the concepts to understand the coexistence of multiple normative orders within a single social space. We draw on Sally Falk Moore's (1973) seminal concept of the "semi-autonomous social field," which recognizes that social groups like the highland clans can generate their own binding rules and customs, often in defiance of state law, while still being influenced by it. *Lule* provides a classic depiction of such a field, where the Kanun, not the distant Ottoman or later state law, holds true legitimacy for its members. Understanding this historical reality is essential for analyzing the modern-day persistence of legal pluralism in Albania, where citizens may navigate between state courts for official matters and informal, tradition-based methods for resolving disputes related to honor or family (Duijzings, 2018). This framework allows us to see the characters in *Lule* not as lawless, but as operating within a different, highly structured, and internally coherent legal system.

2.2 Analytical Approach

The text was subjected to a critical discourse analysis (CDA) following the three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough (1992), which involves analyzing the text, the discursive practice, and the sociocultural practice. This approach is superior to other methods for this specific task because a simple content analysis might count the mentions of "honor," but CDA allows us to see *how the concept of honor is constructed in discourse to justify actions and maintain power*. It provides a systematic way to link the micro-level of linguistic choices to the macro-level of social structures.

Our application of this model involved three specific, sequential stages:

Textual Analysis (The "What"). This was the most granular level of analysis. We conducted a close reading of the original German text and Gurakuqi's Gheg Albanian translation, creating a corpus of key terms related to the Kanun's core concepts. For each term (e.g., *nder*, *turp*, *besa*), we examined its collocations—the words that frequently appear alongside it—to map its semantic field. For example, we noted that *nder* frequently co-occurs with verbs of action, defense, and restoration, while *turp* co-occurs with passive states and metaphors of staining or blackening. We systematically analyzed transitivity in clauses describing key events, such as the duel or Lula's punishment, to identify who is grammatically encoded as the Actor (the one doing the action) and who is the Goal (the one to whom the action is done). This revealed a consistent pattern where men are Actors in the public sphere of honor, while women are Goals or Recipients of the consequences. We also examined metaphors, such as honor as a fragile physical object that can be "broken" or a clean surface that can be "dirtied," to understand how abstract concepts were made concrete and tangible for the community.

Discursive Practice Analysis (The "How"). At this stage, we analyzed the novel not as a seamless narrative but as a collection of embedded "speech events," each with its own rules and goals. We identified several key event types: the formal oath, the council of elders' deliberation, the pastoral confession, the family council, and public gossip. For each, we analyzed the "rules of speaking." For instance, in the elders' council, speech is highly formal, turn-taking is rigidly controlled, and arguments must be framed in terms of ancestral precedent. In contrast, the confession between Lula and the priest is private, emotionally expressive, and governed by the rules of Catholic sacrament. By analyzing these different discursive practices, we can see how social life was organized through different ways of speaking, and how characters navigated these different communicative contexts.

Sociocultural Practice Analysis (The "Why"). This macro-level of analysis connects the findings from the first two stages to the broader social context. Here, we asked how the observed linguistic patterns and discursive practices function to reproduce the patriarchal, honor-based social structure of the Kanun. For example, the consistent representation of women as passive recipients of action (from the textual analysis) in various speech events where their fate is decided by men (from the discursive practice analysis) functions to legitimize and naturalize the broader sociocultural practice of female subordination. This final stage allows us to move from description to explanation, showing precisely *how* language works to maintain a specific social order and its inherent power imbalances. We also maintained a reflexive stance, constantly questioning how Barcata's own positionality as a missionary might be shaping the representation of these practices, particularly in his framing of local customs as "superstition" versus the "truth" of his own faith.

3. Author Information and Historical Context

Father Fabian Barcata was an Austrian Franciscan priest, writer, and scholar. Born Moritz Barcata in Tyrol, Austria, in 1868, he served as a missionary in the northern Albanian region of Mirdita during two periods (1895–1897 and 1899–1907) (Dedaj, 2004). His position as an outsider who became a trusted insider provided him with a unique vantage point. To fully understand his work and its significance, it is essential to contextualize him within the broader political and cultural history of the Franciscan mission in Albania. The Franciscans, particularly those hailing from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were not merely religious figures; they were key actors in the Albanian National Awakening (*Rilindja Kombëtare*). This was due in large part to the *Kultusprotektorat*, a policy through which the Austro-Hungarian Empire positioned itself as the official protector of Catholics within the Ottoman Balkans.

This policy gave Franciscan missionaries a degree of political leverage and resources that they used not only for evangelization but also for cultural and educational development (Clayer, 2007). They were pioneers in linguistics, ethnography, and education. Figures like Gjergj Fishta, whose epic poem *The Highland Lute* became a foundational text of Albanian national identity, and Shtjefën Gjeçovi, who undertook the monumental task of collecting and codifying the oral traditions of the Kanun, were Barcata's contemporaries. Barcata was thus part of a vibrant intellectual network of scholar-priests who saw the documentation of local culture as integral to their mission. This dual role as a Catholic priest seeking to evangelize and reform what he saw as brutal customs, and as an ethnographer fascinated by the resilience and complexity of those same customs, creates a productive tension in his work, which our analysis acknowledges and explores.

His service coincided with the final, decaying decades of the Ottoman Empire, a period often referred to as the "long nineteenth century" in the Balkans. State control in remote regions like Mirdita was virtually non-existent. The Ottoman administration operated under the *millet* system, which granted religious communities significant autonomy in managing their internal civil affairs. For the Catholic clans of Mirdita, this meant that the Kanun was not an "illegal" or "underground" system; it was the primary and legitimate source of law for most aspects of daily life, from property inheritance to marriage and criminal justice (Malcolm, 1998).

The society he describes was structured around the *fis*, a patrilineal clan that functioned as the primary unit of social, political, and military organization. Loyalty to the *fis* often superseded all other loyalties. A person's primary identity was not "Albanian" but as a member of the Shala, Shoshi, or another *fis*. This social structure, combined with the rugged, isolating geography of the northern mountains, created the ideal conditions for the preservation and enforcement of a highly localized, autonomous legal code like the Kanun. Barcata's novel is therefore not just a story, but a window into a fully functioning "semi-autonomous social field" on the periphery of a fading empire.

His work can be productively situated alongside other major ethnographic accounts of the period, most notably that of the British traveler Edith Durham, whose 1909 book *High Albania* provided the English-speaking world with its most enduring and influential image of the region. A comparison is instructive. Durham was a remarkable traveler, political commentator, and adventurer. Her perspective was brilliant but remained fundamentally external; she traveled through the highlands, documenting customs, political intrigues, and the spectacular aspects of the culture, particularly the blood feud. Her work is invaluable for its broad scope and political insight. Barcata, in contrast, was a resident pastor. His role was not to observe and move on, but to live with the people, hear their confessions, treat their sick, baptize their children, and bury their dead. This position gave him unparalleled access to the *internal, psychological, and spiritual dimensions* of life under the Kanun.

While Durham documented the "what" of the Kanun—the rules and their violent outcomes—Barcata's novel illuminates the "how" and "why": how the Kanun was experienced emotionally, how its moral dilemmas tormented individuals, and how it coexisted in a complex, often contradictory relationship with Catholic faith in the hearts and minds of the highlanders. It is this focus on the inner life and the everyday moral reasoning of the people that makes *Lule* a uniquely valuable ethnographic document, complementing and deepening the accounts of observers like Durham.

4. Analysis: Deconstructing the Kanun's Schemas in *Lule*

Barcata's novel provides a rich text for a deep analysis of the core cultural schemas that organized highland society.

4.1 Language and the Embodiment of Social Hierarchy

The novel meticulously documents how social hierarchy was performed through language and ritual. Barcata describes how a local man honors a priest: "he bent one knee, placed his right hand upon his chest, and with his left hand... offered him the cup of coffee, saying: 'Please, my Lord!'" (Barcata, 2022, p. 23). This is a multimodal speech act where gesture, language, and action combine to reinforce a social structure where religious figures held immense authority. The power of oral commitment is captured in ritual oaths, such as, "I swear by heaven and earth, by this stone and this cross!" (p. 35). T

his oath is a powerful linguistic act that binds the speaker to their word by invoking the highest authorities available: the Christian god, the pagan earth, and the physical symbols of both. It demonstrates a syncretic worldview where different sources of power are marshaled to guarantee social contracts in the absence of a state judiciary. Barcata also documents the central role of hospitality, which is enacted through a series of prescribed speech acts, from the initial greeting at the door to the ritual sharing of coffee and food. These are not mere pleasantries; they are linguistic performances that establish and affirm social bonds, creating networks of mutual obligation that were essential for survival. The failure to perform these rituals

correctly could be interpreted as a grave insult, a violation of the social order that could have serious consequences. The language ideology at play here is one where words, when spoken in the correct ritual context, have the power to create social facts.

4.2 The Kanun's Trinity: Honor, Gender, and Justice

The narrative is driven by the Kanun's central organizing principles, which function as an interdependent system.

Honor (Nder). The novel portrays *nder* as the ultimate social currency, valued above life itself. It is a collective property of the patrilineal family. The slightest insult could "stain" the honor of the entire family, demanding a violent cleansing. This is vividly illustrated in the internal monologue of Lula's brother, Marku, after his honor is challenged. He is tormented by the thought that his failure to act will lead to public emasculation: "A day would come when some woman would say, laughing, 'Leave the rifle to one more worthy and take the pitchfork in hand to shear the wool!'" (Barcata, 2022, p. 67). The discourse here is crucial: the threat is a speech act that would strip him of his masculine identity. The rifle symbolizes male honor and power, while the pitchfork symbolizes domestic, feminized labor. The fear of this linguistic shaming is what compels him toward violence.

Gender. Lula, the protagonist, embodies the severely restricted role of women. They are the symbolic vessels of family honor but not its owners. Barcata expands this portrayal beyond Lula. Her mother is depicted as a figure of silent, resigned suffering, powerless to intervene against the patriarchal will of her husband and son. In stark contrast is the character of Bora, the "witch." Described as physically grotesque and spiritually malevolent, she represents a different kind of female agency one that operates outside the sanctioned norms of marriage and motherhood. However, this agency is delegitimized and feared, framed as supernatural and evil. Bora's power is illicit, while Lula's powerlessness is virtuous. Together, they represent the two poles of the extremely limited female existence allowed by the Kanun: the silent victim or the monstrous outcast.

Justice. In the absence of state institutions, justice is a private matter, ritually administered through the blood feud (*gjakmarrja*). Barcata portrays this not as chaotic violence but as a highly regulated legal process. The deliberation of the council of elders regarding Lula's fate is a prime example. Their discourse is one of legal precedent and absolute necessity, framing their verdict not as a choice but as the only possible outcome dictated by the unchangeable "law of the ancestors."

4.3 The Collision of Legal and Moral Orders

The novel's climax stages a direct confrontation between two competing legal systems: the law of God (represented by the priests) and the law of the ancestors (the Kanun). The council of elders sentences Lula to be stoned to death. Father Anastasius pleads for mercy, invoking Christian forgiveness: "The Kanun and justice are good, but mercilessness, cruelty, and brutality are grave sins that require judgment before

the throne of God!" (Barcata, 2022, p. 183). The elders' response is unequivocal: "The law of the ancestors must be fulfilled even if a family is destroyed. Your God is in heaven, but our honor is here on earth" (p. 183). The discourse here creates a powerful spatial and moral binary. God's law is distant ("in heaven"), while the Kanun's law is immediate and necessary for survival ("here on earth").

5. Discussion: Implications for Contemporary Education and Social Policy

The analysis of *Lule* serves as a bridge between historical understanding and contemporary application.

5.1 A Model for Critical Heritage Education

In the context of Albania's national education strategy, which emphasizes civic values, Barcata's text is an invaluable pedagogical tool. A pedagogical exercise could involve a structured classroom debate: one group of students could be asked to defend the actions of Lula's brother from within the internal logic of the Kanun, while another group critiques those actions from the perspective of universal human rights. This exercise does not validate the violence but forces students to understand the internal coherence of a different moral system, thereby sharpening their own critical and ethical reasoning. This fosters critical cultural memory, enabling young Albanians to appreciate their heritage without uncritically accepting its harmful elements (Bristol & Hodgkin, 2019).

5.2 The Ambivalence of Heritage: Beyond Condemnation

A purely negative portrayal of the Kanun would be both historically inaccurate and pedagogically ineffective. Its persistence is partly explained by the fact that it also encoded values deeply prized in Albanian culture, such as *besa* (a sacred word of honor, an inviolable promise) and extreme hospitality. A critical heritage approach must therefore be nuanced. An educator can use *Lule* to ask: How is the concept of *besa*, which can be a force for profound ethical commitment, related to the concept of *nder*, which can lead to violence? This encourages students to see culture not as a monolithic block of "good" or "bad" traditions, but as a complex system of values that can be both constructive and destructive.

5.3 Understanding Contemporary Gender Norms

The patriarchal schemas depicted in *Lule* are not merely historical. Recent studies confirm that traditional concepts of honor continue to influence gender relations and contribute to high rates of domestic violence in parts of Albania (King & Vullnetari, 2020; Marsico & Pjeta, 2019). For social policy, this means that interventions against gender-based violence cannot only be legal; they must also be cultural.

5.4 Navigating Legal Pluralism and Social Cohesion

The conflict between religious and customary law in *Lule* is a microcosm of the broader challenge of social cohesion in Albania today. The country navigates a

complex social landscape where state law, religious norms, and the informal "laws" of custom and kinship often pull in different directions. As Duijzings (2018) notes, this legal pluralism is a defining feature of the Balkan social landscape. By studying the historical precedent in Barcata's work, future policymakers can better understand why simply passing a law is often insufficient to change social behavior.

6. Conclusion and Future Directions

This study has endeavored to reframe Father Fabian Barcata's early 20th-century novel, *Lule*, moving it from the shelf of historical literature and into the active toolkit of contemporary social science and education. By subjecting this rich ethnographic narrative to a multi-layered critical discourse analysis, we have sought to demonstrate its profound value not merely as a window into the past, but as a critical lens through which to understand and address the persistent legacy of the *Kanun* in modern Albania. The analysis has shown how the unwritten laws of the northern highlands were not simply a set of rules, but a complete and coherent worldview, powerfully enacted and reproduced through language, ritual, and social performance. The conclusion will now synthesize these findings, explore their broader implications, acknowledge the study's limitations, and propose a concrete agenda for future research that builds upon this work.

6.1 Synthesis of Findings and Primary Contribution

Our analysis has illuminated the intricate ways in which the core cultural schemas of the *Kanun* were linguistically and socially constructed. The primary contribution of this paper is the articulation of a methodological and pedagogical model for using historical-ethnographic texts to deconstruct this "difficult heritage." We have shown that the *Kanun*'s power did not reside in a written text, but in its pervasive presence in the everyday communicative practices of the community.

First, the linguistic analysis revealed that the *Kanun*'s ideology was made tangible and inevitable through specific speech acts. Ritual oaths bound individuals with metaphysical force, proverbs transmitted complex legal and moral principles in memorable forms, and the specific lexicon of honor and shame (*nder, turp*) created a binary moral universe that left little room for ambiguity. This demonstrates that the *Kanun* was, at its core, a linguistic phenomenon, a reality spoken into existence and maintained through constant discursive reinforcement.

Second, the gender analysis moved beyond simply stating that the *Kanun* was patriarchal. It showed the precise grammatical and narrative mechanisms of this patriarchy. By analyzing transitivity, we saw how men were consistently encoded as the active agents of honor, while women were the passive bearers of shame, often grammatically erased or objectified in descriptions of crucial events. The contrasting portrayals of Lula as the virtuous victim and Bora as the monstrous outcast illustrate the impossibly narrow confines of acceptable female identity. This provides a historical texture to contemporary studies on gender-based violence in Albania,

suggesting its roots are not merely economic or social, but are embedded in deep-seated cultural narratives about female agency and honor.

Third, the analysis of legal pluralism highlighted the deep-rooted competition between state/religious authority and local customary law. The climactic confrontation between Father Anastasius and the council of elders was not a simple conflict between good and evil, but a collision of two legitimate, internally coherent, yet mutually exclusive legal-moral systems. The elders' justification for their brutal verdict, rooted in the immediate, terrestrial needs of their community ("our honor is here on earth"), provides a powerful historical antecedent for the continuing challenges of establishing the universal primacy of state law in regions with strong local traditions.

Ultimately, this study's central contribution is to offer a framework for critical heritage education. We argue that confronting the legacy of the Kanun requires more than just teaching its rules; it requires providing students with the analytical tools to understand *how* such a system of belief and practice was able to hold such absolute power, and how its echoes continue to resonate in modern language and social attitudes.

6.2 Broader Implications for Social Science and Education

The implications of this research extend beyond the specific context of Albania and speak to broader debates in social science and education. For Albania itself, the findings are directly relevant to its ongoing process of democratization and European integration. The EU's *acquis communautaire* is not just a body of laws, but a set of underlying values regarding human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law. A society cannot fully integrate into this framework if significant portions of its population continue to operate, even subconsciously, according to the conflicting schemas of a traditional honor culture. This study suggests that civic education initiatives must therefore go deeper than civics lessons; they must engage with the cultural "software" that shapes legal consciousness. Using texts like *Lule* can be a powerful way to initiate this difficult but necessary national conversation.

More broadly, this study offers a model for other post-conflict or post-authoritarian societies grappling with their own forms of difficult heritage. Around the world, nations are struggling with how to remember and teach histories that are fraught with violence, oppression, and traditions that clash with modern liberal values. The method employed here using a historical narrative text as a basis for a critical, discourse-led pedagogy is transferable. It provides a way to confront the past without either romanticizing it or disowning it entirely, fostering a mature and reflective form of cultural and national identity.

Finally, this paper makes a case for the vital role of the humanities in social science education. In an educational landscape increasingly dominated by metrics, STEM, and vocational training, the skills of close reading, historical empathy, and critical

discourse analysis can sometimes be devalued. Yet, this study demonstrates that these skills are essential for tackling some of the most complex challenges facing modern societies. Understanding the persistence of gender-based violence or the weakness of the rule of law requires more than statistical analysis; it requires a deep understanding of the historical narratives, cultural schemas, and linguistic practices that shape human behavior. The humanities, in this sense, are not a luxury, but a fundamental component of any robust program of social and civic education.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

It is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this research to maintain scholarly rigor and guide future inquiry. First and foremost, this is a text-based study. We have analyzed a *representation* of the Kanun, not the Kanun itself in all its historical and regional variations. *Lule* is one man's interpretation, a narrative constructed for specific literary and, arguably, moral purposes. While it is an invaluable ethnographic source, it is not a transparent window onto the past. Future research must continue to triangulate such narrative sources with other forms of historical evidence.

Second, the author's positionality is a significant factor. Father Barcata was a European Catholic missionary, and his narrative is inherently filtered through this lens. His framing of local customs as "superstition" and his focus on the conflict between his faith and the Kanun are products of his own worldview. While we have tried to maintain a critical awareness of this, his biases inevitably shape the data available for analysis. A more comprehensive understanding would require comparing his account with secular or even Muslim perspectives on related customary practices.

Third, this study proposes a pedagogical model but does not include an empirical test of its reception. We have argued for the *potential* of *Lule* as an educational tool, but we have not studied how it would actually be received by students, teachers, and communities in Albania today. Heritage is often a deeply sensitive and politicized topic. It is possible that introducing such a text in a classroom could be met with resistance, either from those who view it as an attack on national tradition or from those who wish to forget this part of the past entirely. The practical application of this model would require careful ethnographic fieldwork and pedagogical design.

6.4 A Roadmap for Future Research

The limitations identified above point directly to a clear and productive agenda for future research. We propose three major avenues for extending this work:

The Pedagogical Intervention Study: The most direct follow-up would be to translate the theoretical model proposed in this paper into a practical, empirical study. This would involve designing a curriculum module for Albanian high school or university students based on *Lule* and other related texts. Using a quasi-experimental design, researchers could employ pre- and post-intervention surveys to quantitatively measure changes in student attitudes towards gender roles, the rule of law, and

cultural heritage. This would be supplemented by qualitative methods, such as classroom observations and focus groups with students and teachers, to understand the nuances of how the material is interpreted, discussed, and contested. Such a study would provide concrete data on the effectiveness of this approach to critical heritage education.

The Comparative Historical-Ethnographic Study: This research avenue would aim to build a more multi-perspectival, "holographic" view of the historical Kanun by moving beyond Barcata's single narrative. This project would involve a comparative analysis of *Lule* with a wider range of sources: the ethnographic travelogues of Edith Durham, the codified version of the Kanun produced by Shtjefën Gjeçovi, the official reports of Austro-Hungarian consuls, and, where possible, oral histories collected from the descendants of the communities Barcata described. By comparing these different representations each with its own author, audience, and purpose researchers could develop a more nuanced understanding of the Kanun not as a monolithic entity, but as a dynamic and contested set of practices that were interpreted and applied in various ways.

The Contemporary Linguistic Ethnography: The final, and perhaps most ambitious, research direction would be to conduct a contemporary ethnographic study in northern Albania, focusing on the persistence of the Kanun's linguistic and cultural schemas. This would involve long-term fieldwork in a highland community, using methods of participant observation and discourse analysis to study how remnants of the Kanun's language and logic appear in everyday life. Researchers could analyze language use in a variety of contexts: family disputes, local political meetings, coffee house conversations, and even social media interactions. The goal would be to directly test the "persistence thesis" of this paper, moving from the historical text to the living speech of today. Such a study could provide invaluable insights into how cultural schemas are adapted, transformed, and sometimes abandoned in the face of modernization, globalization, and state-building.

By pursuing these avenues, the scholarly community can continue to build the vital bridge between Albania's rich and complex past and its dynamic, and often challenging, present.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research

This study is a textual analysis. The next logical step is to conduct empirical research by designing and implementing a curriculum module based on *Lule* in Albanian high schools. Such a study could measure the impact of this pedagogical approach on students' attitudes toward gender equality, civic law, and cultural heritage. Further research could also involve a comparative analysis of Barcata's account with those of other foreign travelers of the period, such as Edith Durham, to build a more multi-faceted understanding of the Kanun's historical application. By bridging historical scholarship with present-day educational practice, we can ensure that the lessons from the past are used to build a more just and equitable future.

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