COMMUNICATING IDENTITIES. LITERATURE AND OTHER FORMS OF VERBAL INTERACTION

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Introduction

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Over the years, the organizers of this conference have showed their interest in (but also their dedication for) the three key-notions featured in the title of the conference. Because *identity, communication* (and even *comparison*) are not only objects of study or methods to apply, but also genuine treasures deserving to be upheld and hailed, either in times of peace and prosperity or in times of social and political upheaval. That is why we could not help but wonder in what way are these undeniably valuable categories threatened by the recent transformations we are confronted with, on a global scale.

Last year, as we all know, everybody's life was turned upside down not only by a new disease but also by the strict measures imposed by national governments at the recommendation of transnational institutions like WHO (World Health Organization). Terms and phrases like *lockdowns, social distancing, flattening the curve* and *the new normal*, have spread like wildfire and rapidly "colonized" the collective imaginary. It has been, around the world, an occasion for a deeper reflection on the fundamentals of the political and social contract. Equally, an occasion for the rethinking of the legitimacy and epistemological foundations of some of the scientific or theoretical disciplines we currently practice. Scholars, writers and artists have searched for specific modalities and techniques whereby to make sense of what they were living, while also striving to find ways of productive and creative resistance, endurance and healing. For example, the *British Comparative Literature Association* (BCLA) proposed to its members, on the website, to reflect on the topic of "Culture and Quarantine", by asking

> "What does it mean to cogitate in gated communities, to think and to write in enforced isolation? […] The question is particularly pertinent for the discipline of Comparative Literature, predicated as it is upon breaking down borders between languages and cultures. In an age in which borders have been re-erected almost overnight, how do we retain intellectual freedom of movement? In an era in which we have all been weaponized against each other, how do we avoid simply retreating to our castles and closing the drawbridge?" (*Covid-19: Culture and Quarantine* – British Comparative Literature Association [BCLA]).

Early on at the beginning of the pandemic we were told that the world "will never be the same again". The mass-media worldwide enthusiastically promoted the idea of a "great reset", which is an all-encompassing project, conceived on a multitude of levels and domains: economic, societal, geopolitical, environmental, technological, industrial, culminating with the very ambitious outline of an "individual reset", based on a strategy of "redefining our humanness" (Schawb & Malleret 2020: 161). The authors, who are very critical of capitalist consumerism and deplore environmental degradation, talk about a post-pandemic landscape which will, presumably, be a better world, more equitable and sustainable. They even refer to "the principle of creativity under duress" (*ibidem*: 179), with examples from literature, from Shakespeare to Pushkin. And they also warn us that "the genie of tech surveillance will not be put back into the bottle" (*ibidem*: 130).

What could possibly go wrong, with such a well-thought plan?

The totalitarian potential of (political) utopia has been recognized by many exegetes: according to Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, the "crisis of contemporary imagination" resides in the effects of a "monopoly of the utopian" (1979: 9). Similarly, Theodore Dalrymple (2001) pointed out that utopian logic presupposes an enemy which must be eliminated, and this feature of the genre has been revealed in the clearest manner by the dystopian imagination of fictional works like Orwell's *1984* or Huxley's *Brave New World*. Some people are afraid that the frame of biosecurity (Agamben 2020) is being used by the "new tech elite" (Brockmann *et al.* 2001) to usher in a totalitarian, leviathanic, technocratic system, which, in eschatological terms, is sometimes termed "the beast-system".

All these sudden and somehow brutal interventions in an otherwise relatively settled collective life (at least in the rich part of the world) could not remain without consequences when it comes to the issue of identity, or self-perception and perception of otherness which, in their turn, represent the very basis of communication. Apart from the justification by medical urgency, are we being depersonalized by the forced use of masks, especially as this practice does not seem to have an end, in the foreseeable future? This very controversial but mandatory use of facial coverings has turned virtually everyone into a potential felon. A "naked" human face is something almost scandalous, in a way in which no one would have thought possible a year before. Conversely, for many people the masks are positive signifiers, conveying or suggesting not only self-protection but also patriotism, altruism, the love for one's neighbor or an inclination towards self-sacrifice.

Will the prolonged isolation have a devastating psychological impact, or will the "crisis of identities" and their "mutations" (Dubar 2003), which scholars have analyzed from so many perspectives, worsen, while most downtrodden citizens of the world (and, as a novelty, even members of the middle class) feel totally stripped of agency? Dismantling traditional social structures might be a deliberate modus operandi in a process of social engineering which appears to take inspiration from alchemy: *ordo ab chao*, *solve et coagula* (cf. Jung 1968). The newest slogan "build back better" could be just the latest variation of these principles. Only recently some

voices began to say that it's "time to question" our unelected and unaccountable "overlords" (O'Brien 2021: 1).

Not much seemed to have changed since one of the initiators of "public relations", Edward Bernays, serenely and cynically asserted that

> "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society" (Bernays 1928: 9).

In this view, individual autonomy appears largely overestimated and overrated. We are now far beyond the flexible or fluid understanding of identity and the self, which was seen, together with otherness, as always under "re-visioning" (Walton & Haas 2000). The "network society" generates the "network economy" and also "network identities" (Barney 2004: 143). But a "network", a "web" or a "system" could not possibly be appropriate replacements for "community", at least as long as the sinister transhumanist utopia (which seems more like a dystopia) does not become reality.

We should bear in mind that, communication as practiced by mass-media is rarely "dialogical" and, more often than not, "monological", primarily due to the fact that it does not allow a "reversibility of discourse" (Lochard, Boyer 1998: 23). The neuroplasticity of the brain bombarded with negativity is certainly threatened by the state of permanent fear and despondency, and by the induced obsessive thoughts, while the cognitive abilities of the public, for instance the solving-problem capacity, are inevitably reduced. The "fear of freedom" (Fromm 2001) itself, in a new guise, could actually be a result of the overconsumption of anxiogenic messages. In fact, freedom seems to no longer be "in fashion", as the cult of *safety* gains momentum.

Should we so easily dismiss people's fears, when the media themselves are sometimes engaging in blatant fearmongering and sensationalizing? Nor is this a recent phenomenon, but seems to be only the culmination of what could be called the bread and butter of some media outlets: controlling and demoralizing the public through constant panic and catastrophic reporting. There is a strong connection between "fear and fantasy" (Araújo *et al.* 2015), and in this way the masses' imaginary world (Wolf 2012), or their ability of "worldmaking" (Goodman 1978) can be authoritatively shaped by those who push certain agendas and narratives: "More than open barbarism, I fear barbarism with a human face – ruthless survivalist measures enforced with regret and even sympathy but legitimized by expert opinions" (Žižek 2021: 4).

The magician of previous eras has turned into advertising or publicity agent (cf. Couliano 1987) but also into the "infallible" and heavily promoted "expert" whose predictive models are at the origin of comprehensive public policies with very real consequences for the most vulnerable people. Ironically, the reign of the "experts" we are not allowed to question coincides with an unprecedented crisis of *replicability*, especially in the field of social studies and medical studies:

> "The world of science is in the midst of unprecedented soul-searching at present. The credibility of science rests on the widespread assumption that results are replicable, and that high standards are maintained by anonymous peer review. These pillars of belief are crumbling. […] Professional scientists' career prospects, promotions and grants depend on the number of papers they have published, the number of times they are cited and the prestige of the journals in which they are published. There are therefore powerful incentives for people to publish eye-catching papers with striking positive results. If other researchers cannot replicate the results, this may not be discovered for years, if it is discovered at all, and meanwhile their careers have advanced and the system perpetuates itself" (Sheldrake 2015: 1).

Under these conditions, it should be understandable that there is a persistent concern for the future of academic inquiry, including in the field of humanities. In the recent period, with the rise and radicalization of the so-called "woke culture", lately metamorphosized into a very disturbing "cancel culture", freedom of expression, and in particular academic freedom (McWhorter 2020) have been more and more put into question.

Apart from the rampant online censorship from Big Tech (and the phenomenon of self-righteous Twitter and Facebook mobs, engaged in virtue-signaling), we should we also be concerned with the fate of literature and culture in general, in a context where the banning of books and movies, even cartoons, becomes part of a new trend. From pointing out problematic aspects in the canon and "decolonizing" the curriculum (Muldoon 2019), things are escalating very quickly to "cancelling Shakespeare" (Harris 2021) because of "white supremacy" and other unforgivable sins (as identified in the catechism of the new political religion of social justice). When scholarship is reduced to activism, the need arises for a more balanced and nuanced approach of the (inevitably) political dimension of culture, for instance from the perspective of classical liberalism (Pluckrose & Lindsay 2020).

Another important element on the recent agenda is increased digitalization. Perhaps more than in previous years, we can begin to assess the impact that the new communication technologies have on our daily lives, as work, school, shopping, entertainment and even some church services have massively moved online. Several decades ago, the Canadian scholar Marshal McLuhan underlined the shaping power of communication technologies (writing and printing, in particular) over culture and collective psychology. After the "making of typographic man" in the context of "the

Gutenberg Galaxy" (McLuhan 1962), is the "making of a digital man" the next logical step? On the other hand, the newer field called "digital humanities" (Burdick *et al.* 2012) has been full of promises, including for the study of literature, by complementing the already established "close reading" with a strategy of "distant reading" (Moretti 2013).

From the ancient clay tablets to the current electronic tablets, the "written world" (Puchner 2017) has registered innumerable fluctuations and transformations which have not remained without consequences in the realm of human history. When libraries suddenly closed, the hope came from digitized depositories, the "libraries without walls" (Mani 2017: 215) which have been already studied for several years. The heritage of previous world culture can offer precious information for the understanding of contemporary challenges: William Marx (2020: 2) explains how literature can teach us about epidemics, by identifying four types of discourses: documentary, semiotic, eschatological, moral. The aesthetics of film (Goss 2021) and the theological discourse (Gaál-Szabó 2021) can offer important lessons about the predicaments of modernity.

In whatever form or medium, we believe in the powers of literature and other forms of discourse to reach minds and sensibilities, to provoke and console, to instruct and comfort, to unsettle and delight. There is no end to the depth of fine literature, but we should not forget that literature is on a continuum with other discursive forms of dialogue or communication:

> "A text is not a text unless it hides from the first comer, from the first glance, the law of its composition and the rules of its game. […] The dissimulation of the woven texture can in any case take centuries to undo its web: a web that envelops a web, undoing the web for centuries; reconstituting it too as an organism, indefinitely regenerating its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading" (Derrida 1981: 63).

Books of fiction can stimulate the readers' creativity in the form of a "core attitude of tolerance for ambiguity", which, interestingly enough, is tightly connected to the many "dimensions of critical thought" (Piirto 2011: 29-30). Artistic creation entails "the emergence of a new reality" (Burgos 2003: 22), characterized by a dynamic symbolism. The most gifted artists often tap into the "spiritual unconscious" (Larchet), which is even deeper than Jung's collective unconscious, the realm of the archetypes. The "new interdisciplinarity" (Parpală 2011) of cognitive sciences and neurosciences can shed new light on literature's and art's complexities and intricacies, often outlining the peculiarities of individual style (Deaconu 2021). The surveys have shown "an increasing rapprochement between literary scholars and cognitive scientists, as well as an effort by these groups to consider human biological universals in relation to specific cultural and historical factors" (Jaén and Simon 2012: 24). Linguists can also attest to the relevance of this approach for the codifications of emotions embedded in language (Csillag 2021).

In accord with the title chosen for this year's collection of articles, we want to provide a space for the unfettered communication of different identities: personal, collective, intellectual, scholarly, ideological. We believe in the possibility of authentic and fruitful dialogue across similar and different scholarly backgrounds, disciplines and interpretive communities.

The contributors come from Irak, Hungary, Romania and The United States (Spain). We have divided the material into: Part I. *Cultural Identity and Comparative Literature* and Part II. *Discursive Variation in Interactions.* Across the two parts, one can notice several common threads uniting the chapters in distinct groups, according to subject matter and methodology. These are the following:

a. Cultural identities

This rubric includes four chapters, which deal with the manifold issue of "identity" in its inextricable relationship with "otherness". Problems of gender, the "imagined community" of the nation (or the Empire) and theological implications of the racial identity are brought into discussion in this section.

The transnational comparison proposed in the article *Ambivalent Magical-Realist Masculine Spaces in Junot Diaz's "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" and Ştefan Agopian's novel "Tache de catifea"* by Alina Ciobotaru seeks to contribute to the efforts of establishing a more encompassing hermeneutical framework for magical realism as a universal mode or genre capable of subverting authoritarian discourses and of building a cultural identity. Junot Diaz's novel tracks the author's own diasporic experience as a member of the Dominican-American community and deconstructs the category of "masculinity" by using magical realist strategies that oppose the protagonist's (Oscar) passive nature to the hyper-masculine figure of Raphael Trujillo, whose dictatorial regime between 1930 and 1960 had negatively impacted the Dominican Republic for years to come. In contrast, Ştefan Agopian's novel *Tache de catifea* was published during the communist regime in Romania in 1981 and consequently the use of historical detail and the lack of direct political reference reflect the need to avoid censorship. By using various local magical realist strategies that are specific to the Eastern European context, such as anti-mimetic elements, grotesque details and carnivalesque descriptions, Agopian subverts the image of a traditional type of violent masculinity, embodied by Tache's father.

Hayder Naji Shanbooj Alolaiwi's article *Feminist Concerns with Frederick Douglass and William E.B. Du Bois* draws a comparison between these two important African American writers, whose writings and activism for the rights of their minority present similarities (the author of the article classify them as *integrationists*) but also differences. They both opposed oppression or segregation and fought for their people's emancipation (which is not reduced to the abolition of slavery) but had different views about the causes of the inter-racial problems and the

appropriate solutions. Douglass' outlook was a Christian and an optimistic one (he even granted the United States a messianic role), While Du Bois had a secularized and rather pessimistic vision. The former was born into slavery and struggled for his freedom, realizing from an early time the importance of education. The latter was a leftist and considered that the Black people's problems were systemic. There is an anticipation, here, of current concerns for intersectionality (in this case, the intersection between race and gender), because the two authors are interested in the fate of women, especially African-American women, who are hailed as mothers, capable workers but also as revolutionaries. Alolaiwi makes the effort of evaluating Douglass' and Du Bois' contribution through the lenses of contemporary feminism.

The "Up" Series of Documentaries (1964-2019): From Imagined Community to Unimaginable by Brian Michael Goss provides an extensive and detailed context for the analysis of nine installments (1964-2019) of this famous oeuvre belonging to the British director Michael Apted. By observing the life trajectory of 14 subjects from childhood to seniority, the documentary builds a certain type of "imagined community" (see Anderson 1983), in an era when television had replaced, to a large extent, novels, or books in general, as a vehicle for communicating the more or less "constructed" unity of the nation. However, this familial togetherness is harder and harder to maintain because of the aggravation of socio-economic inequalities generated by Thatcherite neoliberalism and its aftermath. Another factor that is taken into account is the persistence of a class system even after its apparent fall into obsolescence. The elite, posh children have a predictable existential route: they got to keep their privileges, unlike their counterparts from a working-class background, although the latter were not without a chance of upward mobility. Gradually, the series lost its political edge. The chapter goes on to analyze in depth three different faces of an imagined community, by focusing on three participants, John, Jackie, and Neil. Despite some tensions and confrontations between the subjects and the documentarian, they are very much like a team or a family. Jackie, for instance, a divorced single mother of three, with arthritis, declared she felt she could rely on Apted as potential help in a difficult situation. The ups and downs of Neil's life configure a narrative of British resilience, while his own perception was that he failed in almost everything. The larger "family" of the nation risks to become "unimaginable", when its representatives are "recruited into incompatible narratives". The diminishing of this imaginability is ultimately generated by major changes in the socio-political, economic and media environment.

The next chapter, by Peter Gaál-Szabó's, is called *Intersections of African American Culture and Theology in James Cone's "Black Theology and Black Power"*. The author shows that in his 1969 book Cone attempted to reconcile Martin Luther King's dream of integration with the revolutionary spirit of Black movements reclaiming social and racial justice, while also trying to elevate black theology to the status of a legitimate discipline. One strategy for doing that is the recourse to the Biblical prophetic tradition, with its often-vehement rhetoric, and the sermonic

tradition of African-American preachers who opposed discrimination. The "white" church is harshly criticized for its complicity with racism, in an attempt to "empower" African Americans theologically by liberating them from the objectified state of "nonbeing". Within the logic of Biblical parallelism, if the Black community is identified with Israel, then the white majority plays the role of Israel's oppressors. The justification of violent rioting as a form of Christian "love" is, however, harder to accept. The author is also critical towards "Cone's militant insistence on ontological blackness" and his exaggerated concern with power. While his merits in giving a new "impetus" to the "black religio-cultural self-conceptualization" are recognized, Gaál-Szabó also points out the perpetuation of "binary limitations" in Cone's intellectual project, which diminishes its effectiveness in offering a response to the current challenges faced by the African American community.

b. Cognitivist concepts applied

This section we have delineated includes three articles which resort to methods from the ever-growing field of cognitive theories with their different branches: linguistic, rhetoric- stylistic, communicational.

Andrea Csillag's chapter, *Prepositions in English Expressions of Disgust – A Cognitive Semantic Approach*, shows how, among the six universal basic emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and surprise), disgust is less studied, from a cognitive linguistic perspective, especially when compared, for example, with the interest researchers have taken in the conceptualizations of anger, happiness and fear. In order to fill this gap, the paper will study a large corpus relevant for the language of disgust in English: 175 sentences. The rich theoretical background outlined at the beginning of the chapter reveals the complexity of this emotion, which can be analyzed on multiple levels. Drawing on Darwin's legacy, some researchers underline the biological, and hence universal elements of the disgust experience (irrespective of the cultural background), while others distinguish between a *core* variant and an *interpersonal* one, meaning that the reaction can be elicited by mental processes, even in the absence of a disgusting object. The purpose of Andrea Csillag's paper is to study the role of the prepositions *at, for, from, in, to, toward(s)* and *with*, occurring in phrases with *disgust* and the image schemata underlying their use. The cognitive approach can assess if the prepositions are used in their literal sense (spatial or functional) or figuratively. The prepositional phrases analyzed in this chapter, the author concludes, cover two aspects of the disgust experience, namely, the cause of this particular emotion and the way the subjects behave in a state of disgust.

In her contribution entitled *Vasile Voiculescu, the Light Seeker: Metaphors of Light in Vasile Voiculescu's Antemortem Poems,* Steliana-Mădălina Deaconu deals with the stylistic strategies employed by the "organically faithful" (as he characterized himself) Romanian poet Vasile Voiculescu. The poet had his own theory about the limitations of poetry in apprehending the ineffably mystical, when

contrasted with prayer, which can approach the divine apophatically, via silence. The poetry here analyzed distils childhood epiphanies and indefinite metaphysical longings, as well as the poet's readings from the *Bible* and science or his participation in the mysteries of the Church. By applying a cognitive reading, the author of the article shows how the Absolute is conveyed through metaphors of light (the thread uniting the poems in the corpus), while non-essential aspects of the world can be rendered through a colorful imagery. The article also mentions the discourse world theory, which considers the cognitive tracking of entities, relations and processes to be a mental space. The semantic sphere of the light and clarity is made more evident through contrasting metaphors of darkness, fog, confusion. Explicitly, light is seen as the "redeeming sign" from God (the poem *Durerea / The Pain*). The cognitive approach is all the more appropriate, considering Vasile Voiculescu's theological interests and taking into account that conceptual metaphors, as associations between a target and a source domain, apprehend, as the scholars in the field explain, a system of thought, and not simple stylistic ornaments of speech. In the "blended space" of the metaphor, a "new emergent understanding" becomes visible, while the poet turns the poem into a "world" where the communion with God through prayer becomes indeed possible.

Cognitive metaphor is also the focus of Alina Țenescu's article entitled *Absinthe in advertising discourse*. Although analyses of wine and beer in advertisement proliferate, research on the figurative language for this particular spirit is scarce. Here, the author tackles the mediatic representation of the so-called "green fairy", a very strong green alcoholic beverage which was the (dangerous) attraction for many European writers and artists from La Belle Epoque, before being prohibited. However, it was mistakenly believed that one of the chemicals contained in the mixture produced hallucinations, which determined its unjust banishment. It was the improper mode of production and distillation which provoked illnesses or even death. More recently, the limited use of the drink was allowed in America and France. Advertising absinthe has currently become pervasive in the online environment, where linguistic and visual images are mobilized as persuasive strategies aimed at potential consumers. Several features of absinthe are emphasized by advertisement: aroma, flavour, mouthfeel and finish. The descriptions show an inclination towards the anthropomorphic metaphor, by focusing on the categories "personality and temperament features" and "physical traits". Organicist metaphors and metonymies are predominant and, as regards the pictorial similes in vintage prints, one can notice the association with an attractive woman drinking the absinth, in order to make the beverage more desirable for the male public.

c. Comparativism and Geocriticism

Geocritical studies represent a growing field with extensive applications in the realm of world literature, thus also establishing close connections with the methodology of comparative literature, as shown by the three articles listed under this rubric.

Theoretical Resources for the Study of Tragedy – Modern Comparative Perspectives by Carmen Popescu starts from the premise that modernity has had a powerful impact on the theory of the tragic, on the specialized exegesis of tragic theatre and on the literary rewritings *per se* (palimpsests / rewritings, intertexts). The investigation concerns the relevance of several theoretical contributions in the field of tragedy scholarship, with the purpose to better understand this genre in its classical, neoclassical and modern variants. This meta-analysis is justified, especially when seen against the recent critical landscape, where the tenets of analysis and creative reception are put into question. Some of the most influential and celebrated books about tragedy have been idiosyncratic, that is, very speculative (see, for instance, Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, but also René Girard's theory of the "mimetic rivarly" and the "sacrificial crisis"). George Steiner's famous *The Death of Tragedy* also receives attention. Although this book is based on a very debated and contested main thesis (that of the uniqueness and irrepetability of Greek tragedy), it remains a valuable resource for comparative analyses. *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* by Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre-Vidal Naquet epitomizes the philological and psycho-sociological trend in tragedy studies. This type of approach tries to be, as much as possible, rooted in historical realities, but does not exclude the ambitious attempt of outlining a "historical anthropology" and a more "dialogic" methodology. While a perfectly objective and unbiased description of this object of study remains elusive, a clarification of the ideological underpinnings of the theoretical frameworks is always necessary.

Marinică Tiberiu Şchiopu's article is called *Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul: Memories and the City. A Stratigraphic and Polysensorial Autobiography.* The author fully demonstrates the relevance of geocriticism and ecocriticism, which are important recent interdisciplinary trends in the analysis of literature. As complementary, interdependent and interconnected approaches, the two grids can fuse into *geo-ecocriticism* or *Earth Studies*, which serve here (with some help from narratology, intertextuality and interculturality) as a holistic perspective on Orhan Pamuk' autobiographical text, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. The latter represents an immersion into the personal past but also in the past of the city that embraces two continents and many layers of history. In this autodiegetic narrative full of analepses (memories), with many elements of *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman*, Pamuk shares his (rather mixed) feelings about his native city, to whose fate his own destiny is intertwined. Thus, the reader can follow the process of transformation from ancient Byzantium or Constantinople to the modern Istanbul. One central method, which Marinică Şchiopu brings into attention, apart from *multifocalization* and *polysensoriality*, is the *stratigraphic* description of particular places in Instanbul, a type of diachronic presentation similar to that of an archaeologist but also to that of a…geocritic, which serves as further evidence for the appropriateness of the chosen theoretical approach.

The geocritical approach, combined with hermeneutics and close reading, is also illustrated in Cristina Durău's article, *Literary Hypostases of the Venetian Chronotope*, which offers an interesting synopsis of the multiple layers of history and aesthetic styles of this unique European city. Its unusual, even extraordinary setting and architecture have stimulated the imagination of countless artists and writers. The Renaissance was the golden age of Venice, in terms of an unprecedented flourishing of the arts, but also in terms of political action and reflection, as mirrored by Nicolo Machiavelli's writings. The city is a somewhat symbolic presence in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice,* with its strong indictment of antisemitism. In the 21st century, the French author Jean-Michel Thibaux portrayed another facet of the Venetian Renaissance chronotope and interculturality, with a view to the geopolitical involvements of that era: Serenissima, or the Venetian Republic, uses the strategy of infiltrating young women into the harems of the Ottoman Empire. The Age of Enlightenment is exemplified by *The Story of My Life* by Jacques Casanova de Seingalt, the famous (and infamous) seducer, a rebel spirit, who lived to witness the collapse of the Republic. The modern era of literature was also fascinated with the mysterious aura of the Italian city, as showed by Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, a tale of decadent aestheticism, and by Emmanuel Roblès' novel, *Venice in Winter*, which, along with detailing the devastation brought about by the Mafia in society, describes the identity quest of a young woman. The analysis is a demonstration about the role of literature in capturing the undying spirit and unforgettable emblems of a city placed at the intersection of multiple cultural influences.

d. Terminology

The avatars and permanent metamorphosis of a natural idiom can be very instructive as regards the impact of cultural hybridization on every aspect of life. Cristiana-Nicola Teodorescu and Anca Gabriela Nicolae (Mic) have studied, from a quantitative point of view, the *Internationalization of Gastronomy-related Terms.* On the background of discussions around *globalization*, the authors show how gastronomy interferes with internationalization by analyzing an oral corpus consisting of 1637 terms and 896 phraseological units from the eight seasons of the *MasterChef Romania* cooking competition. Therefore, the corpus can be considered homogenous, from a thematical standpoint. Among the features of this phenomenon the article lists *xenisms*, or, as they are also called by other linguists, *exoticisms* or f*oreignisms*, i. e. recent neological words which are not yet adapted to the receiving language but are still perceived as foreign elements by most speakers. These are categorized according to various criteria which lead not only to important (socio)linguistic conclusions, but also to an anthropological interpretation: according to the authors of the chapter, they are a proof of the globalization of people's tastes, while also revealing the connection between gastronomy and identity. An interesting aspect of this phenomenon concerns the perfect integration of xenisms in the competitors' vocabulary, although a level of "communicational snobbery" cannot be

excluded. Anglicization represents an important part of this, but the sources of the borrowed terms are more diverse (predominantly French and Italian), depending on the format of the show and the background of many participants, who either studied abroad or are foreigners themselves.

The papers selected for the volume are samples of original critical thinking, bringing new perspectives on a variety of texts and corpora, from film and advertisements to literary fiction and language phenomena.

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PART I

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Ambivalent Magical-Realist Masculine Spaces in Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and Ștefan Agopian's novel *Tache de Catifea*

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1. Introduction

In this paper I will focus on the function of various magical-realist strategies in the construction of an ambivalent masculine space in the novels *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) by Dominican-American writer Junot Diaz[1] and *Tache de catifea* [*The Velvet Man*] (1981) by Romanian author Ștefan Agopian[2]. Although the two novels pertain to different periods and cultural spaces (multicultural USA and communist Romania), the central idea of this comparative analysis is that the magical-realist narrative strategies allow the construction of hybrid masculine spaces

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[1] *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) narrates the story of Oscar Wao, a Dominican American teenager who is an overweight nerd residing in Paterson, New Jersey, through a blend of genres, from realism to fantasy and the immigrant novel, as well as references to other genres, such as science fiction. The main narrative recounts Oscar's diasporic experience of growing up in an American ghetto during the 1980s and 1990s and his quest for what it means to be Dominican. The center parts of the novel focus on his sister Lola, on his mother's experience growing up as an orphan during the regime of Raphael Trujillo and on his grandfather's imprisonment in the Dominican Republic. From this point of view, Diaz follows the tradition of the Latin American dictator novel.

[2] Ștefan Agopian published during the communist regime in Romania; he employs historical detail to avoid censorship and advance the state of literature. The background for *Tache de catifea* is the first part of the 19th century in Oltenia; the novel tells the story of Tache Vlădescu, who recounts it from the grave, using a future tense. The first part is told by the narrator who is now 47 years old and lives at his estate, Mălura. It is dedicated to introducing the story of his conception, his search to find the truth about his paternity, and the brutal death of his presumed father at the hands of a famous group of Ottomans led by Osman Pazvantoğlu. The second part of the novel is focused on his life at the family estate as a 12-year-old boy with a young, widowed mom who is now in search of a new husband. The young boy neglected by his mother soon becomes best friends with one of the suitors to his mother's hand, boier Lăpai, and with his dwarf brother, Piticul. The next chapters are jumbled up and difficult to follow as the focus is on the surreal and oneiric experience of living in this house. Eventually, they decide to join the Romanian uprising from 1821 but the journey to Bucharest takes them months because of their passive nature.

which in turn act as subversive agents because they contradict the "official" nationally-specific discourse of what masculinity is (or ought to be).

2. Magical Realism and Gender Studies

In my analysis I will mostly use Wendy B. Faris' concept of "magical realism" focusing on specific narrative techniques such as "the irreducible element", "defocalization of narrative" and "merger of realms" (Faris 2004 7; 43), in order to disentangle the ways in which both authors deconstruct the category of "masculinity." I start from Judith Butler's notion of "gender performativity" and her observation that both sex and gender are constructed (Butler 1990). The performativity of gender implies that "there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expression' that are said to be its results" (*ibidem*: 24). Gender is nothing more than "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal overt time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (*ibidem*: 33). Seeing that there is no prediscursive natural and universal gender that exists prior to culture (or outside culture for that matter), this suggests that gender is always open to interpretations and resignifications. Butler uses the syntagm *gender trouble* to suggest that "bodies are politically constructed" and that through "subversive bodily acts" – a set of parodic practices based in a performative theory of gender acts" – one can disrupt the already politically and socially established "categories of the body, sex, gender and sexuality and occasion their subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame of female – male" (*ibidem*: X).

Using the idea of gender trouble, I aim to argue that, by constructing magical-realist ambiguous masculine spaces, where men perform and misperform gender, the novels mentioned above actually question the ideologies of their time. I will also be using the concept of "male gaze", developed by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1972) and by Laura Mulvey in *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1999) in order to draw attention to the specific male point of view exposited by both these texts; with the added twist that this "male gaze" is directed not only towards the female gender (in relation to which the masculine is constructed) but towards the male one as well.

3. The reverted "male gaze" and its relationship with the feminine

Laura Mulvey uses the concept of "male gaze" to discuss the Freudian idea of phallocentrism in relation to Hollywood films, stating that in such films women are invariably objectified, catering to the visual pleasures of men. The male gaze thus appears as a natural result of the dichotomy "active / male and passive / female"

which exists "in a world ordered by sexual imbalance" (Mulvey 1999: 837), hence the act of looking becomes an active male role, while the passive role of being looked at is reserved for women. According to Mulvey, this division characterizes narrative structures in general because the ideology of patriarchy places the male gaze in a position of power: its object is strictly female and "man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like", since "the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification" (*ibidem*: 839). John Berger also noticed that "men act and women appear", "men look at women" and "women watch themselves being looked at" (Berger 1972: 45-47).

In the novels analyzed in this paper the primary focus of the "male gaze" is, by contrast, the male characters. Although it can be argued that the female characters are also subjected to a second type of "male gaze", since they are sexually objectified by the male characters. This suggests that the questioning of the cultural category of masculinity comes from within the paradigm itself, the male narrators of the texts (Yunior in the case of Junot Diaz's novel and Tache de catifea from beyond his grave in Ştefan Agopian's novel) tackling issues such as patriarchal structures of power and the pressure to conform to an active and even violent performative masculinity. In both novels the construction of masculine spaces is contingent upon a specific interaction with the feminine. In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* the male characters have to constantly "prove" their Dominican masculinity through their capacity to attract and bed as many women as possible, hence performing proper Dominican masculinity is impossible in the absence of "player" abilities. The male model per excellence is the dictator Raphael Leonidas Trujillo Molina who ruled the Dominican Republic between 1930 and 1961. The narrator describes him at the beginning of the novel in one of the footnotes as "one of the twentieth century's most infamous dictators" who ruled the Dominican Republic "with an implacable ruthless brutality" and who was known mostly for "fucking every hot girl in sight, even the wives of his subordinates, thousands upon thousands upon thousands of women", as well as for his "almost *supernatural* abilities" (Diaz 2008: 2-3).

In *Tache de catifea* it is the decision of Tache's mother, Zamfira Lupu, to remarry, which sets off in motion a series of events which will determine the formation of an all-male exclusive friendship between Tache, Piticul and boier Lăpai, a trio whose manifestations of ambiguous masculinity are in stark contrast with traditional views of masculinity. Their failure to take any action in the face of incoming disaster reveals them to be "passive" and indecisive, a sharp contrast to the image of masculinity portrayed in the first part of the novel.

4. A subversive magical-realist masculine space in Junot Diaz's novel

The oxymoronic term *magical realism* is described as a literary genre or a narrative mode in which the supernatural and the natural, the real and the fantastic are represented as being on the same level. Christopher Warnes defines it as "a mode of

narration that naturalizes or normalizes the supernatural" (Warnes 2009: 3), while Maggie Ann Bowers describes it as a narrative mode that "relies most of all upon the matter-of-fact, realist tone of its narrative when presenting magical happenings" (Bowers 2004: 3). The *magic* refers to "any extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational science" (*ibidem*: 19). Although the history of the term links it to the development of Latin American literature in the 20th century[1], especially during the "Boom" period of the 1960s and 1970s, critics today analyze it as an international phenomenon and have ascribed magical realism a fundamental role in the emergence of postcolonial literature. After the publication of Stephen Slemon's article *Magical Realism as postcolonial discourse*, the idea that it is a literary style applicable especially to marginal literatures (Slemon 1988: 10) has been pervasive, with critics Homi Bhabha, Mariano Siskind, Frederik Jameson, Theo D'haen, Wendy B. Faris etc. all regarding it as a subversive instrument against the hegemony of colonial empires.

Regarding its formal features, Wendy B. Faris identifies "the irreducible element of magic" (Faris 2004: 1) as being central and defines it as "something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically based discourse" (*ibidem:* 7). Because the presence of supernatural elements is common in other genres as well, one common point of confusion is that with the fantastic. The difference between magical realism and fantastic literature is that in magical realist texts the *uncanny* and magical in general get "naturalized", meaning that the narrator is not puzzled by the supernatural and he does not show signs of scepticism (*ibidem:* 7). On the level of textual representation, the relationship between the natural and the magical is accepted by both the narrator and the characters.

In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* one of these irreducible elements is the "fuku americanus", which is inevitably linked to Trujillo and which accounts for his Dominican hyper-masculinity. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator, Yunior, Oscar's friend and the lover of Oscar's sister, describes the arrival of Columbus (the Admiral) and of the Europeans on Hispaniola as an act that gave way to a negative spilling of the supernatural into the world – "The Curse and the Doom of the New World" was released into the world and "we've all been in shit ever since" (Diaz 2008: 1). He then links it to Trujillo, attesting for the fact that in his "parents' day" the fuku was real and "no one knows if Trujillo was the Curse's servant or its master" (*ibidem*: 2-3). Throughout the novel the unnatural element "fuku" is used to explain violence, corruption and unjust power, but it also attests to the interconnection between gender and magical realism:

"It was believed, even in educated circles, that anyone who plotted against Trujillo would incur a fuku most powerful, down to the seventh generation

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[1] Some of the writers who are considered canonical magical realist writers are Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie, Isabel Allende, Toni Morrison.

and beyond. […] Which explains why everyone who tried to assassinate him always got done, why those dudes who finally buck him down all died so horrifically" (*ibidem*: 3).

By using the magical realist device of the irreducible element (in this case, the belief in a curse that can account for all the historical violence and corruption a totalitarian regime has left behind), the narrator constructs a Dominican hyper-masculine space. In his article *Masculinity and the political among Dominicans*, Christian Krohn-Hansen attests to the fact that "notions of masculinity among Dominicans have played, and continue to play, a central part in the everyday production of political legitimacy" (Krohn-Hansen 1996: 108). The essay centers around the masculine representation of the "Dominican tiger", a metaphor used to describe a man of success that is "survivor in his environment", pragmatic, "both an everyday hero and a trickster", appearing "to embody a moral and political power which is ambiguous" (*ibidem*: 109). In his words, "the most important formative period in the history of the image of the 'Dominican tiguere' overlaps with the regime of Rafael Trujillo" (*ibidem*: 110) and the author seems to suggest that the metaphor was created as a response to the political repression from that time. Among the characteristics that Khron-Hansen uses to describe the Dominican Tiger are those of a father and a seducer at the same time. He is a nomadic man, "moving from one woman to the next", a womanizer who is "a bebedor (drinker)", "a bailador (dancer)", and "fiestero (fun-loving)" (*ibidem*: 115). The image of the man as a "machista" or *macho* is highly exaggerated in the novel, since the narrator focuses mostly on this aspect, when he names Trujillo's regime as the first "Culocracy": "dude had hundreds of spies whose entire jobs was to scour the provinces for his next piece of ass" (Diaz 2008: 217).

In *Flashes of Transgression. The Fuku, Negative Aesthetics, and the Future in The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Diaz*, Richard Perez links the existence of this powerful curse to masculinity: "indeed, the curse, for Diaz, is epitomized by and indistinguishable from a rapacious masculinity expressed in predatory form" (Perez 2013: 95) By using the magical realist device of the "irreducible element" (Faris) (in this case the belief in a curse that can account for all the historical violence and corruption a totalitarian regime has left behind), the narrator constructs the image of a Dominican hyper-masculinity which in turn is politically motivated. Hence, we may conclude that the construction of an ambiguous male space (translated as a space which is subjected to contradictory discourses about what masculinity entitles or does not entitle) functions as a politically subversive act. Oscar Wao, the main character of the book, rejects the conventional Dominican male role and hence is not accepted in the emigrant USA Dominican community from New Jersey. His masculinity is constantly being questioned by those around him, women and men, because he is "a nerd" and not a seducer. His preoccupation with books encourages others to "victimize him" (Diaz 2008: 22) because reading is not considered a masculine endeavor. We can argue that Oscar's

"misperforming" of specifically Dominican masculinity, overlapped here with the Trujillian masculinity, may constitute a "subversive bodily act" that manages to subvert the ideology of the time by transgressing the politically and socially established categories of gender (Butler 1990: 33). The alternative of masculinity that Oscar's behavior proposes is rejected precisely because it is considered to be non-heteronormative and hence threatens to cause a destabilization of the Dominican political structures of power which postulates that male is always masculine and seductive, whereas female is passive and objectifiable. Oscar is neither good looking, nor good with words, and he does not see women as objects to be used for his solely physical pleasure:

> "[Oscar] had none of the Higher Powers of your typical Dominican male, couldn't have pulled a girl if his life depended on it. Couldn't play sports for shit, or dominoes, was beyond uncoordinated, threw a ball like a girl. Had no knack for music or business or dance, no hustle, no rap, no G. And most damning of all: no looks" (Diaz 2008: 24).

The end of the novel portrays a different image of Dominican masculinity. During his trip to the Dominican Republic, visiting family, Oscar falls in love with a middle-aged prostitute named Yban. His love affair is eerily similar to Beli's affair with the hitman, Ganster. Ybon's "boyfriend", El Capitan, embodies the image of the traditional Dominican macho and Oscar finds himself in the same cane as his mother, beaten to death by 2 police officers and saved by the mangoose and the "faceless man". Returning back home to the USA, he cannot stop loving Ybon and decides to go back to the Dominican Republic, where he is eventually killed. Oscar's capacity to love a prostitute and die for her contrasts the image of the Dominican man as a seducer that sees women as simple sex objects. His lack of sexual prowess and his aura of "ghetto-nerd" "feminize" him in the eyes of the Dominican society and cast doubt about his manhood. Coming back to Judith Butler's interpretation of the body as being "politically constructed" and adding Christian Krohn-Hansen's analyses of the image of the Dominican tiger as giving "political legitimacy" to absolute power, we can conclude that by failing to perform the type of traditional Dominican masculinity that Trujillo embodies, Oscar subverts the political and social regime of the time as well. In the words of Judith Butler, he performs "subversive bodily acts" that disrupt politically and socially constructed notions of "gender" by moving outside the binary realm of "feminine / masculine".

5. Masculinity and postrealism in Ştefan Agopian's *Tache de catifea*

The working definition proposed in this paper for "magical realism" allows us to look at it not as a monolithic category that defines the whole text, but as a mode with a specific "manner of narration" (Hegerfieldt 2005: 49) that can irrupt in various

locations. We can identify the presence of specific strategies of magical realism such as "defocalization", the merging of realms and disruptions of time, space and identity which at first glance may not seem to belong to the category of magical realism because they are not infused in Indigenism, like in the case of the most well-known canonical magical realist text. We argue that in recent years magical realism has undergone significant changes that differentiate it from mainstream writings such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* or Carpentier's novels and that there are local variants that are influenced by a specific historical and cultural context. It is useful to quote Cristina Șandru's book *Worlds Apart? A Postcolonial Reading of post-1945 East-Central European Culture,* where she identifies the carnivalesque as a central feature of epistemological magical realism, the localized variant of magical realism in Eastern Europe, and nominates Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* as a mainstream example. She makes the observation that the negative aesthetic of this variant of magical realism emerged as a result of "brutal and unaccountable historical circumstances (mainly before and immediately after World War II)" (Șandru 2012:148). It operates either as "a compensatory or illuminating vision" or as "a symbolical means of ideological system-subversion (during the subsequent totalitarian decades)" (*ibidem*: 148-149).

Eugen Negrici (2006: 354) identifies the presence of a unique manner of narrating which does not privilege any of the dimensions, the natural or the unnatural. According to him, atrocious events witnessed by the child Tache, such as the burning down of the Jews' houses in Oltenia in the 19th century during a „progrom", their violent and torturous murder, the raping of women, the invasions by the Ottoman army, are all described in the same matter-of-fact, bored tone as marvelous occurrence.

N. Manolescu (2008: 1357) expounds on the possibility that Agopian was influenced by Mateiu Caragiale's fiction because of his propensity for "baroque forms" and the absence within the text of a recognizable plot. One such example is the process of courtship where various men from the area come to ask for the hand of Tache's mother. Ruxandra Ivăncescu (2000: 24) compares this scene to that from *The Odyssey* portraying Penelope's suitors, although she mentions that contrary to the original suitors, their features are highly exaggerated to the point of being grotesque. In this scene that takes place in 1812, on the 19th of April, the fantastic is naturalized, the bodily deformities of her suitors are relayed in a matter-of-fact, humorous tone. A very rich Greek merchant is described as being a huge lump of meat that looked like an enormous ball, an image reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch: "I closed my eyes and when I opened them, there was a mountain of meat, bones and fat that had the shape of a huge and inhumanly looking ball" [my translation] (Agopian 2008: 576)[1].

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[1] In Romanian: "Am închis ochii și, când i-am deschis era un munte de carne, de oase și de grăsime, având forma unei bile uriașe și neomenești" (Agopian 2008: 576).

The first part of the novel ("Istorii") is focused on characters that embody traditional male role models, most of them historical figures. For example, Tache's father is described to be akin to a warrior, fearless and not afraid to act. When the Ottoman soldier Pazvantoğlu's troops raid Wallachia the year that Tache is born (1800), his father responds aggressively trying to invent devious ways to torture and scare off his enemies. One such example is when he raises ferocious dogs who only obey him. He even punishes one of the servants that had run away by feeding him to the dogs and ignores his wife, who is in child labor during the invasion. He is very eager to go to battle: "One week before I was born he didn't dismount at all, apart from eating and sleeping for a few hours at night. My mother could not understand his happiness at waiting" (Agopian 2008: 500) [my translation][1]. In addition to his interest in war and his bravery, the narrator mentions his sexual prowess as a secondary characteristic. He repeatedly cheats on his wife (Tache's mother), and even rapes a maid while he is sick with gout and in great pain (*ibidem*: 500).

The Routledge *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities* has a special chapter on East European Masculinities, where it tackles the construction of Romanian masculinities as well as the role the communist regime played in this construction. The authors notice the strict division of gender roles that has widened especially during the Middle Ages with models such as Stephen the Great in Moldova or Michael the Brave in Wallachia, setting the standard of the man-soldier "defeating enemies" and "inseminating women both in and out of wedlock" (Flood 2007: 156). Women, on the other hand, played a passive role being merely "reproductive vessels of population and tradition" (*ibidem*: 156) and they continue to play this role even during the communist regime, when Ceausescu's pro-natalist policies required that women give birth to at least four babies.

In *From Parent-State to Family Patriarchs. Gender and Nation in Contemporary Eastern Europe*, Katherine Verdery analyzes gender roles in the socialist systems from Eastern Europe, observing that the state had usurped the role of a parent and it had constructed an image of society as a family whose leader was the wise Father party (Verdery 1996: 64). Women's domain was the house, since in private household chores were still expected to be performed by women. Verdery also draws attention to the specific case of Romania, where "a gendering of the 'nation' and of 'tradition'" took place through nationalist texts which presented the nation as a "patrilineage" (*ibidem:* 70). History was "an endless sequence of male heroes" (*ibidem:* 70), with figures such as Neagoe Basarab, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, Tudor Vladimirescu etc. presented as "'heroes living exemplary 'biographies'", "active", and "dynamic" (*ibidem*: 73). Tache's father portrays such a figure. His violence and aggressiveness in punishing the Turks and even his own servants are reminiscent of Vlad the Impaler's cruelty, who was well known for his

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[1] In Romanian: "Cu o săptămână înainte de a mă naște n-a descălecat decât pentru a mânca și pentru câteva ore de somn, noaptea. Fericirea aceea a lui, așteptând, fu de neînțeles pentru mama" (Agopian 2008: 500).

practice of impaling invaders. His success in training dogs to fight in battle motivates him to write a book to teach others how to raise warrior-dogs and use them in war *(Despre foloasele aduse de câini în lupta cu turcii)*, just like Neagoe Basarab wrote *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Teodosie.*

The second part of the novel contests this through ambiguous masculinity construction. The male trio Boier Lăpai, Tache and Piticul is shown living in a masculine space where time ceases to have the same relevance as in the period of Tache's warrior-type father. Although they know about the pact between Vaucher and Marmona cel Tânăr to kill Marmona cel Bătrân (and eventually even Tache), they take no action and are characterized by passivity, a traditionally female feature. They often discuss about what they should do (kill Tache's mother, Vaucher and Mamona cel Tânăr in order to not let them win), but they lack the force to react, like Tache's father, thus "misperforming" masculinity. The construction of this passive masculine space is made possible through the use of the magical realist strategies mentioned before. The narrative voice that described historically the world of the socially acceptable violent masculinity devoid of any emotional involvement is the same voice from the second part of the novel that conjures a narrative space where unnatural phenomena occur, such as Piticul's levitation, or the appearance of an angel after the three men renovate Tache's house in which they had planned to move. Moreover, the emotional bond between these three men also contests the limits of heteronormativity since it verges on the erotic, creating hybrid heroes. When Piticul receives a letter informing him that he can become a teacher at a high school like he wished, he eventually decides that he cannot leave his friends, especially after Tache had just moved in with them. The concept of an inverted "male gaze" is especially poignant here because it is not femininity and the female body that is perceived as the passive object to be displayed and analyzed, but the male body.

The magical realist strategy of the merging of realms refers to the fact that "the magical realist vision exists at the intersection of two worlds", the natural and the unnatural one, in an in-between space, "a space of uncertainty" (Faris 2004: 21). From this fact stems the creation of a masculine space where magical realism manifests itself in the interstitial space between reality and the unnatural. According to Adrian Oțoiu (2003), "liminality" is the common concept which best unites the Generation of the Eighties – Agopian being a representative of this generation. In *Tache de catifea,* the story is located in "threshold spaces" and the male protagonists, caught in dilemmatic situations, prefer to leave them unresolved. Their reluctance in taking action and responding to the problematic situations around them, even when they have the supernatural ability of knowing the future, places them in a borderline area. Oțoiu speaks about the "liminal spaces of indecision" (2003: 88) and hence the ambiguity of the masculine space constructed by Agopian. There are no direct references to the communist regime partly because the novel was written during that time and it would have been dangerous to include them. Nonetheless, the subversive nature of the book is connected to the fact that Agopian's style breaks with the realist tradition of his time.

Conclusions

The two novels analyzed in the previous pages incorporate insertions of magical realism for varying purposes and in different ways, but both construct an imagine of masculinity that is subversive. In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* the rewriting of history by focusing on male characters enables Diaz to offer an ironic political critique of the dictatorship of Trujillo. It also puts forth a commentary on the diasporic experience of a young teenage boy who doesn't seem to fit in any of the communities of his new country, the US, and is in search of his roots, much like the protagonist of Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos*. There is an autobiographical element to this story as it mimics Diaz's own experience as a young immigrant to the US and his struggles to assimilate.

In contrast, in *Tache de catifea* (published during the communist regime in Romania), the use of historical detail stems not so much from the desire to offer a voice for the marginalized groups of society, but from the need to find a way to avoid censorship. It serves as a pretext for constructing an unnatural space where fantasy can roam wild and it also offers Agopian the opportunity to evasively address the concepts of "violence" and "trauma". Invented or real historical events frame Romania's past as bloody and oppressive: constant rampages on villages and cities by the Ottomans, brutal "programs" which result in horrendous deaths and rapes, and finally, parricide. Such imagery was strictly prohibited in writings that dealt with contemporary life and they most probably hint to the unbearable reality of the oppressive communist regime. The avoidance of political commentary ironically serves as a subversive tool as it was impossible in that time to avoid doing so because of the expectation to write according to the conventions of socialist realism. Hence, anti-realism as a genre stance was in itself subversive.

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Vasile Voiculescu, the Light Seeker: Metaphors of Light in Vasile Voiculescu's Antemortem Poems

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1. Vasile Voiculescu – the light seeker

Although Voiculescu[1] admits that his poems are "proofs of his religious conscience"[2] and talks about "the firm foundation of his faith"[3], he simply cannot explain his innate love for God either to his readers or to himself: "Many of the things you are asking me to reveal to you can't be revealed. They are mysterious. Although they are mine, I feel them inaccessible"[4]. Voiculescu proceeds by saying that the readers can only understand his poems by "empathy and identity regarding inner experiences"[5]. Quite touching is his confession: "I don't get any credit for believing in God, I was born like this!"[6], "I am organically faithful"[7] and he considers himself very lucky for having been born like this.

He defines faith as "an organic trait, a temperament, a special crystallization of our life"[8] and "real faith" as "an instinct and orientation that cannot be decomposed in words, no matter how skilfully crafted they are"[9]. According to

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[1] Voiculescu has been perceived as a religious poet by many critics (Tomoioagă 2015: 223), (Curticeanu 1977: 104), (Ștefănescu 2015: 126), (Granciu 2013: 175). He was considered as "the poet with the most pronounced religious inclination" (Crohmălniceanu 1974: 234); G. Călinescu included him in the chapter "The Orthodoxists": (Călinescu 1982: 881). Voiculescu has been perceived as a religious poet by many critics (Tomoioagă 2015: 223), (Curticeanu 1977: 104), (Ștefănescu 2015: 126), (Granciu 2013: 175).

[2] „versurile, mărturiile conștiinței mele religioase" (Voiculescu 1986: 451).

[3] „temeliile neclintite ale credinței" (*ibidem*: 451).

[4] „Multe din lucrurile pe care îmi cereți să vi le destăinuiesc sunt nu numai fără putință de împărtășire, dar îmi sunt chiar mie misterioase. Deși sunt ale mele, le simt inaccesibile." (*ibidem*: 450)

[5] „simpatie și identitate de experiențe lăuntrice" (*ibidem*: 450).

[6] „gesturi n-am niciun merit să cred, m-am născut așa" (*ibidem*: 452).

[7] „organic credincios" (*ibidem*: 452).

[8] „Eu socotesc credincioșia o însușire organică, un temperament, o cristalizare specială a vieții noastre" (*ibidem*: 451).

[9] „Credința e un instinct de ritm și orientare care nu se poate deșuruba în cuvinte, oricât de măiestre" (*ibidem*: 451).

Voiculescu, religious poems are "verbal gestures"[1] very far away from the depth of the true faith in God. Art is no longer capable to express the genuine faith in God because it "has emancipated"[2]. Therefore, "only prayer can bring together art and faith"[3], mentioning the fact that "the supreme prayer is uttered in silence…with the lips of the soul"[4] thus suggesting, in fact, that words and poetry are powerless when it comes to expressing the essence.

He recalls a moment in his childhood when, as a little boy in the backyard, although being happy, he feels as if he was mystically awaiting something. The same feeling of indefinite awaiting was felt by the poet throughout his entire later life: "What was I waiting for? Angels, God, St. Peter?"[5]. He felt and strongly believed he was "predestined". His favourite book of all times was the *Bible*, his beloved saints, apart from the archangels, were Abraham and Jacob. His favourite games were playing baptisms and funerals. What really help him to consolidate his faith in God was the participation to Mass and celebration as well as to popular traditions. Voiculescu confesses: "If I hadn't become a doctor, I would have become a priest"[6]. He even had out of the ordinary mystical experiences, such as seeing a huge angel on the sky while walking with his sister on a lane or feeling a prayer booklet in the pocket flapping. All these have been his "treasure" throughout his entire life, which helped him survive. When he had exams, he used to kneel in front of the icons and pray and he read the *Psalter* crying. Even if his mind became busy with the study of science and forgot his belief in God, he still treasured his faith inside his soul, by "temper", having "no crisis of faith"[7]. The undefined longing and awaiting from his childhood continued to exist but expressed in intellectual, not mystical, terms, as he studied philosophy and metaphysics, psychology and ethics, psychophysics and psychopathology. He even read theosophy. He described this period of his life using the metaphor of stain glass: "I confess that I've been interested in this voyage and I indulged in it just as I'd like to walk in a gallery with coloured stain glass. You pass through a stripe of sad yellow, enter into one of bright red, to step into a third one, of mystic violet"[8]. A basic idea can be spotted in this confession, namely we can infer from here that all the unessential elements of life, either spiritual or material, can be rendered by means of the metaphors of colours, whereas the Absolute can only be expressed by means of the metaphor of white light:

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[1] „gesturi verbale" (*ibidem*: 451).

[2] „arta s-a emancipat" (*ibidem*: 451).

[3] „care mai poate împreuna arta și credința, a rămas numai rugăciunea" (*ibidem*: 451).

[4] „Dar și rugăciunea supremă se rostește mutește...cu buzele sufletului" (*ibidem*: 451).

[5] „Ce așteptam? Îngeri, pe Dumnezeu, pe Sfântul Petre?" (Voiculescu, 1986: 453).

[6] „Dacă n-aș fi ajuns medic, cred că aș fi fost preot" (*ibidem*: 455).

[7] „N-am avut nicio criză de credință" (*ibidem*: 456).

[8] „Mărturisesc, m-a interesat această preumblare și m-am complăcut. Așa cum mi-ar plăcea să mă plimb printr-o galerie închisă cu vitralii colorate. Treci printr-o dungă de galben mâhnit, intri în alta de roșu aprins, ca să pășești într-o a treia, de violet mistic" (*ibidem*: 457).

"But I ended up by desiring the white light, the true light, and I went out looking for it, staring at the sky. Those colours were only qualities of it, they were not the essential light. …Faith is carrying me away, to that place without a name, from which there is no turning back"[1].

Voiculescu states that the waiting for something undefined, which he first felt in his childhood, is clearly the waiting for God: "I am waiting for Him"[2] and that all his scientific training got him near his faith in God because "Necessarily, faith must form the basis of the normal human spirit"[3]. According to him, life is multidimensional. Two material dimensions are joy and pain, but there is also a third dimension, one which is the height, namely the spirituality. Only by transfiguration we can pass into a fourth one, which is the metaphysical dimension, that is ecstasy and holiness.

2. The poetic universe of light in Vasile Voiculescu's antemortem poems

From the very beginning, the poet underlines his innate longing for divinity, although, at the beginning, he can't really name it by its real name, he only makes reference to it as to a "strange longing" (*Strange Longing – Dor ciudat*), a strange state of mind, a strong desire to become a part of the nature, a pantheistic urge. He wants to be a flower "with snow petals" waiting the "awakening". The rest of the world seems "strange", the only thing that he wants to keep in his heart is "The Blue from the Sky and smell of incense". The bodily life of the poet, which must be "pure" and lacking passions, seems to be a "night" which is going to turn into an eternal light: "May my entire life last only one night, / A night with magic violet light, / And, without pain, when dawn comes, / I'll melt, just like dew, under the first sunray / Simultaneously with the dying Evening star"[4].

Light is the conducting thread throughout all of Voiculescu's antemortem poems. It is present on Golgotha (*On the Cross – Pe cruce*), having a reddish tinge, being in accordance with the blood shed by Christ for us: "On Golgotha's cliffs, the entire sky of Palestine / Seemed to shed spilt lava"[5]. It is interesting to notice the dichotomy cliff – valley: whereas Christ is dying on the cross on the cliffs of

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[1] „Dar am sfârşit prin a dori lumina cea albă, cea adevărată, și am ieşit afară după ea, cu ochii la cer. Culorile acelea erau numai calități ale lui, nu era lumină esențială. [...] Credința mă poartă mai departe, spre acel loc fără nume, de unde nu mai e întoarcere" (*ibidem*: 457-458).
[2] „Îl aștept" (*ibidem*: 458).
[3] „neapărat credința trebuie să stea la temelia spiritului omului normal" (*ibidem*: 458).
[4] Our translation of the original verses „Întreaga mea viață să ție doar o noapte, / O noapte cu vrăjită lumină viorie, / Şi, fără de durere, când zorile-au să vie, / Topi-mă-voi, ca roua, sub raza-ntâi de soare / Odată cu stingherul luceafăr care moare" (*Dor ciudat – Strange Longing*).
[5] Our translation of the original verses „Pe stâncile Golgotei tot cerul Palestinii / Părea că varsă lavă" (*Pe cruce – On the Cross*).

Golgotha, in the valley there is "fog" – the absence of light pointing to moral confusion. Of utmost importance to the main idea of the present paper, namely the seeking of light as a metaphor of God, is the poem *It Was Knocking at Heaven's Door* (*Bătea la poarta cerului*). The dichotomy faith – absence of faith is rendered by means of the light and darkness metaphors. The poem is about a ray that comes to heaven's door from "the depth of a human mind". It is "sad" and "humble", but still "faithful and pure". The angels welcome it like a "sister", take it gently by the hand and lead the way to God. It tells God about the "darkness" from which it comes. In this poem, "darkness" is the metaphor of human lack of faith in God, alongside with "fierce precipices of ice", "whirlpool of passions", "blind wandering", "deaf craziness", "vastness of night", "heavy handcuff". It was supposed to be the "lighthouse of mankind" and, instead, it seems to be nothing but a "cold and rancid shadow", "defeated, empty, extinguished, shattered", "lonely and trembling", "poor and indebted". God sends it back on earth to continue to fulfil its mission.

The poem *Prayer* (*Rugăciune*) is a metaphor of man's desire to permanently communicate with his creator. People are "bitterly wandering" without His divine guidance. They need divine grace to purify their mind and souls, to be able to forgive and pity: "And, if you want me never to forget what joy is / Reflect a ray from Your light in my eyes made of clay / And put fire on my lips just like you did to Esaias / Kiss me with fire on my mouth to be able to sing you afterwards"[1].

The metaphor of light is also encountered in the poem *The Angel of Hope* (*Îngerul nădejdii*), in which the stress is laid on the people's need to hope that, in spite of all difficulties, eventually, they will be able to reconnect with God. The Angel of Hope was at a crossroads in a destitute condition as if in an exile. Its image at twilight is extremely suggestive as, in spite of the fact that it was sad and had withered wings, it still treasures a part of God inside it: "A glowing dark circle under his eye was still flickering on its forehead…/ All around it, only shadow"[2]. People have been walking for a lifetime hoping to meet this Angel of Hope and to kneel down in front of its "lighted lap". Without it, their entire life is lighted by the Archangel of Pain: "But, on the road I've just taken, / The Archangel of Pain was lighting as a fire"[3].

Equally interesting is the poem *Absolution (Dezlegare)*, a metaphor of the frail human condition that needs divine grace to be saved. It underlines the obstacles that

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[1] Our translation of „Iar dacă vrei ca pe vecie să nu mai uit ce-i bucuria / Răsfrânge-n ochii mei de tină o rază din lumina Ta, / Și pune-mi jar aprins pe buze, cum ai făcut lui Isaia, / Cu foc sărută-mă pe gură ca să Te pot cânta" (*Rugăcinue – Prayer*).

[2] „Mai pâlpâia pe frunte-i un cearcăn de văpaie.../ Încolo numai umbră" (*Îngerul nădejdii – The Angel of Hope*).

[3] „Dar iată că pe calea ce-acuma apucasem / Îmi lumina ca focul Arhanghelul Durerii" (*Îngerul nădejdii –The Angel of Hope*).

a human being encounters in order to discover the divine within: "You put a Ghost within the kernel of my being / One that is larger than the kingdoms of light"[1].

The poem *I've Let Him Go by* (*L-am lăsat de-a trecut*) is a metaphor in itself, a metaphor of the man who does not take care of the divine spark within himself. It presents the encounter between the poet (in fact, any human being) and an angel who has "hair as Aurora / The wings, having feathers of light"[2]. In opposition with it, "large and deep shadows" were falling over it.

Postponed Angel (*Înger amânat*) brings forth the same light and darkness opposition. The metaphor of the human mind longing for God is rendered by means of "wax lights" whereas the metaphor of human oblivion is expressed by means of the night: "The bells of mind sounded long, / Old longings started with wax lights. / But the Night stood up as a beast"[3]. Night is personified as a beast which comes over you and, sniffing out the light, growls to the stars: "Night has dropped over you on its paws;/ It licks, excited, its skinny ribs/ And, sniffing out the light, it growls to the stars" [4]. Metaphors of light are also to be found in *Tell Him I Have Come Back* (*Spuneți-I că m-am înturnat*). It is about the poet's attempt to get to the place where God is, but fails. The gates are guarded by an Angel, "the ardent flaming cherub"[5], having "a sword of light and lightening"[6]. However, this time the Angel doesn't show the gate. All around there is a deep darkness. So, again, the reader can see the dichotomy light-darkness, light being always in connection with God.

Light as a metaphor of God can also be found in the poem *In the Forests of Thoughts* (*În pădurile de gânduri*). The thoughts are complicated and complex (rendered by means of the metaphor of forests), not being able to focus on the true essence of life but, from time to time, light appears here and there, as a reminder of the Absolute: "Seldom, lights twinkle in black forests"[7]. Again, the blackness of the forests strongly contrasts with the light: "A sun without rays going down at twilight / Is closing its eyes, cold, smiling reckless"[8]. All around, there is night.

Light, as a representation of divinity, is found in the poem *Pain* (*Durerea*): "Light, His redeeming sign". It is also interesting to notice that light is associated

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[1] „Un Duh mi-ai pus în sâmburul ființei / Mai larg decât domniile luminii" (*Dezlegare – Absolution*).

[2] „Era cu părul ca aurora, / Aripele, cu pene de lumină" (*L-am lăsat de a trecut – I've Let Him Go by*).

[3] „Au sunat prelung clopotele minții / Doruri vechi porniră cu lumini de ceară. / Dar s-a ridicat Noaptea ca o fiară" (*Înger amânat – Postponed Angel*).

[4] „Noaptea peste tine s-a lăsat pe labe; / Linge, ațâțată, coastele ei slabe / Și, urmând lumina, mârâie spre stele" (*Înger amânat – Postponed Angel*).

[5] „Focosul heruvim flăcălător" (*Spuneți-I că m-am înturnat – Tell Him I Have Come Back*).

[6] „Cu paloșul de fulger și lumină" (*Spuneți-I că m-am înturnat – Tell Him I Have Come Back*).

[7] „Arar prin codrii mai scapără lumini" (*În pădurile de gânduri – In the Forests of Thoughts*).

[8] „Un soare fără raze ce scapătă-n apus / Și-nchide, rece, ochii, zâmbind nepăsător..." (*În pădurile de gânduri – In the Forests of Thoughts*).

with pain in the sense that, even in the deepest pain there can be found God because pain is indispensable for redemption.

Light appears in the poem *Common Wheat* (*Grâu comun*) which points to Jesus's parable (*The Parable of the Tares or Weeds* in *Matthew* 13: 24-43). The poet feels he is some "common" wheat, unfortunately not being able to be the good seed sowed in the field. He does not give good fruit, fearing that he is not a child of the kingdom: "I did not lie in the sun, carpet of amber"[1].

God is explicitly referred to as the "spring of true light"[2] in the poem *The Skylight* (*Luminătorul*). A human soul has an innate aspiration towards light. Humans strive to bring sun (as a metaphor of God) into their life but, in order to do that, they are forced to rebuild their inner self, as it can be inferred from the "building of life" that has to be pulled down so that the sun enter: "Then you have sent Your angel to show me / The spring of true light: / He took the axe of pain into his hands: / And hit the walls fiercely, mercilessly […] / The sun rushed inside me"[3].

In *Apocalyptic Sunset* (*Apus apocaliptic*), "the gardens of light" and "the angels with golden spears" are used as metaphors of divinity.

Jesus on Water (*Iisus pe ape*) points to Jesus's miracle presented in the *New Testament* (*Matthew* 14: 22-33). Like in a painting, Jesus appears with His hands wide open "in the light of the moon / Cutting both sky and waters like an immense cross"[4]. Just like in all the other poems, light is always used in connection with God.

Preparations for Last Supper (*Pregătiri pentru cină*) and *The Last Supper* (*Cina cea de taină*) point to events in Jesus' life. In both poems light is used as metaphor for divinity. Jesus's inner torment to accept the final mission He is entrusted by God, namely to sacrifice His life, in Gethsemane garden, is expressed by means of the "darkness and light fighting inside Him"[5]. Jesus appears as if "He was carrying along light clung to His long coat"[6].

In the poem *Inner Horeb* (*Horeb lăuntric*), light appears in connection with fire: "tough ashes" which points to the pure spirit. In order to reach God, one has to mute his/her thoughts. Only "empty thoughts" can have access to the Absolute. Thoughts are presented by means of the metaphor of the mountain: "I am climbing the mountain of thought / Looking for the foliage of the burning bush"[7]. "White" in

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[1] „Nu m-am întins la soare, chilim de chihlimbar" (*Grâu comun – Common Wheat*).

[2] „Izvorul luminii adevărate" (*Luminătorul – The Skylighter*).

[3] „Atunci ai trims pe Îngerul Tău să-mi arate / Izvorul luminii adevărate: / El a luat în mâini securea durerii / Și a izbit năprasnic, fără milă, pereții. [...] / Soarele a năvălit în lăuntrul meu" (*Luminătorul – The Skylighter*).

[4] „Cu brațele în lături plutea-n bătaia lunii, / Tăind și cer și ape ca o imensă cruce" (*Iisus pe ape – Jesus on Waters*).

[5] „umbra și lumina luptau în el amarnic" (*Pregătiri de cină – Preparations for The Last Supper*).

[6] „târând lumina de lunga-Ți haină aninată" (*Cina cea de taină – The Last Supper*).

[7] „Urc munte de gând cu aspre galbe / Cătând frunzarul rugului aprins" (*Horeb lăuntric – Inner Horeb*).

an epithet in connection with divinity in the sense that only the white thunder roars over the "whirlpools of silence" can be an indication for having reached God.

3. Cognitive analysis[1] of metaphors of light

We proceed by analysing some metaphors in connection with light.

3.1. ***"The morning calls us with a cry of light"***[2] (Voiculescu 2009: 115, *The Wine of the World*).
From the cognitive linguistics point of view, *cry of light* is a conceptual metaphor[3]. Thus, the following elements can be identified:
  i. God – target, vehicle, focus space. It is in attribute relation with the base domain.
  ii. Cry of light – source, tenor, base space.
  iii. Common features / generic space / ground – the enlightening power of God, the Absolute.
  iv. The blended space (the new emergent understanding) – Voiculescu creates a world with deep hidden meanings, a world which can only understand itself by referring to God.

Only the source is present, the target is missing from the text and the readers have to make an effort of understanding.

The above example can also be seen from the point of view of the discourse world theory, which considers the cognitive tracking of entities, relations and processes to be a mental space. In order to understand and represent reality, Voiculescu builds a mental space which contains mental representations of everything that can be perceived in real space (also called *base space*). Voiculescu's poem is a blended space, a space that combines the other spaces and which has specific features emerging from the mapping. The stages that can be referred to are: cross-space mapping, generic space and blend.

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[1] In fact, cognitive approach implies a "thorough re-evaluation of all of the categories with which we understand literary reading and analysis" (Stockwell 2002: 6). The cognitive point of view states that metaphors are not seen as stylistic figures of speech, but as a "system of thought" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Therefore, if the thought itself has a metaphorical nature, then language in general is metaphorical. Thus, metaphors are defined as "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain", "conceptual domain A is conceptual domain B" (Kövecses 2010: 4), a conceptual domain being "any coherent organization of experience" (*ibidem*: 4). The understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another is achieved by seeing a set of correspondences or mappings between the two domains: the source domain and the target domain.
[2] „Ne cheamă dimineața cu chiot de lumină" (*Vinul lumii – The Wine of the World*).
[3] In cognitive linguistics, the association between the target and the source domains is called conceptual metaphor. Cognitive linguistics refers to the process of metaphor as a mapping of properties between the two spaces or domains.

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┌─────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────┐
│   •   a         │────────────────────│   •   a'        │
│   •   b         │                    │   •   b'        │
│   •   c         │                    │   •   c'        │
│   •   d         │────────────────────│   •   d'        │
│   •   e         │                    │   •   e'        │
└─────────────────┘                    └─────────────────┘
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Base Space / Real Space /   Projected Hypothetical Space/
Idealised Conceptual Model (ICM)   Fictional Space / Blend

a = cry   a'= "cry of light"
b = wine   b'= "wine of the world"
c = crane   c'= "ropes of cranes"
d = vineyard   d'= "the life vineyard"
e= grapes   e'= "grapes of pain"
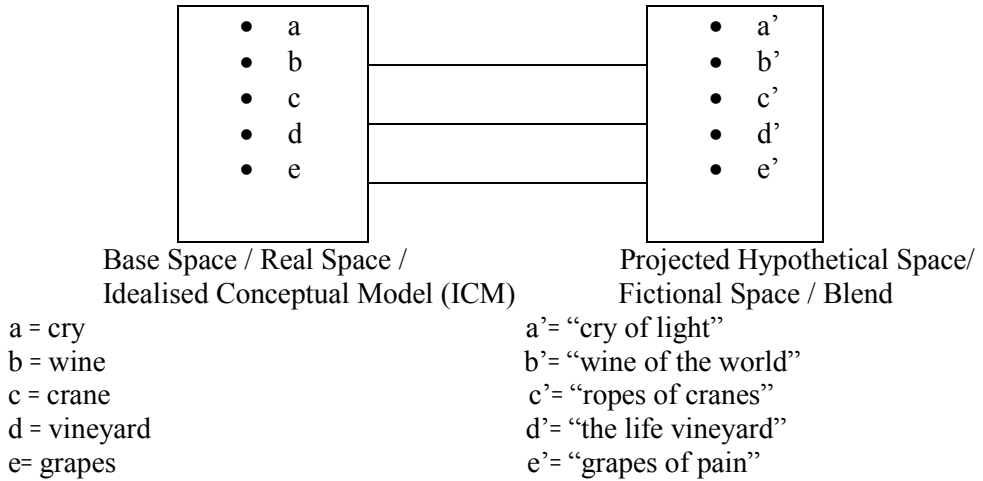
In the base space (real space), there are basic level categories and objects. It is a familiar representation of life, with familiar entities and familiar structure. Thus, there are cries, wines, cranes, vineyards, grapes, etc. In this space, cry is understood as an expression of joy in connection with the happiness generated by the connection with God.

The generic space contains the commonalities of the two spaces, namely common general nodes and relationships across the spaces. In the projected hypothetical space / Blend, Voiculescu creates a world that seems to be like the ICM but, however, it is an entirely different world. In this fictional space, God expresses itself in every possible way, even in the parts of the day ("cry of light" pointing to dawn, daybreak). In Voiculescu's poem, the presence of God is everywhere, the only thing that people have to do is to be focused on the essence. Wine (which is to be found in the metaphor of the title: "the wine of the world") symbolizes here the abundance of joy and revival we receive from the blood shed by Christ. It also represents the abundant blessings of God. The "vineyard of life" has to lift its fruit in the sky pointing to the fact that humans have to be grateful to God for all His blessings. It is also about the transfiguration of pain. Just like Christ who sacrificed for us, we also have to turn pain into joy, to transfigure it for a higher meaning: "Let's make wine out of the grapes of pain"

a', b', c' are counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space.

3.2. "***Twilights were burning their resin in the sky […] / The sad bells were burying the light / And smoothly lowering it mixing it with the vigils***"[1] (Voiculescu 2009: 123, *Jesus in Childhood*).

From the cognitive linguistics point of view, *Twilights were burning their resin in the sky* is a conceptual metaphor[2]. Thus, the following elements can be identified:

   i. God – target, vehicle, focus space. It is in attribute relation with the base domain.
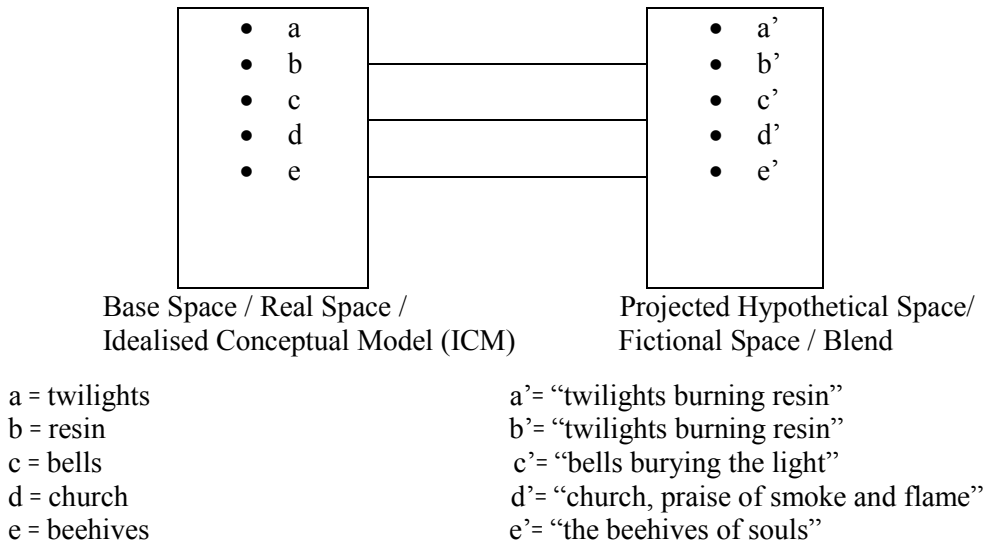   *ii. Twilights were burning their resin in the sky* – source, tenor, base space.
   iii. Common features / generic space / ground – the enlightening power of God, the Absolute
   iv. The blended space (the new emergent understanding) – Voiculescu creates a world which needs superior guidance from God, seen as an enlightening source. However, in spite of this, people waste their time and lives in doing things that have nothing to do with the true essence of life, which, on terrestrial level, is metaphorically expressed by the image of the bells burying the light.

   Only the source is present, the target is missing from the text and the readers have to make an effort of understanding.

   From the point of view of the discourse world theory, Voiculescu's poem is a blended space that can be expressed as following:

Base Space / Real Space / Idealised Conceptual Model (ICM)	Projected Hypothetical Space/ Fictional Space / Blend
• a	• a'
• b	• b'
• c	• c'
• d	• d'
• e	• e'

a = twilights   a'= "twilights burning resin"
b = resin   b'= "twilights burning resin"
c = bells   c'= "bells burying the light"
d = church   d'= "church, praise of smoke and flame"
e = beehives   e'= "the beehives of souls"

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[1] „Amurgurile îşi ardeau în cer răşina [...] / Clopotele mâhnite înmormântau lumina / Şi lin o coborau amestecând-o-n denii" (*Iisus din copilărie – Jesus in Childhood*).
[2] In cognitive linguistics, the association between the target and the source domains is called conceptual metaphor. Cognitive linguistics refers to the process of metaphor as a mapping of properties between the two spaces or domains.

In the base space (real space), there are basic level categories and objects. It is a familiar representation of life, with familiar entities and familiar structure. Thus, there are twilights, resin, bells, churches, beehives, etc. In this space, a twilight is understood as a physical phenomenon caused by the reflection of the sun's rays from the atmosphere.

The generic space contains the commonalities of the two spaces, namely common general nodes and relationships across the spaces. In the projected hypothetical space/ Blend, Voiculescu creates a world that seems to be like the ICM but, however, it is an entirely different world. **a', b', c'** are counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space. In this fictional space, children take part to Easter celebration with all their hearts.

For a whole week, their life was intimately linked to their creator. They felt a "secret joy" while playing a "grand game" in which God eventually wins. "The sad bells were burying the light" is a metaphor of the celebration of the burial of Christ also pointing to the fact that people must always stand up after a fall, aspiring to light, their utmost duty is to reach God, not to waste their lives in vain.

3.3. ***"One night, the angels sang to us on the threshold […] / They were carrying a flag of big light"***[1] (*The Golden Key – Cheia de aur*).

From the cognitive linguistics point of view, *a flag of big light* is a conceptual metaphor[2]. Thus, the following elements can be identified:

    i.   *God* – target, vehicle, focus space. It is in attribute relation with the base domain.

    ii.   *Flag of big light* – source, tenor, base space.

    iii.   Common features / generic space / ground – the communication with God by means of the prayer is made by getting access to light.

    iv.   The blended space (the new emergent understanding) – Voiculescu creates a world in which one can live only by having a communion with God by means of the prayer.

Only the source is present, the target is missing from the text and the readers have to make an effort of understanding.

From the point of view of the discourse world theory, Voiculescu's poem is a blended space that can be expressed as following:

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[1] „Într-o noapte ne-au cântat îngerii la prag, [...] / Duceau, doinind, o lumină mare, ca un steag" (*Cheia de aur – The Golden Key*).

[2] In cognitive linguistics, the association between the target and the source domains is called conceptual metaphor. Cognitive linguistics refers to the process of metaphor as a mapping of properties between the two spaces or domains.

a	a'
b	b'
c	c'
d	d'
e	e'

Base Space / Real Space /
Idealised Conceptual Model (ICM)

Projected Hypothetical Space/
Fictional Space / Blend

a = flag   a'= "flag of big light"

b = stem   b'= "stems of stars"

c = clock   c'= "the clock of the soul"

d = key   d'= "golden key of prayer"

In the base space (real space), there are basic level categories and objects. It is a familiar representation of life, with familiar entities and familiar structure. Thus, there are flags, stems, clocks, keys, etc. In this space, light is only a natural agent and a flag is a symbol or emblem of a country or institution.

The generic space contains the commonalities of the two spaces, namely common general nodes and relationships across the spaces. In the projected hypothetical space / Blend, Voiculescu creates a world that seems to be like the ICM but, however, it is an entirely different world. **a', b', c'** are counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space. In this fictional space, the prayer is the only key to reach God. In childhood, everything is easier. A child can easily pray and builds his/her entire existence around it. The daily conversation with God was something common, and all the saints in the sky were his friends. Growing up, the "key" has been lost and the soul has stopped his evolution, just like a clock that cannot be wound because its key has been lost.

3.4. ***"Lights of raw blood are knocking in my window glass"*** (*The Window – Fereastra*).

From the cognitive linguistics point of view, *lights of raw blood* is a conceptual metaphor[1]. Thus, the following elements can be identified:

i.   *God* – target, vehicle, focus space. It is in attribute relation with the base domain.

ii.   *Lights of raw blood* – source, tenor, base space.

iii.   Common features / generic space / ground

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[1] In cognitive linguistics, the association between the target and the source domains is called conceptual metaphor. Cognitive linguistics refers to the process of metaphor as a mapping of properties between the two spaces or domains.

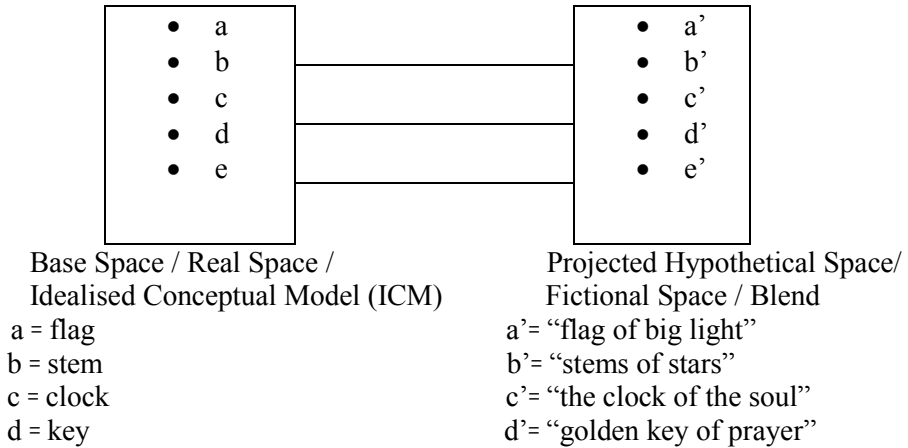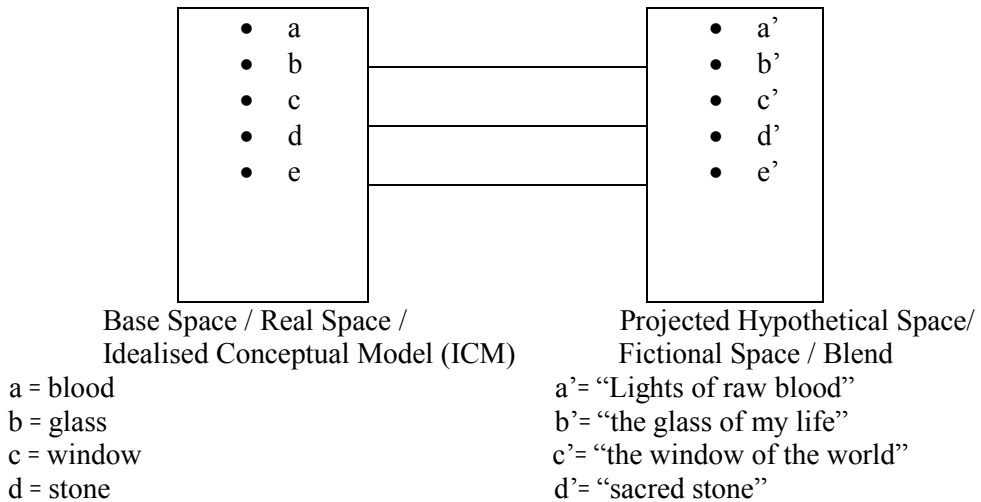*iv.* The blended space (the new emergent understanding) – Voiculescu creates a world in which

Only the source is present, the target is missing from the text and the readers have to make an effort of understanding.

From the point of view of the discourse world theory, Voiculescu's poem is a blended space that can be expressed as following:

Base Space / Real Space / Idealised Conceptual Model (ICM)	Projected Hypothetical Space/ Fictional Space / Blend
• a • b • c • d • e	• a' • b' • c' • d' • e'

a = blood   a'= "Lights of raw blood"
b = glass   b'= "the glass of my life"
c = window   c'= "the window of the world"
d = stone   d'= "sacred stone"

In the base space (real space), there are basic level categories and objects. It is a familiar representation of life, with familiar entities and familiar structure. Thus, there are windows, stones, blood, glass, etc. In this space, light is a natural agent.

The generic space contains the commonalities of the two spaces, namely common general nodes and relationships across the spaces. In the projected hypothetical space / Blend, Voiculescu creates a world that seems to be like the ICM but, however, it is an entirely different world. **a', b', c'** are counterparts of **a, b, c** in the base space. In this fictional space, the life of an individual is cast in glass by the diamond hardness of God. In the window of the life, the sign of divinity manifests in the form of the light.

Conclusions

The aim of the present paper is to justify the labelling of Vasile Voiculescu as a light seeker. In order to do that, the antemortem poems have been examined with a focus on the metaphors of light, which have been analysed from the cognitive stylistics point of view. Mention should be made of the fact that the discourse world theory, which considers the cognitive tracking of entities, relations and processes to be a mental space, has also been taken into account. Voiculescu creates worlds (projected

hypothetical spaces, fictional spaces or blends) which, though are similar to the real world (base space) are entirely different from it. He manages to create them by resorting to striking metaphors, thus, obtaining a unique poetic language which underlines the poet's lifetime quest for God, felt as light, absolute truth and utmost purity. Both his poems and memories illustrate his opinion about the fact that light is God and all the other colours are the secondary elements of life whose existence can be explained mainly as ways to contrast pure white light. The metaphor of stain glass is very suggestive in this respect: "But I ended up by desiring the white light, the true light, and I went out looking for it, staring at the sky. Those colours were only qualities of it, they were not the essential light. Faith is carrying me away, to that place without a name, from which there is no turning back"[1]. In opposition with the metaphor of white light, the metaphor of darkness is frequently used: "the evening star" *vs* "violet light" (*Dor ciudat – Strange Longing*); "sky of spilt lava" *vs* "the fog of the valley" (*On the Cross – Pe cruce*); "lighthouse of mankind" *vs* "vastness of night" (*It Was Knocking at Heaven's Door – Bătea la poarta cerului*); "glowing dark circle" *vs* "shadow" (*The Angel of Hope -Îngerul Nădejdii*); "feathers of light" *vs* "large and deep shadows" (*I've Let Him Go by – L-am lăsat de-a trecut*); *"wax lights" vs "the Night" (Postponed Angel – Înger amânat)*; "sword of light" *vs* "lightening" (*Tell Him I Have Come Back – Spuneți-I că m-am înturnat*); "twinkling lights" *vs "black forests" (In the Forests of Thoughts – În pădurile de gânduri*); "the sun, carpet of amber" *vs* "darkness" (*Common Wheat – Grâu comun*); "spring of true light" *vs* "The Sun ruhsed inside me" (*The Skylight – Luminătorul*); "the gardens of light", "the angels with golden spears"(*Apocalyptic Sunset – Apus apocalptic*); "the light of the moon" (*Jesus on Water – Iisus pe ape*); "darkness and light fighting inside Him" (*Preparations for Last Suuper – Pregătiri pentru cină*); "cry of light" (*The Wine of the World – Vinul lumii*); "Twilights were burning their resin in the sky" *(Jesus in Childhood – Iisus în copilărie); "*a flag of big light" *vs* night (*The Golden Key – Cheia de aur*); "Lights of raw blood" (*The Window – Fereastra*).

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[1] „Dar am sfârşit prin a dori lumina cea albă, cea adevărată, şi am ieşit afară după ea, cu ochii la cer. Culorile acelea erau numai calități ale lui, nu era lumină esențială. [...] Credința mă poartă mai departe, spre acel loc fără nume, de unde nu mai e nicio întoarcere" (Voiculescu 1986: 457-458).

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Literary Hypostases of the Venetian Chronotope

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1. Introduction

Venice is one of the most amazing places on Earth. Built on water, the city impresses with its beauty and originality. The history of Venice has known a time of splendour followed by decadence. The beauty of the city by the sea was a muse for poets, writers, painters, sculptors, architects and musicians. Certified around 421, the city is relatively new compared to other Roman settlements, founded several hundreds of years BCE. It was first known as the Republic of St. Mark or the Republic of Leo, so that from the tenth century the documents attested the toponym *Venice*.

Once a refuge in a swamp, later a safe place to defend against invaders, over time the *Serenissima* has become one of the most sought after and desired cities in Italy. More and more inhabitants of the surroundings were looking for shelter in the fortress between the waters. The population of Venice has been constantly growing and, with it, the power of the city. The fact that it is built on water, gives it the opportunity to grow in the maritime field. Between the 15th and 17th centuries, the Venetian fleet became the largest and most powerful in Europe. In addition to fishing, Venetian sailors handle commercial and passenger transport for quite high prices. During the Crusades, passenger transport was the key to the development of the Republic of Venice. In general, the Crusaders did not have much money but Venetian navigators agreed to negotiate the cost of the voyage in exchange for the work done. Thus, the crusaders fought for the master of the ship for a few weeks, according to the mutual agreement. Their services allowed the Venetians to expand their territories on the Adriatic and Mediterranean coasts. The city became a republic, among the richest states in Europe. The Venetian Republic has enjoyed the sympathy and support of the Byzantine Empire for centuries:

> "The cultural influence of the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire continued to be felt long after their political independence. Signs of this crucial relationship are evident all over the city, both in its churches and its palaces" (Buckley 2004: 16).

The wealth of the Venetians was tempting for enemies eager to possess it but the power of this community withstood its enemies. The foreign policy of the

republic was based on trade treaties, so that all neighbours had an interest in maintaining peace with the most efficient state in business and trade. Continued trade was to the mutual benefit of the countries involved, so it should not be interrupted even when there were tensions between states. As for Venice, it was one of the preferred trading partners, especially for its great fleet that provided the safe transport of goods in large quantities. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Venice has always been a trading city where many cultures mingled to make profitable businesses: "Venice was reputed to be among the most serene republics in Europe, offering safety and tranquillity to the diverse communities of people living within its waters" (Ferraro 2001: 15).

Venice has been a phenomenon in history through its completely unusual urban architecture. Entire forests were submerged in water to support the construction of buildings. Due to its originality, Venice is one of the settlements where time seems to have stopped. Even today, the lagoon fortress has canals instead of streets and gondolas instead of cars. The beauty of the city is unpaired, the visitor's eyes being surprised at every step. No wonder this beauty has inspired artists in all fields. Venice is one of the most desired tourist destinations in the world and has been chosen over time as a setting for many works of art. Over the centuries, builders or artisans have contributed to the decoration and beautification of the chosen city.

The present study aims to approach the Venetian chronotope in a series of literary works that capture different periods in the history of the city, in a geocritical approach, combined with hermeneutics and close reading.

2. The Venetian topos during the Renaissance

The Renaissance period is recognized as the golden age of Venetian history. It is the age in which art shone in all its splendour on all levels, not only in Venice, but throughout Europe. Splendid, richly decorated palaces were built and the architecture of Venetian churches, taken over by other countries, stood out:

> "An enduring taste for colourful surface decoration and intricate stone-carving is in evidence in Venice right to the end of fifteenth century, long after the rigorous classical precepts of Renaissance architecture had gained currency elsewhere in Italy. By the end of the following century, however, the more severe style of the Padua-born architect Andrea Palladio – whose buildings have become an intrinsic part of the image of Venice – had become the model for church design throughout Europe" (Buckley 2004: 20).

The famous Venetian school of painting left a legacy of world-famous names, such as Jacopo Bellini and his sons, Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, Giorgione, Carpaccio, Titian, Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto, while Venetian music was represented by composers and instrumentalists such as Cannareggio, Giovanni

Gabrieli or Claudio Monteverdi. In the second half of the 16th century, the Venetian School of Music distinguished itself by its polychoral compositions, some of the most important musical events in Europe at that time, which, together with the antiphonal innovations introduced in the art of orchestration, represented elements preceding the Baroque style.

The beginning of the 16th century was marked by the appearance of printing, the name of the printer Aldo Manuzio (1449-1515), the inventor of italic and bold characters, being linked to Venice. Aldo Manuzio (Latinized Aldus Manutius) was passionate about preserving and transmitting manuscripts from Greco-Roman antiquity, he himself having a vast culture in this field. The first book he printed was *Erotemata*, written by the Byzantine emperor Constantine XI, followed by another 130 works, including those of Aristotle or Theophrastus. In 1502, he printed Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In the same year he also launched the emblem of his printing house, a dolphin wrapped around an anchor, inspired by the Latin expression *lente festina* ("to slowly hurry"). The emblem is still used today by the "Doubleday" publishing house. In the same year, he published a textbook of Latin grammar, *Rudimenta grammaticae linguae Latinae* and founded the "Accademia Aldina", whose members included personalities from Italy, such as Pietro Bembo (1470-1547) or Alberto Pio (1475-1531) and scholars from outside Italy, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/67/69-1536) or Thomas Linacre (1460-1524) of England. Another member of the Aldine Academy, Marcantonio Coccio, called *Il Sabelico* (1436-1506) writes a chronicle of Venice entitled *Decades*.

Events in the history of 16th century Venice are also mentioned by the diplomat writer and philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli in his work *The Prince*, thanks to which he became known as the father of political science and modern political philosophy. In the "Introduction" there is a passage about the losses suffered by the Venetian Republic following the battle of Vaila:

> „The remaining years of Machiavelli's official career were filled with events arising out of the League of Cambrai […], with the object of crushing the Venetian Republic. This result was attained in the battle of Vaila, when Venice lost in one day all that she had won in eight hundred years" (Machiavelli: 8).

Venice's prestige was so great that it became a muse for artists from countries other than Italy. Undoubtedly, the fame of the city in the lagoon reached as far as Shakespeare, inspiring his play *The Merchant of Venice*. Most likely, the author never visited the city, which explains the almost total absence of decorative elements in the scenic indications, but this did not prevent him from being inspired by stories about merchants and navigators who were part of the urban folklore of the time. The name of the city is seldom mentioned in Shakespeare's play, and details of the Venetian topos are almost non-existent. The subject of the work focuses on the anti-Semitic conflict and the hot topic of marriages of convenience for financial reasons.

The play places the Venetian characters on the side of good, representing love, sincere friendship and noblesse, while the Jew Shylock represents evil, through avarice, wickedness and the absurdity of his claims. The ending is happy, for good triumphs over evil through the marriage of couples in love and through the thwarting of Shylock's evil plans in court. The eternal theme of the conflict between generations is present along with all the other subjects of the play. The comedian turns to Shylock, who is living proof of his daughter's revolt against his fatherly authority. As if destiny wants to punish him for his wickedness, not only does Jessica want to marry Lorenzo without his consent, but she also abandons her Jewish religion to convert to Christianity:

> "Rebellion against parental authority was not aimed just at fathers. Mothers as well bore the brunt of their children's discontent over arranged marriages. Mothers as well as fathers exercised authority, motivated by practical considerations. […] The commedia dell'arte raised these issues in jest, and a feminist literary climate took them up in earnest" (Ferraro 2001: 66).

If the Venetian merchant of William Shakespeare exposes the anti-Semitic problem, without going into details about the Venetian chronotope, in the 21st century novel *The Princess of Light* by the French writer Jean-Michel Thibaux we discover a veritable social and historical panorama of the sixteenth century, in a story whose action oscillates between Venice and Constantinople. Inspired by the story of one of the most important sultans of the Ottoman Empire, who went down in history as Soliman the Magnificent and his favourite Hürem, Jean-Michel Thibaux's novel was translated into 13 languages and became an international bestseller.

The action of Jean-Michel Thibaux's novel begins in Venice in 1535, the year in which the Venetian Senate stated that: "from a wild and uncultivated refuge it has grown, been ornamented and constructed so as to become the most beautiful and illustrious city which at present exists in the world" (Ackroyd 2009: 252). It is the end of the period of glory, permeating the decline of the Republic. In fact, this decline anticipated by the Doges Andrea Gritti and the Venetian merchants is at the cause of the heroine's drama. Cecilia Venier Baffo was asked to sacrifice her own freedom on the altar of Venice, being sent to the Sublime Porte to be part of Soliman's harem not before she was trained in the spirit of the Muslim culture in which she was to integrate. The choice of twilight as the moment of beginning of the action is not without symbolic valences. The main motif of the novel is the decline, on all narrative levels. Twilight is ubiquitous, whether we are talking about the end of Cecilia's childhood, the break-up of the Baffo family, the decline of the Venetian republic or the division that prevailed in sixteenth-century Europe. Another element of the narrative construction is the suspense, as well as the frequent contrast between appearance and essence. Jean-Michel Thibaux also refers to the architectural elements of the city, such as the Doge's Palace or the nobles, but also the merchants' shops, the Jewish ghetto or the Venetian ruins, mentioning among other sumptuous

monuments the Petition Gate, where scribes were available to the public all year round "under the reliefs of the elegant coloured edifice of Verona marble, Cararra and Istrian stones" (Thibaux 2013 – Vol. I: 114).

In a world in which women were deprived of rights, for the merchant Alessandro Baffo, his own daughter is an opportunity to increase his wealth and prestige. Growing up, Cecilia becomes aware that these ideas were inoculated in young women since childhood, so that they are considered a normality: "girls are born marked by sin, they are weaker and less intelligent than boys, they are not able to exercise artistic trades, to hold a weapon, to negotiate a business" (*ibidem*: 19). However, the unexpected discussion she has on a Sunday at church with Beatrice Cornaro Contarini, a young woman from high society, gives Cecilia a very important piece of information, which will never serve her, namely that the wife owned the dowry received from her parents and could even leave it by will to someone other than her husband. Thus, through this power over the dowry, women benefited from a certain obedience of their husbands who aspired to dowries, and Cecilia had repeatedly heard her father complaining to his associates: "The sons of Venice no longer run on the seas, but for dowries. They lost the taste of adventure. Listen to what I tell you, friends: if we want to regain our former power, we must break the rope that binds the leaders to their wives' skirts" (*ibidem*: 22).

The plan devised by the leaders of Venice to infiltrate the young women in the Ottoman harem to turn imperial policy in favour of the Republic managed to postpone the war for several decades, but in the end it inevitably occurs. The conflict between the *Serenissima* and the Ottoman Empire begins in 1570, Venice proving to be a formidable adversary against the powerful enemy due to its naval force:

> "For twenty-one years, Venice engaged in a titanic struggle with the Ottomans for its hub of empire […]. One by one its colonial possessions would be prised away. Cyprus, held for less than a century, was lost in 1570; Tinos, its most northern island in the Aegean, lasted until 1715; by then the rest were gone, and the trade had died" (Crowley 2011: 355).

The passion for history of Jean-Michel Thibaux, as well as his erudition, is reflected in the amount of information that constitutes the framework of the novel' action. This is not limited to Venice and Constantinople, but reaches broader socio-political contexts, realizing the image of a plausible world in the sense of Bertrand Westphal (2011: 15). The novel skilfully intertwines reality with fiction, permanently maintaining the suspense and curiosity of the reader. The alternation of narrative plans occurs between the Christian and the Muslim world, without deviating from the focus of attention on the main heroine, whose character is built and deconstructed in the smallest detail. However, the supporting characters are not without colour and originality. Jean-Michel Thibaux relies on an authentic composition meant to captivate the reader through a social fresco of the 16th century in which fiction and reality intertwine. The hybrid origins of the writer Jean-Michel

Thibaux offer him an authentic perspective on the phenomenon of interculturality, which is one of the main axes of his novel.

3. Venice in the Age of Enlightenment

The story of my life by Jacques Casanova de Seingalt (1725-1798), beyond the author's autobiographical confessions, reflects "between the lines" the image of the city in the lagoon in the eighteenth century:

> "By the mid-seventeenth century the myth of Venice had become in England a paragon of harmony and continuity, all the more alluring in a country that had witnessed civil war and regicide. It was seen as a model of republican virtue […] a model for the intellectuals of the Enlightenment, who saw in its proceedings a genuine compact between rulers and ruled. It became an inspiration to the makers of the American constitution" (Ackroyd 2009: 120).

An open-minded scholar and a passionate traveller, Jacques Casanova led a modern life, being himself a "man of lights". Leading a life of oscillations, somehow organized and socially coherent, Casanova was an excellent observer of the world in which he lived, from human nature to the politics of his time, not hesitating to disapprove the mentalities of his peers, bound in all sorts of social or religious prejudices, hypocrisy, corruption, greed, through accents of acid criticism or fine irony, with an attitude characteristic to a contemporary man. Casanova's narrative presents the same dynamism with which the author lived his life. The rapid transitions from one fact to another, the references to people and events that are not necessarily related to the narrated episode, the concern for painting the society of his time, whose actors are mentioned by name, rank and position, the stories about traveling abroad make the *Memoires* a quick journey through the history of eighteenth-century Europe.

If in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* the vague image of Venice can be explained by the fact that the author has never personally seen the city in the lagoon, Jacques Casanova's lack of concern for the setting of the narrated events (not only those of Venice) may be explained by the author's focus on interpersonal relationships and personal experiences induced by the related events. The decorative elements are quite rare and mentioned in passing, leaving practically free rein to the imagination of the reader who, following the adventures of the hero Casanova, gradually becomes familiar with the decor of his time. Concerned especially with the socio-historical aspects and his own feelings, Casanova's scenery is either blurred or non-existent. Apart from a few mentions related to the most well-known and which everyone has heard of (San Marco Square, Doge's Palace, Grand Canal), references to the environment of the city between the waters are almost non-existent. For Casanova, the material aspect of life hardly matters. Able to take refuge

under the protective wing of a wealthy friend, he managed to survive for decades without shortcomings. This disinterest may be one of the causes of the author's low concern for objects or buildings. In fact, the only buildings that particularly attract his attention are those that cause him discomfort or even suffering, such as the house of his first host in Padua, where he faced a cruel misery and a hunger for survival, or the Piombi prison, where he spent a year of his life and from where he managed to escape through a plan as clever as it was risky:

> „The eighteenth century was the period of Venice's terminal decline as a political and economic force – with the coming of Napoleon, the Republic was dead. Yet the visual arts underwent a remarkable resurgence at this time, with painters such as Tiepolo (father and son), Canaletto and the Guardi brothers at the forefront" (Buckley 2004: 22).

Casanova spent the last years of his life as a librarian in the castle of Count Joseph Karl von Waldstein, in the castle of Dux in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). He lives to witness the collapse of the Republic of Venice, dying a year later. Historians report on the tragedy of the Venetian republic's self-dissolution under the pretext of a new beginning:

> "In those revolutionary days the Venetians annihilated their own history as they attempted to turn the clock back to 1297 and the days before aristocratic 'tyranny' began. In the long run, however, their efforts to define 1797 as a moment of rebirth and renewal collapsed beneath an alternative reading of that year as one of decline and death" (Martin, Romano 2000: 14).

Giacomo Casanova's free spirit, his detachment from the moral and theological constraints of his time, his refusal to fit into social patterns are, on the one hand, the result of his erudition and, on the other, the legacy of the nonconformist spirit of his comedian parents. The access to higher education, the contact with the enlightened minds of his century exposed him fully to humanistic thinking, then to the Enlightenment, daring to question what was dictated or imposed in the past and to assert the freedom of being human:

> "Casanova is the most famous of all Venice's favourite sons. He is the quintessential Venetian, and his memoirs demonstrate the facility with which life in the city can be turned into self-conscious and self-serving drama. 'The chief business of my life has always been to indulge my senses', he wrote. 'I never knew anything of greater importance'. This might be justifiably described as a main article of the Venetian creed" (Ackroyd 2009: 133).

4. The Venetian topos in the modern era

A city that challenges the laws of physics, Venice is a place hard to imagine before it is seen. Only by gliding with the gondola on the undulating canals or stepping on the narrow streets, paved with cubic stone, the imagination becomes prolific, stimulated by the legendary beauty of a place that seems unreal.

> "The natural life of the city must be imagined rather than seen. […]. Byron called Venice 'the greenest isle of my imagination', a paradox only he could sustain. George Aschenbach, the protagonist of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, sees in vision 'a landscape, a tropical marshland…a kind of primeval wilderness-world of islands, morasses and alluvial channels.' It is a vision of Venice itself in its original state. But it is a city that no one else will ever see" (*ibidem*: 87).

A city of beauty, full of life, *Serenissima* is at the same time a place of death, when the humidity favours the spread of diseases, as happened to the child Casanova and Aschenbach found his end: "Death and Venice go together, as Thomas Mann demonstrated" (Morris 1960: 151). But for the German tourist, every trip through Venice is a real conglomeration of sensations:

> "The air was still and noxious; the sun burned intensely through the haze, which coloured the sky a slate grey. Gurgling water lapped against wood and stone. The gondolier's call – half warning, half greeting – was answered from afar, from the silence of the labyrinth, by some curious accord. Clusters of blossoms – white and purple, redolent of almonds – hung down over crumbling walls from the small gardens overhead. […] Such was Venice, the wheedling, shady beauty, a city half fairy tale, half tourist trap, in whose foul air the arts had once flourished luxuriantly and which had inspired musicians with undulating, lullingly licentious harmonies" (Mann 2004: 103-104).

His journey gradually turns into an adventure of self-discovery, an opportunity for introspection generating internal conflicts, for exacerbating the senses aroused by the taboo passion that the hero falls prey to in a way as involuntary as it is devastating. Throughout the book, the evolution of the character is closely related to that of the city generating light and shadow, beauty and ugliness, joy and despair, life and death. The literary motif of the gondolier has symbolic meanings, his figure can be associated with another materialization of mythological figures from the world of death, representing the boatman of Hades, Charon, who made the transition of the dead to the other world:

> "The gondoliers are the most famous of the city's native sons. Their characteristic uniform of straw hat and black-and-white striped top, together

with the red or blue scarf, was really only formalised in the1920s. But their braggadocio is very old. […] when they are hushed, and the only sound is that of the gondola gliding through the water, then the deep peace of Venice begins to reign" (Ackroyd 2009: 240).

If Thomas Mann's short story depicts Venice in the early 20th century, Emmanuel Roblès's novel captures a troubled period in the history of Italy, that of the 1970s, which coincides with the beginning of the decline of the communist regime and the first germs of the orientation towards social democracy. Uncle Carlo warns Hélène on the evening of her arrival at his house and that of Aunt Marthe: "On average, we have three revolvers or bombings a week" (Roblès 1988: 8).

The story of the young French woman Hélène Morel goes from platitude and resignation to struggle for her own becoming. Two important themes follow one another in the two main narrative plans: on the one hand, the uncertainty of happiness, as far as Hélène is concerned, and on the other hand, the life of Lassner, reporter and photographer, who reveals the violence of the bombings during the lead years. Italy, to which the witness becomes a victim. At the same time, the novel offers an authentic image of the city between the waters, because the Venice in winter is the "true" one, unlike the one in summer, commercial and full of tourists. Last but not least, although less significant than the others, is the epic thread about the businessman André Merrest, whose obsession with Hélène reaches pathological levels. The novel is structured in four parts, the first three having the title of the main characters, namely Hélène, Lassner and André, while the last part is suggestively titled *The Bridge of Freedom*, a symbol of liberation at the limit of supreme sacrifice. Here is Lassner's accident caused by the assassins of Alberto Scabia, "the deputy prosecutor of the Republic" (Roblès 1988: 17), whom he had accidentally photographed at the very moment of the attack. The accident is also the moment when both he and Hélène, regain their freedom: the photographer frees himself from his followers, and Hélène from the possessive lover who causes a pressure comparable to that of the assassins on Ugo Lassner.

Through the characters introduced in the novel, the author seeks to reveal the different social strata belonging to the city. First, we discover the middle class, through Aunt Marthe and her husband Carlo, nice people, with a rather modest situation, but who can afford certain taboos and fun. Searching for rent, Hélène discovers hard-working workers, such as the family of Amalia and her husband, the builder who stops the infiltrations that affect the ground floor of Venetian houses, or Anna-Maria, who ruins her health by poisoning herself in a chemical factory from Marghera. In order to support herself, Hélène teaches French at home, a new opportunity to discover other types of inhabitants of Venice, this time among the wealthy, such as Mrs. Fiorenza Poli, the decrepit wife of a prosperous businessman who, although they no longer lived together, continued to send him money, or the young Sardi, who lived alone in his luxurious palace, surrounded only by servants, but whose discretion failed to keep him away from extremist gangs that robbed rich

families or kidnapped them to demand ransom. Finally, perhaps the most suggestive of the novel's plans is that of the photographs taken by Lassner. His experienced eye captures the representative places in Venice, capitalized in frames that recompose the beauty and originality of the city in the lagoon. In addition, a lot of photos capture Hélène in various poses, capturing the pleasure of the moments spent together.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that of Hélène's discovery of her own femininity, to which two important factors contribute. On the one hand, the determination to get rid of the former lover's possessiveness awakens into her a spark that makes her remarkable in the eyes of those around, although most are unaware of her problems. Aunt Marthe, a possible confidant, has a delicate way of showing her affection by avoiding annoying questions. The only one who senses the transformation of the young woman is the skillful Mrs. Poli, the abandoned wife of a millionaire, whose life experience has developed cop instincts, so she notices everything. Her confrontation with André Merrest also inspires courage in young Hélène, who is increasingly determined to regain her freedom. The second determining factor in unleashing the femininity of Roblès's heroine is the relationship with Hugo Lassner, completely opposite to the previous one. The masculinity of the photographer is accompanied by a delicacy probably derived from the awareness of his own clumsiness when it comes to women. However, there is an overflowing eroticism between him and Hélène, the intensity of which is revealed by the photographs Lassner takes of the young woman in private and which he exposes on the walls of his room, along with those he had taken around the city.

The title of the novel is the same as that of the photography exhibition that Lassner is preparing: *Venice in Winter* and, just as the photographer captures, in addition to urban landscapes, life inside Venetian homes, the writer Emmanuel Roblès presents the city in various ways, offering different perspectives on its inhabitants. The author uses the zoom effect especially on his characters, making detailed portraits that mirror even the deepest abysses of their consciousness, where feelings fully manifest their violence seemingly unrelated to the violence perpetrated by the Mafia in Italian society.

Conclusions

Reading is one of the most beautiful opportunities to explore worlds that once (could have) existed, which Westphall calls "possible" or "plausible world". Literary works of historical inspiration offer unique perspectives on the past, by studying them it is possible to observe the evolution of a settlement over the centuries.

In the analysed literary works, the Venetian topos is captured every two centuries: the Renaissance era, evoked by Shakespeare's play and Thibaux's novel, the Enlightenment evoked by Casanova's *Memoirs*, the modern era as it appears in Robles' novel or in the story of Thomas Mann, offer different temporal perspectives on the same Venetian space whose evolution from one epoch to another is almost

imperceptible. The same scenery and landscapes charm the eyes of the protagonists of each era presented, the same gondolas cross the city's canals, and the steps lead them on the same narrow streets paved with cubic stone.

Unlike others, the Venetian chronotope falls into the category of the timeless. Not many seem to have changed from the Republic of St. Mark to the Venice of modern times. Canals, stunning buildings, gondolas, cityscapes, unreal silence, bright shop windows, masks, Murano glass have been and remained emblems of the city for centuries. Despite its troubled history, Venice retains its unique identity in the universal cultural heritage.

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Feminist Concerns with Frederick Douglass and William E.B. Du Bois

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1. Introduction

Even if both Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois lay the foundations of a modernist tradition, their positions on the status and future of African Americans in American society and within the political system of the United States are essentially different in terms of the place and mission of the Americans and the United States in relation to the rest of the planet. Du Bois's black man, in contrast to Douglass's vision, will never be completely free or "saved". Du Bois is a secular, skeptic, pessimist, and a leftist thinker. His concept of a "colored man", exposed in a series of his works, most notably in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) does not imply a strictly African American man, but a whole humanity that does not belong to the White Protestant Anglo-Saxons in the first place, but to the entire political West as a whole.

Any careful insight into the Frederick Douglass records leads to the observation that his vision of the future of the American nation is optimistic. His optimism is based on his interpretation of Protestant Christianity and a rational faith in the moral structure of the universe. His new "blended race" is no longer an Anglo-Saxon settler, slave, Indian, Chinese, Slovenian, but a new syncretic being – the final product of the Hegelian end of history. Douglass sees the salvation of the American nation in the religious key of salvation of an individual: "Save the Negro and you save the nation, destroy the Negro and you destroy the nation, and to save both you must have but one great law of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity for all Americans without respect to color" (Douglass 1863: np). As in the Protestant vision of Christianity, life success, faith, and prosperity are signs that a man is predestined for salvation. The continual correction of the position of African Americans (as well as other US citizens, above all women), for which Douglass is a witness, speaks of the predestination of the messianic role of the United States and the "mixed race" in the role of the new Israel.

One of the key causes of the two thinkers' radically different views of the future is largely a consequence of their different life experiences, and their participation in the debates about abolitionism and later on other topics such as racial segregation and the future of African Americans in the United States. Both Douglass

and Du Bois can be classified as integrators, although they started from different assumptions and reached different conclusions.

We start from the assumption that the two thinkers also influenced the development of contemporary events, such as the abolition of slavery and the emergence of the human rights movement in the sixties of the 20th century. Both influenced the generations of other African American activists, including Martin Luther King, Jr., whose famous *I Have a Dream* speech in front of Lincoln Memorial Centre in Washington in the summer of 1963 is actually a manifest of Douglass's political ideas.

2. Douglass, Du Bois and their views on the emancipation of the race

Douglass – whose work on the emancipation of black slaves in the United States and political ideas is almost unknown to our academic public (similar to Du Bois's work) – felt that the process of emancipation was irreversible and that the future could only bring better days to African Americans. Douglass owes much of this attitude to his own life experience. He, who, during his lifetime, fled to high state functions and outstanding social recognition, saw the end of slavery and the gradual emancipation of the Negroes, whose home can only be the United States, and in that home, in time, all the inhabitants will enter the "mixed race".

It would be wrong, however, to interpret Douglass's view only as a consequence of the personal experience that formed his personality and convictions. He was strongly influenced by Protestant Christianity, by what he called "the true faith" that he opposed to the "false faith" which justified the slave system. "For of all slaveholders with whom I have ever met", he wrote, "religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others" (Douglass 1992: 68). According to Peter Myers, faith in holy providence is the source of Douglass's fundamental conviction of the moral arrangement of the universe. Douglass's argumentation, arising from classical liberal thought, relies on his theological interpretation of slavery. He was firmly convinced that sacred providence, together with rational arguments, were an unqualified guarantee of the future of the United States as it had been seen and which it considered imminent. His views formally shaped the current course of American history and the factors he saw as the key to the future of the United States in which he believed.

Unlike Douglass, Du Bois believed that African Americans would never be completely happy (although this is exactly what they want), because they will permanently evaluate themselves with the others' "white" eyes. Du Bois is an atheist (by Marxist standards) and he regarded Douglass's theory as a "fairy tale" without serious support in reality. He does not believe in Douglass's optimistic picture of the future and opposes his pessimism and scepticism, seeing the problems of his people as systemic. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, he asserted that the African Americans are

perpetually detained, and heavily burdened with a lasting dual consciousness, in which the soul is constantly fighting, because they look at themselves according to the whites' standards.

Du Bois found the basis of a specific culture of crime and social pathology in the urban population of African Americans, racially segregated, unqualified, and uneducated, depleted and devastated black masses. His famous statement – "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line" (Du Bois 2007: 3), confers a universal dimension to the race relations. He divides mankind into "white" – WASPs (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) and the Western European – and "colored'. This division, although largely racial, is essentially a cultural one, as many white people belong to the category of "colored", while one can imagine that someone is "colored" while culturally "white".

Du Bois's thought is based on pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism. He interprets social relations as an endless process. He views future as a process, controversy, the ongoing resolution of an unsolvable problem, while Douglass' view, albeit subject to change, becomes an eschatological one at one point – a "mixed race" is the ultimate answer to the problem of racism in the United States.

3. The African American women between damnation and emancipation

One question shared by Frederick Douglas and W.E.B. Du Bois is their attitude towards the position of women in American society, especially the position of African American women. Although in two different historical contexts, it is possible to draw a clear thread connecting these two great fighters for emancipation. In his sociological studies, novels, and collections of essays, Du Bois not only recognized the problems faced by the Afro-Americans but described a special basis for slavery, civil inequality, racial segregation, and economic subordination. All that affected men slaves (and later descendants of slaves during the period of racial segregation), but in the case of black women, it was further reinforced: The link between women's rights and the rights of the goods should be sought in the specific US distribution of power. It cannot be compared with any of the existing forms of organization of power in the world. Among other things, blackmail did not only inflict a terrible physical pain but served and further degraded them by exposing their bodies to the views of all those present.

The African American theorist Gary Lemons points to the importance of the theory of natural law for Douglas's perception of full equality and De Bois's view that the freedom of women will be complete only when black women are free. He underlines their different approaches to the "woman question": Douglass contends that women are equal to men and deserve equal rights, while Du Bois is of the opinion that when the black woman attains her freedom, all women would be free. Moreover,

"For each man, personal, firsthand witness of women's oppression acted as the primary catalyst for his feminist development; each man consciously understood the *inter*relationship between women's liberation and black liberation; being black, male, and pro-woman(ist) posed a particular set of gender and racial issues for each man; and each man conceived women's rights within a larger human rights framework" (Lemons 2009: 14).

He further argues that both Douglas and De Bois' theoretical standpoints on the equality of women and men are deeply linked to their fate.

Chroniclers of African American political thought, among them African American historian Paula Giddings, unanimously share the opinion that both Douglass and Du Bois, each of them in their time, were leading feminists, with Du Bois continuing where Douglass stopped. Both of them cordially advocated a woman's right to vote, with the difference that Du Bois experienced the day when American women won that right. As far as Douglass's and Du Bois's views are in common, their approach and style were quite different. According to Lemons, Douglass based his feminism on the discourse of women's "natural rights". In Douglass, however, it was "cleansed" of racial access, in the sense that it bound these "natural rights" to a woman as such, regardless of racial affiliation. On the other hand, Du Bois is strategically oriented towards the fight of black women for racial equality. Lemons points out, citing an example from "The Damnation of Women", an essay included in *Darkwater* (1920):

"in 'The Damnation of Women,' his most passionate defense of black womanhood, he crafted a vision of women's liberation that simultaneously examined and denounced both gender and racial oppression. From this overtly racialized standpoint, Du Bois addressed the impact of sexism on all classes of women" (*ibid*. 53).

Du Bois's essay was written in a typical Du Boisian style, where the genre boundaries between autobiography, sociological study, fiction narratives, and historical analysis are blurred, and Du Bois outlined his own position on the problem of the black woman. Three are the basic topics that he points to: first, like Douglass, he advocates the full equalization of women with men in political rights; secondly, the right of women to be economically independent and, third, most importantly, to suppress the two main forces that affect the black women: sexism and racism. Du Bois questions the basis of patriarchal power and family relationships by pointing out that female self-esteem is sacrificed to the will of the "father", that is, that the woman is valued according to her domestic and material use value. The main cause of such a situation for Du Bois is the poverty, or economic dependence of women, conditioned by their cramped employment opportunities. And when they managed to find a job, it was as a rule that they had to sacrifice something essential:

"The world wants healthy babies and intelligent workers. Today we refuse to allow the combination and force thousands of intelligent workers to go childless at a horrible expenditure of moral force, or we damn them if they break our idiotic conventions. Only at the sacrifice of intelligence and the chance to do their best work can the majority of modern women bear children. *This is the damnation of women*" (Du Bois 1920: 164, italics mine).

Du Bois advocates motherhood in marriage and puts it on the top pedestal. Du Bois wants society to become such that a woman can reconcile the role of mother for which she is created, with the role that enables her to achieve her personality in a job for which she is talented and in which she also needs to prove and confirm herself. He underlines that the living conditions of black women are much more difficult than the circumstances in which white women live. This was especially emphasized at the time of slavery, but the situation of black women even after slavery, during the period of racial segregation was incomparably more difficult than the unsettled position of women in general in American society. Du Bois also speaks about the special quality of black women whose motherhood he sees as gentler and more self-sacrificing than the motherhood of other women, and as a mission that the black race gives to humanity:

"land of the mother is and was Africa. In subtle and mysterious way, despite her curious history, her slavery, polygamy, and toil, the spell of the African mother pervades her land. Isis, the mother, is still titular goddess, in thought if not in name, of the dark continent" (*ibidem* 166).

4. Feminist concerns

Lemons believes that the defence of black motherhood in "The Damnation of Women", the emphasis on the heroism of black women as women, mothers, workers, and revolutionaries, is a kind of Du Boisian testament to the commitment of black women and his ultimate admiration for their courage. Du Bois singles out two prominent figures, the hero of the American civil war and post-war time, Black Abolitionist Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth. The two of them not only have been proclaimed saints on the official lists of saints of two Protestant denominations, but soon, as the first women to whom this honor came, they can also be found on dollar bills.

Harriet Tubman was born a slave, probably in 1820, in the state of Maryland as the Araminta "Minty Ross", and managed to escape from slavery in September 1849, along with her brothers Ben and Henry. Only two weeks later, due to the returning brothers, she was forced to do the same, but she quickly ran away freely, without her brothers, this time forever. Neither partial deafness, nor illiteracy, or complete ignorance of geography, hindered her from achieving a great feat: she

helped hundreds of black slaves to escape to freedom along the "Underground Railroad", a network of anti-slavery activists and safe houses for hiding, and she never lost any refugees on the way. For this reason, the abolitionist and suffragist William Lloyd Garrison gave her the nickname "Moses," referring to the *Old Testament* prophet who brought the Jewish people out of Egypt. During the American Civil War, she was a reconnaissance and intelligence officer of the Union Army and its guide to risky missions in a difficult field. She was legendary, a symbol of courage and incredible resourcefulness. In the post-war period, until the end of her life in 1913, she was very active in the women's rights movement.

Sojourner Truth was born into slavery in 1797 in the district of Ulster in the state of New York, as Isabella "Bell" Baumfree. In 1826, together with her little daughter Sophia, one of her five children, she managed to escape into freedom. Two years later, she was able to make a court order to join her five-year-old son, Peter, who was illegally sold to the southern state of Alabama, becoming the first African American in the history of the United States to get such a case against a white man in court. Sojourner Truth is the name she gave herself in 1843, and she became extremely active in the abolitionist movement and soon in the movement for women's rights, until her death in 1883. Her contribution to the American Civil War in recruiting black men to the Union Army was enormous. Truth was remembered by her contemporaries as a charismatic figure of extraordinary intelligence, a great speaker, a distinctly self-supporting personality. Over the years, she secured her place among central national figures in the struggle for the emancipation of blacks and all women, regardless of the color of the skin. Her most famous speech, held in 1851 at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, in which she pledged full equality of women and men and equal civil rights of blacks and whites, was published shortly after being held, but 12 years later a revised version appeared, which was held up to our day, named characteristically for the Southern speech, *Ain't I a Woman?* The title of that speech was later used by a radical feminist, bell hooks, as the title of her most famous book.

Theoreticians of feminism are generally recognized by three main types of feminism: liberal, radical, and socialist, that is, Marxist, and according to some authors there are still cultural, ecological, psychoanalytic, essentialist, and postmodern feminisms. American feminist theorist Alison Jaggar (1989) also established a chronological division of feminism into "waves", which is widely accepted in the feminist movement, and according to that division, Douglass certainly belongs to the first, liberal wave of feminism in mid-19th century, while Du Bois – even though he died before the occurrence of the wave in the late sixties and early seventies of the 20th century – belonged to another, and in some ways even to the newest, third wave. According to Angela Jean Hattery, Du Bois laid the foundations of black feminist thought and epistemology. He was "the first American Sociologist to advance the race, class and gender paradigm", while his works are at the very basis of black feminist thought, even if "Du Bois was an outsider and his ability to connect these three 'systems of domination' was slowed and does not take

centre stage until the 2nd wave of feminist scholarship in the 1980s" (Hattery 2005: np). Hatteri also pointed out that Du Bois, for several decades before contemporary feminists, criticized racism within the women's voting rights movement: "Du Bois is very critical of the racism in the movement for women's suffrage and much later black feminists would be critical of the same in the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s" (*ibidem*).

A few decades later, Angela Davis combined these three categories in *Women, Race and Class* (1981). This only further confirms Du Bois's power to predict the topics that will just come to an end. This is true even for his sociological work. Regardless of the progress of statistical methods and other sociological tools, connoisseurs of African American studies find that *The Philadelphia Negro* is still well-updated today. And in other times, in other circumstances, the patterns of social pathology that Du Bois saw yet.

It is not quite usual today to characterize a man as a feminist, and in the middle of the 19th century, it was to act utterly strange; however, Douglass publicly declared himself as a feminist, which is also in accord with his character: when he believed something, he did not hide it, on the contrary. He was aware of the spirit of the time and of the social climate in which he lived. Therefore, he found it appropriate to remind those who were inclined to mock the new movement and the very importance of women's rights that they should by no means be proud of their attitude.

5. Douglass and (African American) feminism

Douglass considered the struggle for the rights of women as his moral obligation of the highest order. This stems from his life experience and from his lofty understanding of natural law defined as Jefferson did in the Declaration of Independence. He was at the centre of the debate on racial and gender issues both in the abolitionist movement and in the women's right to vote. In *Life and Times*, his third autobiography, Douglass comments on the role of the African American woman in the time of slavery:

> "Her heart and her conscience have supplied in large degree its motive and mainspring. Her skill, industry, patience, and perseverance have been wonderfully manifest in every trial hour. Not only did her feet run on "willing errands," and her fingers do the work which in large degree supplied the sinews of war, but her deep moral convictions, and her tender human sensibilities, found convincing and persuasive expression by her pen and her voice" (Douglass 1992: 903).

In his autobiographies, Douglass pointed out that his mistress Sophia Auld and his first wife Anna Murray contributed decisively to his personal emancipation. The first one is responsible for the beginning of Douglass's literacy, and the other is

– but also because he was not a slave – she hoped that he would also be free. Anne Murray helped him escape from bondage and come to New York, after which they soon married. Douglass has attached particular importance to morality, which is inextricably linked with the family and the idea of family as a basic human community; slaves were systematically deprived of all that by destroying both their humanity and any idea of dignity. Douglass and other chroniclers of that time left plenty of testimonies that the breaking up of the slave family structures by the violent separation of the closest relatives, which would later almost never again meet, was a very widespread practice of slave owners. All this went hand-in-hand with the southern version of the confession of Christianity, which is why Douglass called the "slave Christians" with full-right slaves and their faith "false Christianity". The master, at all times, seeks to prove to himself that the slave is not a man, and accordingly, he does not have the right to a family; there is no marriage or religious wedding ceremony, there is no father or mother, brothers, and sisters, nor family holidays, birthday, for no slave knows when he was born, only a family could say that. The slaveholders had a completely clear rule that is valid at all times, that the destruction of families and any ideas about the family, as well as the encouragement of all kinds of values represent a prerequisite for enslavement, because they destroy trust, morale, and solidarity, taking away the compass by which slaves could be oriented, especially to the idea of freedom; in short, cutting them to the level of the animal, which is ideal for slave owners.

The slaveholders were certainly cruel, but not stupid: they realized that the naked force had limitations and that the slaves in the long run could not be made to obey only with it. Because the survival of the system and the security of the slave owners were above all: "The slave's happiness is not the end sought, but, rather, the master's safety" (Douglass 1992: 201). Douglass explains that these holidays, along with a lot of drinks, music, and games, necessarily generated fights between the slaves, which their owners encouraged. These beatings, like the gladiatorial struggles, were in the function of "fun", and the slaves ended up remembering them and waiting to follow such an event. According to Douglass, those slaves who would not behave in such a way would behave properly, while the drunkenness in the first place would cause a slave to insult. Slaveholders had the power to fully master life and death of the slaves and had unlimited sex with "comfort girls," as they called them. According to African American feminist Gloria Jean Watkins (aka bell hooks),

"Racist exploitation of black women as workers either in the fields or domestic household was not as de-humanizing and demoralizing as the sexual exploitation. The sexism of colonial white male patriarchs spared black male slaves the humiliation of homosexual rape and other forms of sexual assault. While institutionalized sexism was a social system that protected black male sexuality, it (socially) legitimized sexual exploitation of black females" (hooks 2015: 41).

According to the prisoners who were forced to love, the relationship with white mistresses was especially distorted. The women, instead of being furious at husbands, were furious at slaveholders because they were supposed to whip their husbands, writes hooks.

Douglass linked manhood with citizenship, the military duty being an inevitability. He, like the Ancient philosophers, believed that in addition to the inalienable rights by birth, it was necessary to serve in the army of the political community whose member was a certain citizen. According to him, loyalty is expressed by the readiness to defend the state with his own life. Not only in Douglass's time, but also long after his death, the degradation of the masculinity of slaves was looked upon in a manner similar to his, which largely came from the conceptions of the poles in the 19th century. In her volume *Ain't I a Woman*, bell hooks distinguishes between the approaches to the oppression of African American men during slavery, seen as a "demasculinization", and the oppression the women were subject to. As a result, "the two forces, sexism and racism, intensified and magnified the sufferings and oppressions of black women" (hooks 2015: 21–22).

Contemporary black feminists, however, consider such a view as sexist and patriarchal and harshly contradict the previously common image of the relationship between sexes in slavery. According to the slaves – who were mistreated by white masters on a daily basis – the black slaves themselves were often extremely cruel. It is understood that slaves were forced into hard physical work, not much lighter than those performed by men. All this, according to contemporary feminist theories, women's robotic position seemed more difficult than that of the men.

Douglas unambiguously advocated equality in the enjoyment of political rights and he did not even consider that the right to vote was given to black men rather than women. To completely overcome the criticism of bell hooks, it suffices to quote the parts of the editorial that Douglas published in his journal *The North Star* on July 28, 1848, following a convention on women's rights in a series of his articles advocating for the equality of women:

> "we are free to say that in respect to political rights, we hold woman to be justly entitled to all we claim for man. We go farther, and express our conviction that all political rights that it is expedient for man to exercise, it is equally so for woman… there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise, or a hand in making and administering the laws of the land. Our doctrine is that 'right is of no sex'" (Douglas 1848: np).

Douglass was ahead of his time when it comes to the fight for women's rights. According to Lemons, some theorists of black feminism documented the racist treatment to which Douglass, like other black men and women, was exposed in the very women's rights movement, but dissuaded Douglass that, despite this, he paid enough attention to the political struggle of black women without being bound to the

full-term *Negro*. Douglas, however, made no distinction between sexes. He considered that there was no difference between the poles according to which one sex would be politically emancipated and capable of participating in a democratic process and the other one not. Thus, his motto of *The North Star*, which he founded on December 3, 1847, after disbanding Garrison and returning from a two-year trip to Great Britain and Ireland, read: "Right is of no Sex – Truth is of no Color – God is the Father of us all, and we are all brethren".

Douglass's feminism, like any other political position he defended, was consistent with the basic line of his political philosophy. Douglass, as already said, was liberal, and his liberalism was based on the *Declaration of Independence*. As a committed reader of the Declaration, he could not conclude anything else than the fact that women should have the same voting rights as men. As a consistent liberal, he would have to inherit this attitude completely independently of his personal experience, love or pity for his mother, Aunt Hester, mistress Sophia Auld or any other woman he knew. Douglass's principledness was not based on aesthetics, but on ethics, as he understood it.

6. From Douglass's "mixed race" to the unsettling cyborg

When liberalism had fierce competition, it was liberating, and emancipatory. However, at the "end of history", as advocated by Francis Fukuyama (1992), when there is no one against whom to release, liberalism simply follows its logic of liberating the individual, regardless of any kind of collective identity. From this prism, one should look at Donna Haraway's essay *The Cyborg Manifesto* and understand what it has to do with Frederick Douglass. Haraway published this work just in 1991, at the time of the victory of liberalism over the last opponent, a communist-minded figure in the former Soviet Union. In short, Haraway explains that the time of gender struggles is shrinking; more precisely, there will be no more, because the subjects of this struggle, men, and women, will naturally take the cyborg out of place, the "being" of the future, which is a mixture of man, animal, and machine. Haraway presented this new being in her book, *Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991) in the section "A cyborg manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the late twentieth century": "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (Haraway 1991: 149). Haraway further describes what this creature of the future is: "The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labor, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity" (*ibidem:* 150).

Haraway's cyborg will be the one who transcends full relationships by destroying the existence of a man and woman by his appearance, irresistibly reminiscent of Douglass's post-war American, in the sense that this also overcomes

the problem of racial tension with the disappearing race in their mixing. A "mixed race" becomes the end race – or the end of a race. There is, however, one important difference: Douglass's motive for propagating a "mixed race" comes from the most humane initiatives, while Donna Haraway's "cyborg" is not only inhuman, but obviously antihuman: he is postmodern, posthumous in post-liberalism.

In the same way that Douglas sees the liberation from racial differences by their literal poaching, Haraway sees the elimination of gender differences. Her proposal to women, to whom she primarily addresses the *Cyborg Manifesto*, is that they be self-taught, which ultimately will not be a matter of choosing but of evolution, that is, it is a matter of inevitability. This, therefore, is actually not just its proposal but an essential requirement. This requirement applies both to women (and men), as well as to animals and machines that will, even if they do not want this, naturally be sucked into a new entity, or a new "being", a cyborg. If Douglass's solution to the racial problem is the disappearance of the race, the "final solution" of the struggle for gender equality, Donna Haraway's solution is the disappearance of the sexes, or the destruction of humanity.

For Douglass, the overcoming of racial differences through the arrival of a "mixed race" man, which will become dominant in the United States, also in the 19th century seemed to be inevitable and a matter of an evolutionary process, but the important difference in relation to Haraway, Faye and others was that his initiatives were extremely humanistic. Douglass certainly could not have been of the mind that in the late 20th century the idea of liberation could become a motivation to plead for the liberation of man from humanity. Probably the same can be said for all other classics of liberalism, starting with Francis Bacon, John Lock, David Hume, Thomas Hobbes, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, and others, who have just paved the way for Haraway's trans-human, post-apocalyptic image. Understanding how things are going, some of the contemporary ideologists of liberalism realized that such an anarchic development should either be stopped or at least slowed down.

Conclusions

Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois permanently marked the political history of the United States, by asking questions and pointing to possible responses to some of the key identity problems of that country. A comparison of their work is important and necessary, not only for the concrete history of political ideas in the United States, but for giving universal answers and explaining a few abstract terms such as *freedom, equality, or justice*.

This research is devoted to the political ideas of Douglass and Du Bois, highlighting the differences between the two thinkers of the two eras of the African Americans fighting for emancipation. We underline their concern with the rights of the African American women, which marks them as feminists *avant la lettre*.

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Theoretical Resources for the Study of Tragedy – Modern Comparative Perspectives

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1. Introduction

I intend to investigate the relevance and topicality of several theoretical landmarks in the field of tragedy scholarship in order to better understand this genre in its classical, neoclassical and modern versions. This endeavour can prove important, especially when seen on the background of today's intellectual climate, where the foundations of critical analysis are (sometimes radically) reconsidered. Some of the most influential approaches to tragedy have been idiosyncratic, that is, very personal and speculative as well as militant. It is the case of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* ([1872]1993), but also of René Girard's theory of the „mimetic rivalry" and the „sacrificial crisis" (1972). George Steiner's famous *The Death of Tragedy* ([1961] 1966) also deserves attention, as a valuable resource for comparative analyses and at the same time as containing a very debated and contested / contestable main thesis (that of the uniqueness and exceptionality of Greek tragedy). *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* by Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet epitomizes the philological and psycho-sociological trend in tragedy studies. This type of approach tries to be, as much as possible, rooted in historical realities, but does not exclude the ambitious attempt of outlining a „historical anthropology" (1990: 9).

All these samples of tragedy scholarship demonstrate, in fact, that modernity has had a powerful impact both on the specialized exegesis of tragic theatre and on the literary rewritings. The study of palimpsests, intertexts, and, in general, post-classical reception of canonical ancient masterpieces are, predictably, conducted from the perspective of comparative literature (just a few examples: Brunel 1995, Ioannidou 2017, Mănescu 1977, Marin 2002, Pageaux 2000). The underlying assumption of most current approaches to tragedy is that, cultural "distance" and "difference" notwithstanding, the genre is entirely relevant for modernism and modernity (Krutch 1929, 1953; Gramatopol 2000) and even for our situation today (Critchley 2019). Any comprehensive presentation of this important cultural heritage for today's public will need to have in view "the context of late twentieth-century reading, criticism, and performance" and "to take note of changing patterns of reception, from antiquity to the present" (Easterling 1997: XV).

2. The maze of interpretations

There are, without any doubt, a multitude of possible approaches to tragedy, which can be complementary but also contradictory: philological, historical, philosophical, aesthetic, anthropological, sociological, psychological etc. Close reading and the application of deconstruction and modern literary theory are present even when it comes to a very archaic and difficult text like *Oresteia* (see Goldhill 1984). More recently, we can notice in the metadiscourse about tragedy traces of the main critical directions from the postmodern episteme (cf. Goldhill 1997): feminism, postcolonialism, New Historicism, last generation psychoanalysis, but also approaches from the field of performance studies (Macintosh 1997). Some of these critical accounts are obviously ideologized, while others seem to be much more open towards the various and unpredictable results of research, irrespective of their alignment or non-alignment to the current standards of ethical or political correctness. Other innovative approaches are in the rather technical fields of digital humanities, with a focus on social networks (Rydberg-Cox 2011), or on cognitivism (Meineck 2017), while other interventions promise paradigm shifts and spectacular reversals (like William Marx in his 2012 book, where he wants us to accept the possibility of a tragedy *without* the tragic).

The researcher will unavoidably feel overwhelmed by the multitude of accessible scholarship and, not least, by an impression of chaos and unresolvable contradictions within the multitude of critical accounts. One could even think that systematization remains elusive. And still, it is possible to put some order in the apparently amorphous mass of bibliographical sources with divergent positions and orientations. What could finally help us find our way through this labyrinth is precisely the preliminary choice of a particular Ariadna's thread (which could in fact be just a hypothesis, or an interpretive pre-judgment), or, one could also say, the choice of an Archimedean point which would allow us to watch and assess the most representative, outstanding, useful and applicable critical grids which have been proposed so far. Once this path is assumed, the puzzle pieces will (hopefully) come into place, as if attracted by the „magnet" of the central idea.

The idea with a value of orientation for which I have opted is the one concerning the imprint left by modernity on the grammar of the *tragic* such as the latter has been configured starting with Aristotle's *Poetics*. I contend that this choice is not arbitrary or whimsical, but instead is determined, maybe even imposed, by the concrete reality of successive sedimentations on the theoretical and critical vulgate in its diachronic dynamics.

Contrary to William Marx, who thought we should "save" (2012: 10) tragedy from our own modern conception of an autonomous literature in order to really understand it, I argue we only need to acknowledge modernity's importance and inevitability in the discourse about tragedy, even when this takes the form of

misreadings and projections[1] on the past from the present. In Rita Felski's words, "To rethink tragedy is, of necessity, to acknowledge a history of prior thought. Indeed, the magisterial bulk and sheer weightiness of that history still cast a long shadow over the present" (Felski 2004: V). A totally different perspective is engendered by the vocal *rejection* of the tragic legacy and outlook on life, usually on grounds of a progressive ideology. Thus, the Marxist scholar Raymond Williams brings into attention the sociological and political view of writers (like Bertold Brecht) and critics who "have often rejected tragedy as in itself defeatist. Against what they have known as the idea of tragedy, they have stressed man's power to change his condition and to end a major part of the suffering which the tragic ideology seems to ratify" (Williams 1966: 63).

When we say that modernity has influenced the way we perceive literary phenomena from remote eras, we should not forget, also, that modernity itself is diverse and divergent, contradictory and often at odds with itself. At the same time, "the idea of modernity" in its turn is deeply influenced by tragedy and its underlying philosophy (cf. Billings & Leonard 2015). Both the progressive and the anti-modern strands of modernity emerge in these multi-layered, palimpsestic realities. Modernity replaces the tragic "sublime" by a hybrid form which has been called "tragic farce" (Munteanu 1989). In the framework of this genre there is no chance for any theodicy, because the universe is seen either as a labyrinth or as a jungle.

In the rest of the article, I will focus on individual examples of studies which have been seminal and / or can be considered representative for a more general direction in specialized scholarship.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche on the origin, flourishing and demise of tragedy

The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music [*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, 1872], Friedrich Nietzsche's first book, written when he was a very young professor of classical studies, has been an unusual book from the very start[2]. It is not at all easily classifiable, as it only partially fulfils the requirements of a scholarly treatise, even though, "as a philologist", Nietzsche's "fluency in ancient Greek was legendary among his contemporaries", "his knowledge of the Greek tragic plays was intimate", and "the works of the Greek poets – from Homer to Pindar – were always at his fingertips" (Daniels 2013:7). There are more and more studies

[1] Later on, I will bring into discussion some proposals for avoiding such projections, by following the lead of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet.
[2] The book promptly elicited a harsh response from the classicist Ulrich von Willamowitz-Moellendorf and some critics even claimed, over the years, that the writing of this book has ruined Nietzsche's career. Conversely, William Arrowsmith shows that "time and recent scholarship" have "vindicated" Nietzsche, "the man who 'arrogantly' dared defy the scholarly consensus of the time for the simple reason that it did not make literary or cultural sense to him" (Arrowsmith 1963: 10).

being published concerning Nietzsche's genuine value as a classicist (cf. Heit & Jensen 2014).

The first edition, published in January 1872, under the aforementioned title, with a *Preface to Richard Wagner*, was followed by a second edition in 1874 (only slightly revised), and a third one in 1886, which was renamed *The Birth of Tragedy. Or: Greekwood and Pessimism. New Edition with an Attempt at a Self-Criticism.* The fact that Nietzsche himself was so prone to self-revision and self-criticism should be taken into consideration when one reads later deconstructions of the text, penned by professional critics (de Man 1979, Clark 1987), eager to denounce the contradictions within the argumentation. As Michael Tanner points out in the *Introduction* to the 1993 edition of the book, the deconstructive approach hardly brings any "valuable insight", considering that Nietzsche never intended "a rigorous analysis" (1993: XXVII) in the first place. Instead, "since it is clear that the mode of presentation in *BT* is febrile and impressionistic, we had better accept it on those terms or leave it alone" (*ibidem*). In fact, his work has enjoyed a recent, "striking" "rehabilitation", in such a way that Nietzsche

> "is now hailed as an inspiratory figure and guide to rethinking tragedy. The very untimeliness of Nietzsche's ideas has rendered them newly timely; his vision of tragedy […] offers a provocative challenge to the received view of Greek antiquity as the cradle of Western civilization and an epoch of enlightened serenity" (Felski 2004: VIII).

Perhaps the most memorable and well-known aspect of *BT* is the central dichotomy which made it famous: "art derives its continuous development from the duality of the *Appoline* and *Dionysiac*" (Nietzsche 1993: 14). These two complementary "tendencies" should be seen as representatives of the "separate art worlds of *dream* and *intoxication*" (*ibidem*). It is quite evident that he conceives of this conceptual paradigm, which is even compared to "the duality of the sexes" (*ibidem*), as universal, and not just proper to the Greek culture. Nietzsche might seem to privilege the Dionysiac, but his observations about the Appolinic counterpart of tragedy are equally enlightening. For instance, if we want to study the tragic primarily through the lens of the tragic flaw / fault / guilt (Saïd 1978, Mălăncioiu 2013), or the notions of *hubris* and *hamartia* (Popescu 2015), it is important to remember that "hubris and excess are considered the truly hostile spirits of the non-Apolline realm" (Nietzsche 1993: 26). The god of light and expiation is also associated by Nietzsche, in a very intriguing way, with the notion of *dialogue*: "Everything that comes to the surface in the Apolline part of Greek tragedy, the dialogue, looks simple, transparent and beautiful. In this sense the dialogue is an image of the Hellene […]" (*ibidem*: 46).

While exalting the Dionysiac as a possibility of escaping the "principium individuationis", the author does not hesitate to blame Socrates and Euripides for the demise of the true, authentic tragedy, supposedly for the manner in which the last important playwright has injected a surplus of rationalism (in fact, sophistry) and

realism in the original grammar of the genre. The argument will be repeated, in various forms, by the following exegetic tradition, although it is sometimes turned on its head, with many critics praising Euripides for the same democratizing innovations Nietzsche reproaches him for:

> "The bourgeois mediocrity on which Euripides staked all his political hopes now had its chance to speak, where previously its dramatic language had been defined in tragedy by the demigod, and in comedy by the drunken satyr, the half-human" (*ibidem*: 56).

Another remarkable insight of *The Birth of Tragedy,* one for which Nietzsche is really famous, proclaims that "it is only *as an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*ibidem*: 32). The book was also concerned with the Greeks' reaction to sufferance, but this extreme aestheticism functions as a "radical anti-theodicy, a repudiation of the theologico-ethical foundations of several major world-views, including those of Platonism and Stoicism in antiquity, Christianity and Leibnizian philosophy in more recent times" (Halliwell 2018: 94).

Nietzsche's daring and very original argumentation did not remain without followers. Despite the widespread reticence to wholeheartedly accept all his theses, his influence can be subtle or insidious, as can be seen from other influential books on the topic, for instance in *The Death of Tragedy* by George Steiner, which will be referred to in the next section of the article. Although there are practically no direct references to *The Birth of Tragedy*, Steiner's 1961 study follows a similar logic of "grandeur et décadence". If we take a closer look at the whole paradigm of analysis, we can notice that both the search for the *birth* ("origin") of tragedy and for its purported *death* ("decline, demise, decadence") are pretexts for a more complex cultural critique and for cultural diagnoses, whose target is rather the present state of culture. As a matter of fact, the observation can be expanded, as Susan Sontag has pointed out, in an article about *The Death of Tragedy* included in *Against Interpretation,* to all "modern discussions of the possibilities of tragedy", which "are not exercises in literary analysis; they are exercises in cultural diagnostics, more or less disguised" (Sontag 1969: 138). Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that, far from searching a "return" to an idealized archaic Greece, Nietzsche "was interested to discover how Greece had become what it was and thought that the structural lesson might be of importance for his day" (Strong 1989: 991). We could say that he engages in a free dialogue with the "authority" (*ibidem*) of the tradition epitomized by the tragic canon.

Another aspect of Nietzsche's intriguing and sometimes exasperating book which has inspired many other authors is the central polarity *Dyonisiac – Appoline*, which becomes even more generic than its initiator had conceived it. Though I would not claim that E.R. Dodds has been definitely influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, I think there is an obvious similarity between Nietzsche's trademark dichotomy and Dodds' opposition between the *rational* and the *irrational* in Greek culture. We can infer from the Irish scholar's argumentation that the Nietzschean category of the

Dionysiac is reframed as "ecstasis" (Dodds 1962: 77, 94), and sometimes as "frenzy" (*ibidem:* 82) and "possession" (*ibidem:* 77). With the French sociologist Michel Maffesolli (2000), the "tragic" itself (whose "return" in postmodern societies he proclaims) acquires a meaning closely resembling the Dionysiac as described by Nietzsche: joy, euphoria, savage vitality, social *viscosity* or fusion.

4. The "death of tragedy" trope

According to William Storm, in the study *After Dionysus: A Theory of the Tragic*, the tragic spirit has not vanished from contemporary world; he confidently asserts that the tragic "endures in our own time" and "will continue" (Storm 1998: 7) for as long as human beings will experience existential dilemmas. Apart from this universalist argument, which we can find, in various formulations[1], with several scholars, there is a widespread interpretation concerning the so-called "death of tragedy", which was very much reinforced by George Steiner's book by the same title (1966). This lamentation of modern decadence[2] has also been denounced as a *myth* which "had no business ever existing" and which is "well worth dispelling", because "the very methodologies, arguments, assumptions, inconsistencies, and motives of its formulators clearly show that it is not at all a reasonable observation derived from observed evidence but rather a fiction dreamt up by the observers" (Van Laan 1991: 6). The "formulators" of the myth are, according to Thomas F. Van Laan, apart from George Steiner, Joseph Wood Krutch and Lionel Abel. The same issue has also been discussed in quite balanced and nuanced terms, by a careful consideration of the pros and cons of the "death" thesis (Brockmann 2002). As Stuart E. Baker aptly points out, many such controversies appear because of "the unreasonable demands that we have placed on tragedy" (Baker 1987: 17). One could even believe that this particular genre has become a cultural fetish, because of its decisive role in the construction of European identity[3]:

> "All men are aware of tragedy in life. But tragedy as a form of drama is not universal. Oriental art knows violence, grief, and the stroke of natural or

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[1] Here is another typical form of the same argument: "The increasing segregation of tragic theatre from public life in our own time may have seriously diminished its claim to immediacy. But we still reach out to the idea of the tragic when confronted by horror or catastrophe. Tragedy can shape experience and history into meaning and the shock of significance may have the power to transform us. The distinction between tragedy and the merely horrific accident or catastrophe lies in our expectation that knowledge might emerge out of the chaos of human suffering" (Bushnell 2005: 1).

[2] However, if we follow closely Nietzsche's argumentation, the seeds of decay were already present in antiquity.

[3] See also Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind. The Greek Origins of European Thought* (1969).

contrived disaster; the Japanese theatre is full of ferocity and ceremonial death. But that representation of personal suffering and heroism which we call tragic drama is distinctive of the western tradition. It has become so much a part of our sense of the possibilities of human conduct, the Oresteia, Hamlet, and Phèdre are so ingrained in our habits of spirit, that we forget what a strange and complex idea it is to re-enact private anguish on a public stage. This idea and the vision of man which it implies are Greek. And nearly till the moment of their decline, the tragic forms are Hellenic" (Steiner 1961: 3).

Decades later, George Steiner has resumed the ideas of his famous book in the article '*Tragedy', Reconsidered* (2004), in a synthetic and memorable form: "Absolute tragedy, whether in Euripides' Bacchae or Kafka's parable of the Law, is immune to hope" (2004: 4). Here he states that he has no intention of using any "formulaic, legislative definition" as the ones used "to label a literary genre", usually "variants on Aristotle's *Poetics*" (*ibidem*). Instead, he has in view a different "indispensable core" shared by various plays across the centuries, which is of a metaphysical nature:

> "This nucleus (Ur-grund) is that of 'original sin'. Because of that fall or 'dis-grace,' in the emphatic and etymological sense, the human condition is tragic. It is ontologically tragic, which is to say in essence. Fallen man is made an unwelcome guest of life or, at best, a threatened stranger on this hostile or indifferent earth (Sophocles' damning word, dwelt on by Heidegger, is *apolis*). Thus, the necessary and sufficient premise, the axiomatic constant in tragedy is that of ontological homelessness – witness this motif in Beckett, in Pinter – of alienation or 'tragedy,' reconsidered ostracism from the safeguard of licensed being" (Steiner 2004: 2-3).

Elsewhere in *The Death of Tragedy*, Steiner defines tragedy as "that form of art which requires the intolerable burden of God's presence. It is now dead because His shadow no longer falls upon us as it fell on Agamemnon or Macbeth or Athalie" (Steiner 1966: 353). But I think that, when applied to Greek tragedy, *God* can also be understood, less as a personal Christian God and rather more vaguely, as "transcendence", and, of course, the "necessity" of a metaphysical "law", or "destiny" (what the Greeks called *moira*). As modernity largely rejects transcendence and a metaphysical plane, this could be one of the reasons for which George Steiner maintains that genuine tragedy is almost entirely absent from the post-Renaissance and post-classical literary landscape. Another possible reason concerns the impossibility of a sublime, elevated language, appropriate for high drama, because "the political inhumanity of our time", as Steiner notices, "has demeaned and brutalized language beyond any precedent" (*ibidem*: 315). Although after Racine, as the author contends, true tragedies are few and far between, the book does not only searches arguments for the absence of the paradigmatic, pure tragedy, but also sheds light on the many exceptions and unexpected manifestations of that

very revered form whose "death" he claims to deplore: from Pushkin to Schiller or Büchner and Wagner, true tragedy has re-emerged. Surprisingly, there are many positive examples from the age of Romanticism, which otherwise is considered by Steiner anti-tragic. Although the main thesis might be flawed and not likely to be easily accepted in our era, *The Death of Tragedy* remains a treasury of fine comparative analyses, still interesting and useful for any student of world drama.

A similar hypothesis about the radical discontinuity between the tragic theatre of the ancient world and the modern theatre, which is allegedly defined by the *meta-*level of self-reflection, was advanced by Lionel Abel in *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (1963). According to him, Hamlet and other early-modern or modern characters in drama are incompatible with the tragic atmosphere because they are too self-aware:

> "the persons appearing on stage in these plays […] knew they were dramatic before the playwright took note of them. What dramatized them originally? Myth, legend, past literature, they themselves. They represent to the playwright the effect of dramatic imagination before he has begun to exercise his own; on the other hand, unlike figures in tragedy, they are aware of their own theatricality" (Abel 1963: 60).

From these observations we can deduce that the intertextual and palimpsestic layers of tradition have a role in the perception of the world through bookish lenses which characterizes the protagonists of metatheatre. However, the assumption that characters in classical theatre were devoid of any self-awareness is as problematic as Steiner's claim that authentic tragedy has just "died" after the golden age of French neo-classicism and then has only known scarce and almost random moments of apparent resurrection. Unlike in Steiner's book, Abel's association of modernity with self-consciousness seems a little less derogatory towards "decadent" modernity. Beyond the many variations and modulations of this organicist vision, the trope of decadence and death of the genre is still prevalent.

5. The past in its own terms? Towards a "dialogic" methodology

While the engaging but very speculative (and sometimes even emphatic or exalted) accounts of the tragic discussed above are not without reproach and have attracted numerous critiques, there still remains the question about the most appropriate approach, which could compensate the shortcomings of the previous ones. Is there a more objective reading possible, one that would avoid modern projections and appropriations? Is it reasonable to even expect this from critical exegesis, no matter how well-documented? Can the researcher truly suspend all his / her preconceptions, presuppositions and preferences? Can they escape their contemporary ideological horizon and is a total immersion in the world of the studied texts indeed feasible? The model of analysis I want to bring into attention does not claim to be totally

objective or infallible in its interpretive solutions. Instead, I am going to make an example out of Vernant's and Vidal-Naquet's two volume-book because the authors, apart from their very informative and thorough analyses, raise some important epistemological questions that we can all learn a lot from. For instance, in the Chapter XI, entitled *The Tragic Subject: Historicity and Transhistoricity*, Jean-Pierre Vernant noticed that

> "The invention of Greek tragedy, in fifth-century Athens, amounted to more than just the production of the literary works themselves, objects for spiritual consumption designed for the citizens and adapted for them; through the spectacle, reading, imitation, and establishment of a literary tradition, it also involved the creation of a 'subject,' a tragic consciousness, the introduction of tragic man. […] there is no tragic vision outside tragedy and the tradition of the literary genre that it founded" (Vernant 1990: 240).

The very ontology of the "tragic" is thus put into question by Vernant's suggestion that it is the genre[1] itself (together with its ramifications, including intertextuality) which creates the category, or even the "substance" of the tragic, while with other authors the tragic is a pre-existing aesthetic category which can fill various genres, Greek tragedy being just the most prestigious among them.

Arguing from the standpoint of modernity seems to be a constant feature of the book: further evidence that the attempt to escape one's own Zeitgesit for the sake of "perfect" objectivity is futile. When trying to assess the distinct difference of ancient psychology (for instance, the notion of "will"[2] as a component of an individual, autonomous agent), Jean-Pierre Vernant does not shy away from taking the present *forma mentis* as a reference point: if "we are inclined to believe that it is as natural for man to make decisions and act 'as he wills' as it is for him to have arms and legs" (*ibidem*: 50). It is the immersion into the Greek mode of being, as revealed by Greek tragedy, and the subsequent comparison between Antiquity and modernity which helps demystify this fake universality, thus allowing the moderns to take some distance from their own position. The author's observations have a larger epistemological and methodological relevance, also relying on the scientific findings of their psychological-historical explorations:

> "The will is not a datum of human nature. It is a complex construction whose history appears to be as difficult, multiple, and incomplete as that of the self, of which it is to a great extent an integral part. We must therefore beware of projecting onto the ancient Greeks our own contemporary system for the organization of modes of behavior involving the will, the structures of our own processes of decision and our own models of the commitment of the self

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[1] I think the influence of poststructuralist theory is quite obvious in this regard.

[2] The chapter is entitled *Intimations of the Will in Greek Tragedy* (Vernant, Vidal-Naquet 1990: 49-84).

in action. We must examine, without *a priori* assumptions, the forms taken in Greek civilization by the respective categories of action and of the agent" (*ibidem*: 50-51).

Apart from choosing a certain theoretical frame and testing it against the object of study, the problem or challenge the researcher faces every time is to adapt his own mindset to the specificities of a different historical and cultural context. Vernant's and Vidal-Naquet's collection of studies is important because it offers us a solution for this very problem: one that is not utopian or dogmatic and did not result from a pre-formed, established ideology but which was devised in the practice of research, as a necessary and efficient, heuristic tool. In the *Preface* to the first volume, the authors clearly outline their preferred procedure (which is, in fact, somehow imposed by the texts themselves):

"Our studies presuppose a constant tension between our modern concepts and the categories used in ancient tragedies. Can *Oedipus Rex* be illuminated by psychoanalysis? How does tragedy elaborate the meaning of responsibility, the agent's commitment in his actions and what today we would call the psychological functions of the will? In posing such problems it is necessary to set up a clear-headed and strictly historical dialogue between the *intention* of the work and the mental habits of the interpreter. This should help to reveal the (usually unconscious) presuppositions of the modern reader and compel him to re-examine himself as regards the assumed objectivity of his interpretation" (Vernant, Vidal-Naquet 1990: 9-10).

The key-word *dialogue* in this excerpt reveals a serious commitment to a methodology which is flexible enough to allow permanent adjustments and refinements of the analytical instruments. Their attitude is all the more interesting and encouraging, especially if we take into consideration that the studies have been elaborated in the heyday of relativism, (post)structuralism and deconstruction.

New discoveries and proofs emerging in a field of study will always require new interpretations, which build upon previous models or dismantle them through well-articulated polemics. There can be, indeed, a middle ground between subjectivity and objectivity. Of course, what comes to mind is also the "hermeneutic circle", together with the issue of "prejudices" and "the historicity of understanding" (Gadamer 1989: 268). On the other hand, this is not necessarily the epistemological alignment suggested by the book I am discussing here. But the purpose of metacriticism must also be to bring together various approaches whose convergences are not always visible to their proponents or adepts. For instance, I could also make a connection with Umberto Eco's warnings regarding the perils of "overinterpretation" (1990a) and of mistaking the "utilization" of a text for its interpretation (1990b). I feel justified in this rapprochement not least by the phrase "the *intention* of the work" employed by the two French authors in the profession of faith quoted above (Vernant, Vidal-Naquet 1990: 9-10), which recalls the "intention

of the text (or *intentio operis*, as opposed to — or interacting with — the *intentio auctoris* and the *intentio lectoris*)" as discussed by Eco (1990a: 145).

Conclusions

In the template of "literature review" or "state of the art", the article presents a synopsis of tragedy scholarship, sampled on the criteria of representativity and subsequent influence. Friedrich Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, George Steiner's *Death of Tragedy* and Jean-Pierre Vernant's and Pierre Vidal-Naquet's *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* are the main studies featured in this short presentation. They span a period of almost two centuries, and put forth the seeds of relevant directions in this particular field, leading towards an ever better and more "dialogic" methodology. The prestigious authors of these books have balanced, to their best, subjectivity and objectivity, attention to historical context and to aesthetic value, and an interest in the uniqueness of Greek culture but also its universality.

The metacritical investigation has revealed that the speculations about the so-called "death of tragedy" are, more often than not, covert diagnoses of the modern world and its peculiar mentality or Weltanschauung. This, of course, is viewed as determined by the absence of God or desacralization, as well as by hedonism, individualism and narcissism (coupled with a diminished responsibility). All these elements of the modern worldview and sensibility, together with an obsession for psychological intricacies, make their way into the palimpsests and rewritings which take Greek tragic plays as their models. Some commentators have been very unhappy with the replacement of archetypal Greek tragedy by the modern drama, but lately, a more flexible use of the core conceptual repertoire (from the issue of "genre" to the "tragic" itself) has allowed the reconsideration of such radical indictments of modernity as the one formulated by George Steiner. A comparative framework for the approach of hypotexts and hypertexts will certainly further clarify many aspects of the larger problem of reception. The latter pertains to the intertextual echoes of the canon established by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides as well as to the complex dialogue which is initiated in the post-classical reworkings of tragic theory.

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Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City.* A Stratigraphic and Polysensorial Autobiography

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1. The emergence and the relevance of geocriticism and ecocriticism

Space has always been an important factor in human cultural production. Since ancient times, the idea of "space" and "place" has played a crucial role in literature, as well. If one thinks of some of the first literary works (*The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Holy Bible*, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Mahābhārata*), one cannot ignore the importance of the routes that the characters follow, the interaction between heroes and the environment (weather, flora and fauna). Thus, "space" can hardly be separated from the environment in the study of literary texts.

Time and history used to be the main preoccupation of literary critics until the spatial turn occurred after the World War II, so, space became the main target of scholars and critics, as Robert T. Tally Jr. noticed in the *Preface* of Bertrand Westphal's book, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*:

> "The nineteenth century had been dominated by a discourse of time, history, and a teleological development (following in the Hegelian tradition) and by a modernist aesthetic that enshrined the temporal, especially with respect to individual psychology (à la Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*). But after the Second World War, space began to reassert itself in critical theory, rivaling if not overtaking time" (Westphal 2011: ix).

Geocriticism, an approach coined and developed in the second half of the last century, aims, as Bertrand Westphal states in the *Foreword* to *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*:

> "[…] to explore some of the interstices that until recent times were blank spaces for literary studies. Geocriticism is clearly affiliated with those theories that unleash spatial perception and representation in a nomadic perspective, which have made for a very stimulating background" (Tally Jr. 2011: xiii).

An interdisciplinary method, geocriticism represents a nexus between literary studies, geography, environmental studies, cultural studies, religious studies,

philosophy and imagology, showing how space influences human cultural production. The Anthropocene has seriously changed the world and the way in which people interacted with their environment, creating the premises for collaboration between geocritics and ecocritics in the field of literary and cultural studies:

> "What once seemed to be fixed, stable, or at least reliable spatial or environmental markers, such as national boundaries, regional borders, public or private properties, and even identifiable climate zones, are now threatened by the increasing volatility of both the social and natural worlds. Indeed, this distinction between the social and the natural is itself dubious and unhelpful, and it becomes increasingly untenable as the twenty-first century wears on" (Tally Jr., Battista 2016: 2).

We are currently witnessing "the Spatial Turn", according to Edward W. Soja, and it is going to influence many other fields of research:

> "The Spatial Turn is still ongoing and has not yet reached into the mainstream of most academic disciplines. Its future expansion, however, has the potential to be one of the most significant intellectual and political developments of the twenty-first century" (Soja 2009: 12).

Living in a globalised world, people are more and more concerned about our planet; in order to fully understand the problems that the globe is facing, geocriticism and ecocriticism should converge and generate a stronger and unitary discipline: *geo-ecocriticism* or *Earth Studies*, as geography and biology are interdependent and interrelated. The connection between these two fields and human and social sciences is of paramount importance nowadays:

> "Nevertheless, it is essential for ecocritics to give greater consideration than they have thus far to the transformation in the dominant meaning of the word 'earth': from the most immediate ground of existence, the soil, to life's largest relevant context, the biosphere. The need not only to think globally but to think about the globe demands a politicised reading practice more akin to social ecology and Cultural Studies than to deep ecology and traditional literary studies. Such a practice would consider constructions of the Earth provided by economics, politics and biology, as well as literature, Tv and film" (Garrard 2004: 162).

Thus, a geo-ecocritical approach to literary texts is more desirable than a geocritical or an ecocritical analysis alone, to offer a holistic view of the explored book. My study will explore Orhan Pamuk's autobiographical text, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, from a geo-ecocritical perspective, combining narratology, intertextuality and interculturality.

2. The autobiographical dimension of *Istanbul: Memories and the City*

Istanbul: Memories and the City, as any other autobiographical text, is an autodiegetic narrative: the narrator and the main character is one and the same Orhan. The analysed book is full of analepses representing the author's memories. The complexity of the text consists of several intertextual implications (references to some internationally renowned writers such as Flaubert, Nerval, Conrad, Nabokov, Naipaul etc.) and its ekphrastic dimension (Orhan is artistically gifted), as well. Hande Gurses noticed the variety of components the author used in writing the analysed book:

> "With its variety of ingredients that includes autobiographical details from Pamuk's own childhood memories, photographs from the family album, newspaper articles, paintings, as well as writings […], *Istanbul: Memories of a City* (sic!) reflects the different levels, temporal and spatial, through which the narrator has experienced the city" (Gurses 2012: 47).

Orhan Pamuk starts his book from the standpoint of time and history, recycling the theme of childhood and blending it with the topos of Istanbul, a *centrum mundi* for the author: "From a very young age, I suspected there was more to my world than I could see: Somewhere in the streets of Istanbul, in a house resembling ours, there lived another Orhan so much like me that he could pass for my twin, even my double" (Pamuk 2006: 3). The narrator's approach goes from wide space to a local place, from general to particular. He emphasizes the symbiosis between him and Istanbul; his relation with his native city is so complex and solid, almost an attachment: "Istanbul's fate is my fate. I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am […] I've accepted the city into which I was born in the same way that I've accepted my body […]" (*ibidem*: 6).

Thus, Istanbul is a part of Orhan's body, soul and identity. This is an example of the integration of outer space into the inner space of a person. The author sometimes describes a decaying city, a pale memory of a magnificent empire, when he refers to Istanbul and considers his birth in this city a misfortune: "I sometimes think myself unlucky to have been born in an aging and impoverished city buried under the ashes of a ruined empire" (*ibidem*). So, his feelings towards his native place are sometimes mixed.

The Turkish term *hüzün* ("melancholy", "sadness") is in Pamuk's opinion one of the main features of Istanbul and its people and, in a meta-textual digression, he states that one reason for writing this book is represented by the reading of the works of the four melancholic writers of Istanbul:

> "I wrote this book in constant – and sometimes fierce – dialogue with four lonely authors who (after voracious reading, long hesitant discussion, and

meandering walks strewn with coincidences) gave modern Istanbul its melancholy" (*ibidem*: 107).

And *hüzün* sometimes affected the narrator himself, as a genuine Istanbulite. Saman Hashemipour considered that *hüzün* "is not the sadness about the lost glory of the Ottoman dynasty, but the pain of losing a society that nevertheless was the capital of Islam" (Hashemipour 2019: 103).

The narrator recalls his evolution from childhood to high school and university; as a consequence, the book can be considered a *bildungsroman*, a novel of development permeated by metafictional insertions and details regarding the family life (his fights with his elder brother, the lack of implication of their mother in these quarrels etc.) and a *künstlerroman* as well (it presents the artistic evolution of the narrator-author):

"Between the age of six and ten, I fought with my older brother incessantly, and as time went on beatings to which he subjected me grew more and more violent. […] Later, when reminded of those brawls, my mother and my brother claimed no recollection of them, saying that, as always, I'd invented them just for the sake of something to write about, just to give myself something colorful and melodramatic past" (Pamuk 2006: 294).

Pamuk alternated autobiographical chapters (which included not only actions from his past but also a detailed report of his feelings and thoughts, his love and the relationship with the others) and chapters on the history of Istanbul or about artists, writers or historians' writings on Istanbul and its people, ending his book with his final decision (after long discussions with his mother) to be a writer: "'I don't want to be an artist,' I said. 'I am going to be a writer'" (*ibidem*: 370).

3. Istanbul: The historical and spatial evolution

The city that embraces two continents is presented by Orhan Pamuk from two main perspectives: historical and eco-spatial; thus, the reader has the opportunity to follow the evolution of the ancient Byzantium or Constantinople to the modern Istanbul. The author offers a full perspective to his native city by presenting a variety of information concerning the architecture, the economy, the topography, the cultural diversity and the environment of Istanbul. He also inserted several photographs of different places from Istanbul or from his family album to sustain his narrative; as Esra Mirze Santesso noticed: "By inserting these images alongside the narrative, Pamuk seeks to alleviate the 'confusion' of the real city and his memories of it" (Santesso 2011: 154).

Pamuk dedicated a whole chapter to the transition from Constantinople to Istanbul, to the conquest of Byzantium by Ottomans, an almost forgotten period for the author as his interest in the Eastern Roman Empire was little:

"Like most Istanbul Turks, I had little interest in Byzantium as a child. I associated the word with spooky, bearded, black-robed Greek Orthodox priests, aqueducts that still ran through the city, Hagia Sophia and the red-brick walls of old churches. To me, these were remnants of an age so distant that there was little need to know about it. Even the Ottomans who conquered Byzantium seemed very far away" (Pamuk 2006: 170).

May 29, 1453, has a twofold significance, a different one for each of the cultures that came in contact: "For Westerners, May 29, 1453, is the Fall of Constantinople, while for Easterners it's the Conquest of Istanbul" (*ibidem*: 172).

The author describes the city at different times, using the data given by Turkish and European historians, writers and artists, and presents a vivid multilayered local history:

"The Pamuk Apartments were built at the edge of a large lot in Nişantaşı that had once been the garden of a pasha's mansion. The name itself, meaning 'target stone', comes from the days of the reformist sultans of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Selim III and Mahmud II), who placed stone tablets in the empty hills above the city in those areas where they practised shooting and archery; the tablets marked the spot where an arrow landed or where an empty earthenware pot was shattered by a bullet […]" (*ibidem*: 26).

This is merely one of the many *stratigraphic* descriptions of different places in Istanbul and this type of diachronical presentation of a place is similar to the work of an archaeologist who delves through strata of historical information, Pamuk's "archaeological" vocation being close to the one of a geocritic: "Because space only exists in its temporal strata, geocriticism will have an archaeological – or better, stratigraphic – vocation" (Westphal 2011: 122).

The author completes the presentation of his native city by depicting several disasters, mainly fires, which affected both the natural environment and the anthropic space. Pollution caused by the oil spill from ships is another threat against the ecological balance of the Bosphorus.

Istanbul: Memories and the City is a perfectly suitable text for a geocritical analysis as it is dominated by *multifocalization* and *polysensoriality*. The narrator appeals to a plethora of personalities in the description of his native city, thus, the reader benefits of different points of view during the flow of the history of Istanbul. The depicted scenes are highly polysensorial as well, Pamuk uses all senses to give a holistic picture of different parts of the city or to talk about some events:

"When the ferry moved away from the shore and the windows began to tremble again, as we moved toward the cemeteries of the opposite shore, the black smoke from the ship's funnel would veil the view in a melancholy that made it look more like a picture. At times the sky seemed pitch black, but then, just like a corner in a film that suddenly comes aflame, a cold snow light would appear" (Pamuk 2006: 349).

Göknar Erdağ considers that Istanbul "constitutes the literary space that enables Pamuk to transcend the master narratives of secularism, modernity, and orientalism" (Göknar 2013: 227). Having a city on focus, treating its stratigraphic evolution from different standpoints and giving a full perspective to a place by using all sensory faculties, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* is a highly rewarding book for geocritics and ecocritics.

Conclusions

Orhan Pamuk exploited Istanbul both historically and spatially, with its plethora of landmarks. The book is difficult to classify, but after a thorough analysis one can assert that the main characteristic of *Istanbul: Memories and the City* is the autobiographical component, enriched by the intertextual relations with a diversity of writers, historians and artists. The analysed text is the result of an interdisciplinary approach to the city of Istanbul, as the author touched topics from history, geography, religion, environmental studies, recycling them in a unique style, giving the impression of a time tunnel. In addition to the autobiographical component, Pamuk's book presents three other features: *multifocalization*, *polysensoriality* and *stratigraphy*, being extremely suitable for a geo-ecocritical analysis.

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PART II

DISCURSIVE VARIATION IN INTERACTIONS

Prepositions in English Expressions of Disgust – A Cognitive Semantic Approach

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1. Introduction

Ekman *et al.* (1972) identify the six universal basic emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and surprise) and most of them are extensively studied in cognitive linguistic literature. Papers investigating the language of anger, happiness and fear are mainly concerned with the similarities and differences between the concepts of these emotions throughout a number of languages (see for example, Kövecses (1990, 2000), Wierzbicka (1992, 1996), Yu (1995), Apresjan (1997), Levontina and Zalizniak (2001), Esenova (2007)), however, the language of disgust seems to be neglected. Lakoff and Turner (1980) and Lakoff (1987) show the significance of metaphor and metonymy in human cognition in general, Kövecses (1990, 2000) demonstrates that through the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy we conceptualize our emotions in their complexity by capturing details of our facial expressions, physiological, bodily as well as our behavioural reactions.

The present paper[1] aims at showing the results of the first phase of a larger corpus-based study of the language of disgust in English. First, I will give a brief account of the theoretical background to emotion research, then describe my corpus built from sentences containing the term *disgust*, put forward my research questions concerning the role of prepositions in expressions combined with *disgust*. Next, I will briefly present the basic (mostly spatial) meanings of the prepositions *at, for, from, in, to, toward(s)* and *with,* which occur in phrases with *disgust*. Finally, using a cognitive linguistic approach I will discuss which image schemata may underlie the use of the above prepositions in English linguistic expressions of disgust and see what aspects of the disgust experience the prepositional phrases capture.

2. Theoretical background

Darwin in his seminal work entitled *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872 / 1999) discusses a number of human emotions, gives descriptions

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and photographic illustrations of facial expressions together with bodily movements and suggests that there is a close link between people's bodily movements and their mental states. He also claims that the facial expressions and bodily movements make it possible to recognize emotions not only in particular cultures but also throughout different cultures and in communities of different ethnic backgrounds.

In his discussion of the emotion "disgust", Darwin states that "The term 'disgust,' in its simplest sense, means something offensive to the taste. It is curious how readily this feeling is excited by anything unusual in the appearance, odour, or nature of our food" (Darwin 1872 / 1999: 256). He also claims that we also experience disgust when we smell, touch or see something revolting. Darwin describes the facial expressions of disgust as frowning, protruding the lips, etc., which may be followed by bodily reactions like spitting and pushing away the object that triggers the emotion (*ibidem*: 257-260).

Ekman *et al.* (1972) and Ekman (1999) follow the Darwinian tradition and identify the same facial expressions of disgust and prove by their research findings that people coming from rather remote places and cultures are able to identify disgust (and the other basic emotions) by looking at photos of facial expressions characteristic of the emotion. Based on their findings they claim that facial expressions of disgust are not culturally determined but have biological origin and are related to vegetative response patterns.

Plutchik (1980) claims that when humans meet a gruesome object as a disgust elicitor in a stimulus event, they find that this object is potentially a "poison" for them, they feel disgust in relation to the gruesome object. As the emotion appears, people may vomit or push the object away, that is, the behaviour results in rejection of the object. Such a chain of events is very likely to take place universally in a large number of (or perhaps all) human cultures, therefore the set of reactions has an evolutionary significance.

Rozin and Fallon (1987) and Rosin *et al.* (1993) focus on the survival value and the social function of the emotion of disgust. They make a distinction between "core disgust" and "interpersonal disgust". By *core disgust* they mean cases in which disgust is a result of oral incorporation of an object (in other words, eating some food) that may be dangerous, poisonous or contagious, while by *interpersonal disgust* they understand cases in which disgust is elicited by ill people, strangers, misfortunate people or people who are morally tainted. The main function of both types of disgust is to keep us away from anything or anybody that is unhealthy or can make us filthy.

McGinn (2011) has a more philosophical approach to the emotion "disgust" and compares it to fear and hatred. He claims that disgust is not an existence-dependent emotion like fear or hatred because people may feel disgust even if a disgust elicitor is physically not present but only appears in their minds. He adds that the main focus of disgust is proximity, therefore "we seek to avoid being close to what disgusts us" (McGinn 2011: 15), no matter whether the disgusting thing is real or imaginary, that is, it may exist in the physical world or it may only occur in the

disgusted person's mind. Therefore, disgust may be understood as a consciousness-cantered emotion rather than a body-cantered emotion because we tend to keep our consciousness clean from perceptual contact with the imaginary disgust elicitor.

The language emotion has long been studied in cognitive linguistics. Research has found that the language emotion abounds in metonymic and metaphoric expressions (Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 1990, 2000). Metonymies usually conceptualize physiological processes, facial expressions and behavioural reactions accompanying emotions, while metaphors conceptualize less easily observable and more subjective experiences going together with a change of emotion states (Wierzbicka 1996). Identifying conceptual metonymies and conceptual metaphors enables us to understand particular emotions in their complexity, which is the basis to understand human emotion in general.

Reviewing (some of) the cognitive linguistic literature on the language of emotion and emotion concepts I have found only a small number of analyses of disgust. However, Stefanowitsch's corpus-based analysis of several emotions contains his research findings in relation to disgust. His list of disgust metaphors presents several versions of the container metaphor and a number of other metaphors as follows: DISGUST IS A MIXED / PURE SUBSTANCE, DISGUST IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER (UNDER PRESSURE), DISGUST IS AN OPPONENT, DISGUST IS PARALYSIS / A DISEASE, DISGUST IS HIGH / LOW (INTENSITY), DISGUST IS COLD, DISGUST IS FOOD, DISGUST IS LIQUID, DISGUST IS PAIN, DISGUST IS AN ORGANISM, DISGUST IS HEAT, DISGUST IS A BALLOON, DISGUST IS A HEAVY OBJECT (Stefanowitsch 2006: 89). Kuczok (2016), on the other hand, makes a corpus-based analysis of English and Polish expressions of disgust and arranges the metaphors he identifies into thematic groups as follows: physiological metaphors – DISGUST IS BEING SICK, SHUDDERING and GRIMACING; metaphors based on certain sensory experiences as source domain entities – DISGUST IS TASTING SOMETHING BAD, SMELLING SOMETHING BAD, SEEING SOMETHING SPOILED / SOMEONE ILL / SOMETHING DIRTY / SOMETHING UGLY, and SEEING / TOUCHING AN UNPLEASANT ANIMAL; force dynamics metaphors – DISGUST IS A REPULSIVE FORCE and DISGUST / OBJECT OF DISGUST IS AN OPPONENT; reification metaphors – DISGUST IS A CONTAINER, DISGUST IS AN INSTRUMENT / MEANS FOR DOING SOMETHING and DISGUST IS A FLUID; orientational metaphor – DISGUST IS DOWN.

There are a few notes to be made here. Stefanowitsch's (2006) corpus contains expressions combined with the term *disgust* only, while Kuczok (2016) has a corpus of expressions a number of which do not contain the term *disgust* but contain some other words related to the topic such as *sick, nauseate, shudder, grimace, distasteful,* or *smelly,* just to name a few. Both Stefanowitsch and Kuczok only account for metaphors of disgust and neither of them discusses metonymies, however, going into more details would exceed the limits of the present paper. Finally, neither

Stefanowitsch nor Kuczok is concerned with the role of prepositions in English disgust expressions.

3. My research

For the aims of the present paper, I have built a corpus of sentences containing the term *disgust*. I have used an internet site[1] as a source. My corpus contains 175 sentences. The term *disgust* is used as a noun in 169 sentences and as a verb in 6 sentences. As a start of my work, I grouped the sentences according to certain grammatical considerations and found that *disgust* as a noun is combined with prepositions in an overwhelming majority of the sentences (127 instances of the use of one of the combinations preposition + *disgust, disgust* + preposition and preposition + *disgust* + preposition), with adjectives (17 adjectives in 26 example sentences) and nouns denoting other emotions (26 nouns in 24 sentences). Looking through the sentences containing prepositions combined with the noun *disgust* I have found the following prepositions in alphabetical order: *at, for, from, in, to, toward(s)* and *with.*

My research questions are: What is the basic meaning of each of the prepositions *at, for, from, in, to, toward(s)* and *with*? Are the prepositions used in their basic meaning or figuratively in combination with *disgust?* And what aspects of the disgust experience do prepositional phrases of disgust refer to? Which image schema can be associated with each of the prepositions?

Below, I will briefly outline the basic meanings of the aforementioned prepositions, then discuss what details of the disgust experience they capture and their meanings in the expressions: *in disgust, disgust at, disgust to / toward / towards, disgust from, disgust for, disgust with, to someone's disgust, from disgust* and *with disgust,* taken from my corpus and find out the underlying image schemata.

4. *at, for, from, in, to, toward* and *with*

The words *at, for, from, in, to, toward* and *with* all belong to the category of preposition in English; they have a wide range of meanings and usages, the most basic of which are spatial and functional meanings. When they are used in their spatial meanings they function as prepositions of place and they express the location of a thing or person in relation to another thing or person. Thus, for example, in the sentence *My mobile phone is in my handbag* the speaker describes the location of an object denoted by the phrase *my mobile phone*, which is inside another object denoted by the phrase *my handbag.* The mobile phone is thought of as the "trajectory", while the handbag as the "landmark" to apply the cognitive linguistic

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[1] https://sentence.yourdictionary.com/disgust

terms introduced by Langacker (1987: 217-220). The example illustrates the use of *in* in its literal meaning since the sentence describes a physical scene. In cognitive linguistics, trajectors are understood as relatively small and (potentially easily) moving / movable objects (animate and inanimate things), whereas landmarks as points of reference, relatively larger and more stable entities, usually places and locations, however, people can also function as landmarks. In *Peter is going to his mother* both the trajector and the landmark are animate. Spatial prepositions are often used figuratively, that is, metaphorically with abstract ideas as trajectors and landmarks, for example, *American society is in trouble* (Lindstromberg 2010: 10).

In our physical world animate and inanimate objects (trajectors) are located in various places, locations or containers denoted by expressions comprising spatial prepositions and landmarks. Sentences like *My mobile phone is in my handbag* and *American society is in trouble* instantiate the CONTAINER schema (Johnson 1987: 21-23, 126), the former use of *in* has a literal meaning, while the latter a metaphorical meaning. Our everyday experience is that containers can be things with boundaries and interiors and so they can hold things in their inside. Such features are thought of as characteristic of physical objects, however, we often think of abstract ideas in the same way, therefore they may also function as containers (Lindstromberg 2010: 31).

When we speak of moving or movable entities, we usually tell what their places of departure and their destinations are. The movement from one location to another is captured by the PATH schema (Johnson 1987: 113-117, 126) having three distinct points, the beginning, an intermediate point and the end. The preposition *to* in sentences like *Peter is going to the door/to his mother* refers to the end point of the path Peter (trajector) is taking. Peter's destination is the door or his mother, a location, where a physical object or a person is. In both cases the meaning of *to* + landmark (*the door / his mother*) is clearly literal, that is, spatial, where the landmark denotes a location. In sentences denoting an act of giving or sending *to* + landmark also refer to the end point of the path the book (trajector) takes, however, we comprehend the landmark (Mary) as a recipient (rather than a location) as in *Jane has given / sent a book to Mary*.

An intermediate point or location of a path is referred to by the preposition *toward* as in the sentence *Jack was walking toward his car*, where *toward his car* (*toward* + landmark) denotes a direction in which Jack (trajector) is moving. (N.B.: The sentence implies that Jack may or may not reach his car, cf. *Jack was walking toward his car when he heard his phone ring so he turned back to the house*.) The example shows that the meaning of *toward* is "nearer and nearer in the direction of" something (Lindstromberg 2010: 29) and its landmark does not necessarily denote the end point of the path in question.

The beginning / starting point / origin of a path is presented by the preposition *from* and its landmark as in the sentence *Peter is going to his mother from his father*. Peter (trajector) leaves his father/separates from his father. The sentence illustrates that the basic spatial meaning of *from* is the opposite of *to*. *From* also means the origin of something in a metaphorical sense in sentences like "*Apple cider vinegar*

is vinegar made from apple juice", where *from* refers to a "significant difference in chemical composition and taste between the two liquids" (*ibidem*: 45-46).

The preposition *at* also has a spatial meaning as in *Jill is at the station*, however, the meaning is somewhat vague. The phrase may mean that Jill, the trajector is "near the station", "in front of the station", "inside the station building", or perhaps "at the platform". Lindstromberg (2010: 17) claims that "Depiction of the spatial meaning of *at* is problematic because it lacks imageable detail". Lindstromberg (2010:173-174) explains this phenomenon by claiming that "Using and understanding *at* in its spatial sense often involves a mental act of 'zooming out' so that the Subject [=trajector] and Landmark are visualized from such a distance that they merge into a single point." In other words, the details are not depictable, we only know that Jill is within easy reach of the station. *At* also has a few non-spatial meanings as in (a) *look / stare / gaze at something / somebody*, where there is a sharp focus on the landmark (*ibidem*: 177), (b) *Mark throws a ball at John,* where John, the landmark, is the target (not the recipient as in *Mark throws the ball to John*) and (c) *be good / bad at maths*, where the landmark is "presented as a target, or at least, a potential focus of activity" (*ibidem*: 180).

The preposition *for* is not thought of as a spatial preposition today, however, *for* is etymologically linked to the Old Teutonic word *for a* meaning "before" and "in front of" (*ibidem*: 225). Lindstromberg claims that in sentences like *This book is for Mimi* the landmark presents the intended recipient, in front of whom the book is placed in a real-life act of giving. He also notes that *for* is used to earmark the book, the trajector, "as something offered, or reserved for, immediate or eventual use, consumption, or possessions by the landmark" (*ibidem*: 226).

Finally, the preposition *with* is used to describe spatial relations, however, its meaning is vague and shows that the trajector and the landmark are close to / near each other and there may be contact between them but it gives no specification about their relative positions. The sentence *The eraser is with the pencils* states that the trajector and the landmark are near each other but it does not specify how they are arranged in space, they may be near each other in any direction. *With* has a functional meaning to denote the trajector and the landmark "as elements of an overall ensemble such as THING + APPURTATENANCE" (*ibidem*: 214), for example, *a house with a garden, a man with a problem.* By the phrase *a house with a garden* we denote an ensemble of real estate items (usually the house is located on the site of the garden) and by *a man with a problem* we refer to person + problem ensemble, that is, to someone who potentially needs help. (In the latter example the question of spatial arrangement is not relevant.)

5. Prepositions in English disgust expressions

I have found the following prepositional phrases with *disgust* used as a noun in my corpus: *in disgust, disgust at, disgust to / toward / towards, disgust from, disgust for, disgust with, to someone's disgust, from disgust* and *with disgust* Below I will discuss

whether the prepositions are used in their basic meaning or in some metaphorical sense and see what aspects of the disgust experience these prepositional phrases refer to and which image schemata they can be associated with.

The phrase *in disgust* occurs in 48 sentences in my corpus and is combined with 33 different verbs referring to roughly 3 kinds of actions: (a) turning / moving away from the cause of disgust, (b) agitated behavioural reactions and (c) bodily reactions such as shaking one's head or crinkling one's nose, etc., for example,

(1) Some of the featured careers are fairly tame, while others have to be heavily edited in order to keep the audience watching instead of changing the channel *in disgust*.

(2) His manual skill was duly appreciated: "I was a thousand times tempted", he said long afterwards, "to tear up my drawings *in disgust* at the esteem in which they were held, as if I had been good for nothing better".

(3) Dean said as the others returned to work, Rita shaking her head *in disgust* and Harrigan trying to talk on the phone by sticking a finger in one ear.

In all the three examples the phrase *in disgust* describes the emotional state of the experiencer. The experiencers (*others, I* and *Rita*, respectively) are understood as the trajectors and the emotional state disgust is the landmark. The landmark serves as the container for the experiencers, that is, examples (1-3) make use of the CONTAINER / CONTAINMENT schema (Johnson 1987: 21-23, 126). The container schema underlies the metaphor DISGUST IS A CONTAINER (FOR THE EXPERIENCER), which is a specific-level version of the metaphor EMOTIONAL STATES ARE CONTAINERS (Kövecses 1990: 145). The sentences composed with the phrase *in disgust* highlight the actions the experiencers do to get out of a disgusting situation or to "get rid of" what causes their disgust.

The phrase *disgust at* occurs in 26 sentences in my corpus and the landmarks of the preposition *at* refer to various disgust elicitors such as unpleasant smells and tastes, revolting things that can be felt or sensed, events or actions that are morally or ethically wrong or unacceptable. In sentences like (4) and (5) the experiencer is in a state of disgust (probably has been in disgust for a certain period of time):

(4) In 59 Thrasea first openly showed his *disgust at* the behaviour of Nero

(5) [...] whose justifiable *disgust at* the sight of discarded chewing gum or of dog turds on the pavement made him find alternative routes home.

In these examples the trajector is the emotion *disgust*, which as a result of the experiencer's behaviour gets into contact with the landmark (the behaviour of Nero, the sight of discarded chewing gum and dog turd). As we have seen above when *at* is used in its spatial sense the trajector and the landmark merge into a single point therefore the details are not depictable, while in non-spatial uses of *at* (a) there is a sharp focus on the landmark as in *look at something/somebody* and (b) the landmark denotes the target as in *throw the ball at somebody* (not the recipient as in *throw the ball to somebody*). In expressions like *show one's disgust at something* both the spatial and non-spatial meanings (trajector and landmark merged into a single point, landmark as target) may come into play. In other words, the disgust elicitor and the

emotion of the experiencer are in close contact (they are merged in a metaphorical sense), the disgust elicitor / the cause of disgust must be in the focus of the experiencer's attention, therefore it gets an intense emotional reaction and in this event the disgust elicitor is the target of the emotional reaction. The emotional reaction comes about because the experiencer gets into contact (mental and / or physical contact) with the disgust elicitor. On the whole, the use of the preposition *at* in *show disgust at* can be explained by the use of the CONTACT schema (Johnson 1987: 126).

There is only one example sentence using the phrase *disgust to* and two sentences using *disgust toward* and one using *disgust towards* in my corpus. The verbs are *take* and *feel* in the sentences, *disgust* is the trajector and the phrases after *to / toward / towards* denote the landmarks.

(6) He took a *disgust to* the world and its occupations, and experienced a longing to give himself over to an ascetic life.

(7) I thought you felt *disgust toward* me and would turn me away.

(8) They begin to feel resentment and *disgust towards* each other.

The landmarks (*the world, me, each other*) in examples (6-8) refer to people who are disgust elicitors, however, we do not know what they have done to cause the experiencer's disgust. In comparison with situations described by phrases like *feel disgust at*, sentences (6-8) show a more dynamic character, the trajector (disgust) and the landmarks (people) are not in direct contact (definitely not seen as merged into a single point). The prepositions *to, toward* and *towards* have a directional meaning and refer to the (virtual) path 'taken' by disgust felt by the experiencer in the direction of the people causing the emotion. The PATH schema (Johnson 1987: 113-117, 126) with *to* highlights the end point of the path the trajector takes, while *toward* and *towards* highlight an intermediate point of the path. Example (9) (the only example in the corpus) uses the phrase *disgust from* highlighting the beginning (or origin) of the metaphorical PATH where disgust comes from:

(9) His intellect, indeed, was not incapable of understanding and admiring the majestic edifice of Roman law; but he shrank with *disgust from* the illiberal technicalities of practice.

The landmark after the preposition *from* depicts the disgust elicitor in the situation and that is where the experiencer's disgust originates from.

My corpus contains seven examples with the phrase *disgust for*. The verbs used in the sentences are *express, feel* and *have*:

(10) I really did like him and cared about him, but now I just have *disgust for* him.

(11) You are simply expressing a *disgust for* his public behavior.

In sentences (10) and (11) the prepositional phrase with *for* names the person, thing or phenomenon that causes the experiencer to feel disgust. The situations depicted in these sentences seem to last for a period of time and there seems to be no reference to change in the emotional state. In a sense the emotion is pending (it has come about and exists because the experiencer sees or hears something unacceptable). The construction *having / expressing disgust for someone* is very

similar to *having a book for Mimi*, where Mimi is the intended recipient of the book. In an act of having / expressing disgust for someone the person denoted by the *for* phrase is meant to be the "intended recipient" of disgust, that is, *for* is used metaphorically, and disgust may be viewed as a reaction to his/her behaviour or deeds. The use of *for* may be a special case of 'earmarking' (Lindstromberg 2010: 226) an emotion for someone doing something wrong to the experiencer. In such a case *disgust* is understood as the trajector and the "intended recipient" is the landmark. In a real act of giving (e.g. giving a book to someone) the landmark would refer to the end of the path where the trajector lands after taking its path to the recipient. Likewise, in an act of having / expressing disgust for someone the *for* phrase denotes the end of the path in a metaphorical sense. Therefore, I claim that it is the (end of the) PATH schema that underlies the expression.

There are four example sentences containing the phrase *disgust with*. The expressions after the preposition *with* refer to long-lasting situations (life, a new sibling in the family, someone's cruel misrule, regime and the like) that evoke the experiencer's disgust:

(12) Pierre no longer suffered moments of despair, hypochondria, and *disgust with* life, but the malady that had formerly found expression in such acute attacks was driven inwards and never left him for a moment.

(13) Verbal toddlers may express their *disgust with* the new sibling by asking, "Isn't it time to send him back?"

(14) In 853 and the following years Louis made more than one attempt to secure the throne of Aquitaine, which the people of that country offered him in their *disgust with* the cruel misrule of Charles the Bald.

The causes of disgust denoted by the expressions after *with* are difficult if not impossible to change for the experiencer, they seem to be constant for the time being since they are either people or static situations. In other words, in sentences (12-14) the trajector is disgust, a more or less abstract thing, while the landmarks are more or less concrete and their relation can be explained by "an important metaphorical application of the notion 'non-specific proximity'" (*ibidem*: 219). I find that the non-specific proximity of disgust and its cause may be posited in the mind of the experiencer, however, the proximity of the cause and the emotion has its relevance in the physical reality of the experiencer as if the cause and the emotion were 'sitting together' (*ibidem*: 219). NB.: There are a number of other emotion words used with *with*, for example *happiness, satisfaction, content, frustration* and their adjectives. The metaphorical application of *with* for the notion of non-specific proximity can be explained by the NEAR(-FAR) schema (Johnson 1987: 125).

There are seventeen sentences in my corpus that describe things happening *to someone's disgust*. The expressions in the possessive case denote the experiencers of the emotion disgust. The actions or events denoted by the sentences have a negative effect on the experiencer by their unpleasantness (however, they may be not very revolting, dangerous or harmful, cf. (15).

(15) Fred stood up suddenly, much *to Mrs. Lincol's disgust*.

(16) Tristan undertakes the mission, though he stipulates that he shall be accompanied by twenty of the barons, greatly *to their disgust*.

In its basic spatial meaning the preposition *to* together with its landmark refers to the endpoint of the path the trajector takes. Actions and events depicted in sentences like (15-16) cause someone's disgust and are to be viewed as trajectors, which get to the experiencers Mrs. Lincoln and the barons in the two examples above, that is, the actions and events metaphorically travel to the endpoint of a path, that is, the experiencer. To test this idea, for example, sentence (15) can be paraphrased as *By having stood up suddenly Fred caused disgust to Mrs. Lincoln / caused Mrs. Lincoln disgust,* where Mrs Lincoln may be seen as the recipient in a metaphorical sense. Sentences like (15-16) are built on the (end of) PATH schema.

There are five sentences containing the phrase *from disgust* in my corpus to describe actions that have their origin (or motivation) in a situation that is unacceptable for someone:

(17) But, either from weariness of the life at Paris, or *from disgust* at clerical work, he sought permission to go to Turkey in order to reorganize the artillery of the Sultan.

(18) "Flesh, bodies, cannon fodder!" he thought, and he looked at his own naked body and shuddered, not from cold but *from* a sense of *disgust* and horror […].

Sentences (17-18) refer to situations in which we see that an action is originated from (caused or motivated by) the experiencer's feeling of disgust. In the prepositional phrase *from disgust* the term *disgust* is the landmark denoting the beginning of the journey of the trajector, which is the action denoted in the sentence. Sentences like (17-18) make use of the (beginning / origin of) PATH schema.

It is interesting to note that sentences composed with the phrase *to someone's disgust* highlight the effect (disgust) of an action / event (trajector) on the experiencer (landmark), whereas sentences composed with the phrase *from disgust* highlight an action (trajector) (done by the experiencer) caused by / originating from the experiencer's feeling of disgust (landmark). Thus, both arrangements are built on the PATH schema, but the first arrangement highlights the end of the path, while the second the beginning or origin of the path.

My corpus contains 13 examples of the use of the phrase *with disgust*. In sentences (19-21) the phrase describes the way one does something:

(19) "Oh, the nasty beasts!" said he *with disgust*.

(20) Often TS women are abused, ridiculed and treated *with disgust*.

(21) But she drove these thoughts away *with disgust*.

The spatial meaning of *with* is proximity but here the meaning is rather the idea of "togetherness", which is to be understood as the togetherness of the trajector, that is, the subject of the sentence (the experiencer) and the landmark, the emotion disgust. Lindstromberg (2010: 217) calls such an arrangement an "AGENT + ATTRIBUTE ensemble, where the attribute suggests a manner" and he claims that "Some expressions in this category can generally be rephrased […] as an adverb ending in -*ly*". His example is *speak with great force*, which can be paraphrased as

speak forcefully. He explains that here an abstract feature (force) "is spoken of as if it were an appurtenance, accessory, or device". I find that emotions like disgust have the same paraphrase option, that is, *say something with disgust* can be paraphrased as *say something disgustedly* and they refer to the emotional manner how the experiencer does something. The use of *with* in the AGENT + ATTRIBUTE ensemble to mean manner can be explained by the use of the NEAR(-FAR) schema.

The corpus-based analysis above shows that the meanings of the prepositions in the expressions *in disgust, disgust at, disgust to / toward / towards, disgust from, disgust for, disgust with, to someone's disgust, from disgust* and *with disgust* can be explained by the spatial meanings of the preposition, however, they are mostly used in metaphorical senses.

Conclusions

In the present paper, after giving a theoretical background to the study of emotion and emotion language, I have presented the first phase of my research into the language of disgust in English. Investigating my corpus, I have found that the prepositions *at, for, from, in, to, toward(s)* and *with* combine with the noun *disgust* in the expressions *in disgust, disgust at, disgust to / toward / towards, disgust from, disgust for, disgust with, to someone's disgust, from disgust* and *with disgust*. The preposition + *disgust* phrases describe the ways how the experiencer acts and behaves, while the *disgust* + preposition phrases refer to the causes of the emotion, the disgust elicitors. The meanings of the prepositions are metaphoric, which can be interpreted by applying their basic spatial meanings.

In the preposition + *disgust* phrases 'disgust' serves as the landmark and the experiencer is the trajector, while in the *disgust* + preposition phrases disgust is the trajector and the noun phrase after the preposition serves as the landmark where the trajector moves to or away from. The landmark in the latter case is always the disgust elicitor. The image schemata applied can be arranged into two groups: (a) in relation to disgust elicitors: CONTACT (*show disgust at somebody*), PATH (*feel disgust to/toward/towards somebody*), INTENDED PATH (*have disgust for somebody*), NEAR(-FAR) (*express disgust with something / somebody*), (b) in relation to the way the experiencer does something: CONTAINER (*do sg / be in disgust*), (end of) PATH (*do something to somebody's disgust*), (beginning / origin of) PATH (*do something from disgust*), NEAR(-FAR) (*do something with disgust*).

On the whole, prepositional phrases of disgust capture in detail two main areas of the disgust experience, the cause of the emotion and the way the experiencer acts in a state of disgust.

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Intersections of African American Culture and Theology in James Cone's *Black Theology and Black Power*[1]

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1. Introduction

Much as James H. Cone seeks to formalize black theology as a theological discipline, his lifework primarily revolves around questions of the black self in relation to white America. It is in the intersection of black theological anthropology and the newly aestheticized black self in the 1960s that he establishes a revolutionary theology in the post-Civil Rights movement era: contextualized in white America, he seeks to revitalize the black self and validate it from a theological point of view within America. As he importantly points out, "I am critical of white America, because this is my country" (Cone 1969: 4) – a statement proving and problematizing his oeuvre – that even in his early theology, he claims a place in America for African Americans, i.e., a place fundamentally shared with and not excluding other American citizens. Unlike the Black Muslims' insistence on separation in the period and the militant black pride characteristic for Black Power advocates' nationalism, it shows Cone's dilemma how to reconcile Martin Luther King's belief in integration with the revolutionary empowerment of African Americans in the emancipation of the black self theologically.

Cone published his *Black Theology and Black Power* in 1969 directly after King's assassination that unleashed riots "represent[ing] the upending of social order [that] vividly highlighted the vast gulf that separated one America from another" (Risen 2009: 250). Well demonstrating the divide, emphasis centers in his book on the black self as the delimitation of both a racially oppressed category and a religio-cultural entity, which evolves through a rejection of white injustice and a sharp contrast to white theology. His stand precipitates as a radical critique of the white church as "the white church and white theology are dead, not God" (Cone 1969: 89) and a self-justifying embrace of "the black revolution [as] the work of Christ" (*ibidem*: 89). Straightforwardly, his theological work can be seen as an extension of Black Power-informed black pride to expose the "failings" and "paralysis" of white

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American theology and church (West 1982: 104) in order to bring about justice and equality for the whole African American community.

In the present study, the intersection of the theological and cultural are scrutinized *vis-à-vis* Cone's understanding of the prophetic tradition and the revelation of Christ as "two interrelated poles" (Singleton 2002: 113) to explore the meaning of blackness from a cultural point of view.

2. The prophetic voice in Black Theology

In establishing a revolutionary voice, Cone reaches back to, what Cleophus J. LaRue identifies as, the components of the sermonic tradition of black preachers to establish the continuity of his religio-cultural discourse by interpreting the Bible "on behalf of the powerless and oppressed" (LaRue 2000: 5), i.e., from the point of view of the black experience:

> "The New Testament message of God's love to man is still embedded in thought-forms totally alien to blacks whose life experiences are unique to themselves. The message is presented to blacks as if they shared the white cultural tradition. We still talk of salvation in white terms, love with a Western perspective, and thus never ask the question, 'What are the theological implications of God's love for the blackman in America?'" (Cone 1969: 49).

Cone's refusal of white European traditions echoes the black preacher's "social location on the boundary of the dominant culture, a boundary that provides them with creative perspectives often unavailable to those standing in the center of power" (LaRue 2000: 6). His theology appears to primarily exert harsh criticism of the white church and whites in general for their silence and consequent compliance with racism, but, more importantly, it seeks his understanding and interpretation of God that evolves from an authentic black perspective, which is "practical and relevant to a broad spectrum of black existence" (*ibidem*: 6).

Cone's endeavor coincides with Enrique Dussel's observation regarding the main trends of liberation theologies. In an overview of liberation theology, Dussel identifies the reinterpretation of the Bible and the identification of a particular relationship to Jesus as well as a parallel with the prophetic movement in Israel's history. As he claims, "Liberation theology is a creative and complex synthesis of apparently contradictory tensions. Without falling into traditionalism, it claims to participate in the most ancient prophetic traditions and to learn from the very founder of Christianity" (Dussel 2001: 40). In a likewise manner, Cone "envision[ing] [black theology] the voice of the oppressed and the theological wing of the black Christian tradition" (Pinn 2003: 103) addresses the peripheral, the marginal, the oppressed through decentering the hegemonic center socially, politically, theologically, and culturally via connecting to the black religious tradition as "people's psychic survival

kit" (Mitchell 2004: xv) representing "their collection of rules, values, and modes of action for coping with the realities of their existence" (*ibidem*: 15). The rather heterogeneous prophetic movement in ancient Israel appeared in "an era of internal disintegration" with prophets as "holders of cultic office" and others "who proceeded to stronger and stronger attacks on existing institutions and altogether denied their legitimacy in the eyes of Jahweh" (Von Rad 1962: 97). The charismatic prophets often exerted their work in opposition to the political system and the centralized cult: "In actual fact it was against the holders of the high offices, kings, priests, and prophets, that these prophets turned, and reproached them with their failure to comply with the will of Jahweh" (*ibidem*: 97-98). Importantly, these prophets sought to reprimand the leaders for their failure to fulfill the will of God, while never questioning the legitimacy of their offices (*ibidem*: 99). As defenders of the faith and the people, they often got entangled with social and political issues. The prophets with charisma had thus various functions including inspiration, praise, and teaching (*ibidem*: 102) – but, perhaps, no less importantly, they functioned as the core reminders for Israel of who they were and where they belonged.

What Cone does is connect to the pre-Civil War black prophetic tradition of non-acceptance of oppression, while practicing constant critique of present-day social and political circumstances. In so doing, he insists on a long-standing African American tradition of a prophetic office, while also seeking Biblical verification. He consciously draws a parallel between the prophets of the Old Testament, who "certainly spoke in anger" (Cone 1969: 3), and black theology, thereby validating "a radical approach which takes the suffering of black people seriously" (*ibidem*: 49-50), even floating the possibility of violence by not denouncing it "as a legitimate means of protest" (Pinn 2003: 103). Radicalism is thus a question of perspective as any approach without emotion will stand in stark contrast to it, but an attitude that can be characterized by such radicalism is truthful to both the black ancestors and the Biblical forebears. The close identification of Israel and African Americans enhances the harsh contrast and establishes the equation of white America with the oppressors of the *Bible*.

The charisma of any prophet turns out to be political in the *Bible* as the practices criticized are not only related to the cult but bear an impact on the lives of the people. Indeed, Biblical prophets speaking up against the office-holders do speak up for those supplanted or even displaced, even as they defend the interests of God. Cone's understanding reflects this, too, when he forcefully asserts that "If the Church is to remain faithful to its Lord, it must make a decisive break with the structure of this society by launching a vehement attack on the evils of racism in all forms. It must become prophetic, demanding a radical change in the interlocking structures of this society" (Cone 1969: 2). The prophetic is equated with radicalism in the sense that it refuses moderate, emotionless consideration of the plight of African Americans. The prophetic is, on the one hand, meant to suggest immediate and uncompromised action and, on the other, regarding its nature, to be ultimately political as it is justified by faith (*ibidem*: 46). The prophetic must furthermore

represent and mediate God's will – an aspect that markedly comes to the foreground in a summary of Cone's thesis:

> "What, then, is God's Word of righteousness to the poor and the helpless? 'I became poor in Christ in order that man may not be poor. I am in the ghetto where rats and disease threaten the very existence of my people, and they can be assured that I have not forgotten my promise to them. My righteousness will vindicate your suffering! Remember, I know the meaning of rejection because in Christ I was rejected; the meaning of physical pain because I was crucified; the meaning of death because I died. But my resurrection in Christ means that alien powers cannot keep you from the full meaning of life's existence as found in Christ. Even now the Kingdom is available to you. Even now I am present with you because your suffering is my suffering, and I will not let the wicked triumph.' This is God's Word" (*ibidem*: 46).

Claiming a prophetic voice, Cone does not just substantiate the cause of the address but identifies also with the suffering subjects in echoing "the communal voice raised in opposition to the reality" (Hubbard 1994: 7), envisions hope by reiterating the divine promise, and proclaims God's will for the suffering and the oppressed. In actuality, his Pauline verification of group membership through claiming stigmas of the African American existence, Cone activates the African American subjects through the resonance with traumas in the African American experience, while, at the same time, the maintenance of the harsh binary between the black socio-cultural reality and the a priori black condition. Similarly to old-time preachers in the peculiar institution, Cone, too, "in taking Jesus from *there* to *here* and moving the people from *here* to *there*, moves the spirit of the people beyond the boundary of hierarchical social order to the creation of new forms of human consciousness" (*ibidem*: 5). In so doing he joins the major black thinkers of the period as, for example, Vincent Harding, friend and colleague of Martin Luther King, Jr., who claims at one point that "Healthy self-esteem has been seen in many traditions as a prerequisite to the establishment of community" (Harding 2003: 716), who ultimately also "define […] *freedom* as the ability to articulate the self" (Hubbard 1994: 5).

Importantly, Cone reconnects to an anthropological type in the *Bible* as he heralds the appearance of God in historical time and his purpose for African Americans even with eschatological horizons.

3. Black Christ and Black Power

Conceptualized in the spirituals of slave religion as "an ever-present and intimate friend" (Raboteau 2004: 259), Christ for the African American religion is no abstract concept, no distant, inaccessible, or mediated entity. Cone professes to this notion,

but with an emphasis on its empowering capacities: for him, Christ is seen as essentially connected to power; and for the theologian, as the interconnection of power and love empowering African American subjects to act.

Relying on Paul Tillich's insistence on the interrelation of love and power rather than their disconnection or even mutual negation, Cone identifies the duality of the Christian faith as the foundation to establish the renewed black self, and that renewed self is then able to reunite with others (Tillich 1969: 54). The love-power duality also represents the tool to effect social justice and, in this way, racial justice. The insistence on power becomes dubious, though – much as it is comprehensible from a rhetorical point of view – when he connects any form of power to the concept of love. The fiery and ideologically biased language use even if for rhetoric purposes can certainly not be validated on the basis of Christ's teachings or that destructive violence should be acceptable in the name of or as an expression of love. So, it becomes an apparent distortion with ideological overdetermination when he vehemently argues that

> "The violence in the cities, which appears to contradict Christian love, is nothing but the black man's attempt to say Yes to his being as defined by God in a world that would make his being into nonbeing. If the riots are the black man's courage to say Yes to himself as a creature of God […] then violence may be the black man's expression, sometimes the only possible expression, of Christian love to the white oppressor" (*ibidem*: 55).

Cone's bias becomes palpable as he seeks to validate his theology based on Tillich's contextual theology while he disregards its implications for the Christian practice proposed by him. Tillich sees love as "transcend[ing] justice" (1954: 13) as "justice is just because of the love which is implicit in it" (*ibidem*: 15), yet it cannot be interpreted without the "universal law" and the "particular situation" (*ibidem*: 15). Even if any method can contextually be validated, less so regarding the "intrinsic quality" (*ibidem*: 16) of universal law. As Tillich says, "Positive law [. . .] does not express but it judges power" (*ibidem*: 16). Power presents an obvious tenet in Cone's theology in the era of the Black Power movement. Centering his argument on a discourse of power, Cone seeks to empower African Americans theologically. Reiterating previous power discourses, he identifies blackness as the source of value, which evolves as God's original intention:

> "For God to love the black man means that God has made him somebody. […] His blackness, which society despises, is a special creation of God himself. He has worth because God imparts value through loving. It means that God has bestowed on him a new image of himself, so that he can now become what he in fact is. Through God's love, the black man is given the power to become, the power to make others recognize him" Cone 1969: 52).

Embracing blackness is dogmatized as an invitation by God to realize and accept the value connected to it. In this way, the black subject is religio-culturally reinlivened by being liberated from an essentially objectified stance that Cone calls "nonbeing." Much as blackness signifies for him a symbolic level, which, supported by many black theologians, "grounds what we can say about God's liberating activity" (Day 2014: 143) and that "in the context of the black religious experience" (Roberts 1971: 139), he establishes blackness as an ontological category, i.e., as "an ontological link between black people and the Divine" (Pinn 2003: 104). Cone's passionate language is in danger of lapsing into "racial henotheism" (Anderson 2016: 15), introducing a "notion of blackness as essentialized, totalizing identity" (Copeland 2014: 44). The concept of "blackness" entails self-definition through the other, i.e., white America, but in Cone's line of thought also detachment from the original divine intention that has led to the nonrealization of the initial divine plan for African Americans. The quote reveals that blacks are created at the sovereign will of God in his image, so accepting God's will, i.e., acknowledging their real existence means becoming new (renewed) beings in the scheme of God and the resurrecting love of the black Messiah (see Cleage 1993) is able to deliver African Americans from their contemporary condition of misery.

With the concept of "blackness", Cone blends into an "Afro-American exceptionalist tradition" going back even to the "liberating and revolutionary prophetic violence" of Nat Turner's black theology (Lampley 2013: 15). The tradition "claims a *sui generis* status for Afro-American life in regard to form and content" (West 1982: 70), concentrating on differences, especially "what sets them apart from white Americans" (*ibidem*: 70). In inherently binary thinking, Cone idealizes both black and white as non-dynamic types, the former in rigid contrast to white America and defined by resistance and an incessant demand for liberty. In the heavily Black Power-informed milieu, Cone's early work centers his arguments on the rejection of white society and the embrace of black values. As Cornel West categorizes similar tendencies: "These groups provided ontological justifications for the inhumanity of white Americans, hence Afro-American superiority over these whites. The evidence usually adduced was American history; the conclusion was to deny American (white) values, defy American (white) society, and preserve the small dose of (black) humanity left in America" (*ibidem*: 74). Cone's move reflects the characteristic crisis theology (see Anderson 2016) of the 1960s as well exemplified by Joseph R. Washington, Jr., for whom black religion can be described by "protest and relief" and that the "uniqueness of black religion is the racial bond which seeks to risk its life for the elusive but ultimate goal of freedom and equality by means of protest and action" (Cone 1966: 33).

From a Christological point of view, Cone's argumentation is essentially Barthian, especially as for him as for Barth "revelation [is regarded] as the decisive category of theological reflection" (Singleton 2002: 119). Cone centers thus his view on Christ who takes a stand "against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly; against those who already enjoy right and privilege and on behalf of those who are denied it

and deprived of it" (Cone1969: 45). In many ways reminiscent of *Old Testament* prophets' work ("The prophets certainly spoke in anger, and there is some evidence that Jesus got angry" [*ibidem*: 3]), Jesus's activity is taken to be essentially liberating for the oppressed: "Jesus is where the oppressed are and continues his work of liberation there" (*ibidem*: 38). In his interpretation, blackening Jesus means thus that he is the first representative of Black Power, whose social and political engagement is predominant. Opposition to the world, precipitated in statements like "To be free in Christ is to be against the world" (*ibidem*: 42), is in Cone's understanding opposition to racist white America. For the theologian, it means to denote alignment to the standards of the Gospel. In this way, Christ's action for African Americans, social or otherwise, is seen as the denotation of God's will.

In a maneuver that Harry H. Singleton (2002: 92) labels as "indigenous deideologization", Cone attempts to contextualize his message: "Like God's righteousness, his love is expressed in terms of his activity to and for man, which is the very basis of man's response to God and to his neighbor" (Cone 1969: 51). In the Barthian move, Cone builds on Barth's doctrine of revelation as "[God] makes himself known through himself by distinguishing himself in the world from the world. Otherwise he cannot be known at all" (Barth 1938: 21). By apparently deideologizing any theological reflection of the revelation, Cone connects it to divine activity in history, more closely, to the actual, historical context of African Americans, professing to the Barthian view that "Human knowledge of God is an impossibility apart from God's act of self- revelation" (Bruce 2020: 62; italics in the original). For Cone revelation is divine action expressed in terms of contextual opposition that serves to redefine the black self in the light of the Gospel in a way that caters to blacks' needs and expresses African American contextualization in God's work. Exceptionalist as Cone's oeuvre may look, it does not necessarily express the condemnation of whites – only of the ungodly phenomena that Cone metaphorically labels as "white" – but it intends, in the first place, to refocus the theological discourse on the black self in a radical way. However, Cone's militant insistence on ontological blackness blurs the permissive understanding of his theology even if, at times, it may follow from the arguments he makes – as when he quotes John Oliver Killens, a major literary voice in the period, on *Symposium: The Meaning and Measure of Black Power*: "Black Consciousness does not teach hatred; it teaches love. But it teaches us that love, like charity, must begin at home; that it must begin with ourselves, our beautiful black selves" (Cone 1966: 36). Even here, though, the fact that Cone replaces in the quote "consciousness" with "power" shows his preoccupation with power and less with the black aesthetics of the era.

For him, response to God is conceived as unconditional, whereas the response to humans cannot remain "unrequited" (*ibidem*: 36) as it is also suggested by Killens: "it will settle for nothing short of love in return" (*ibidem*: 36). Much as he echoes the many voices militant and moderate alike from within the African American community, Cone remains preoccupied with power, which originates from blackness conceived ontologically.

Conclusions

James Cone's "theology of revolution" (1969: 32) offers a radical view of black theology in the midst of the black political, social, and cultural awakening of the 1960s, blending into an age of turmoil of many kinds. Apart from the elements stemming from the anger of African Americans over the injustices in contemporary America, one finds an oeuvre that reflects the by-then well-established tradition of African American self-emancipation and cultural authentication. The often militant radicalism renders Cone's critical stance, nevertheless, "truncated" to use Cornel West's coinage in his evaluation of black prophetic practices calling for "a higher moral plane, a more sophisticated and open-ended theoretical plane and a more culturally-grounded political plane" (West 1988: 49). While Cone gave the African American prophetic tradition and the black religio-cultural self-conceptualization a significant, new impetus, it remained encapsulated in its own binary limitations, ultimately incapable of fulfilling calls by later generations for a black theology offering a comprehensive response to the challenges the African American community has to face.

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The *Up* Series of Documentaries (1964-2019): From Imagined Community to Unimaginable

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1. Introduction

This chapter analyzes the series of nine *Up* documentaries from the United Kingdom that were released at seven-year intervals between 1964 (*Seven Up!*) and 2019 (*63 Up*). Each installment of the documentary series charted the life trajectory of the 14 children originally introduced in 1964's original *Seven Up!* as they grew from teens, to young adults, to middle-age and, finally, to seniors. That is, in a startling longitudinal approach, the filmmakers visited the documentary participants at the ages of 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49, 56 and finally at 63 years of age. The premise of the documentary at the outset was to test the aphorism, attributed to Saint Ignatius of Loyola, that if one can have the child until seven to educate, one will see the adult; early imprinting is determining of character and destiny in this view.

As I was drafting this chapter on the *Up* documentaries in early 2021, Michael Apted, director of the last eight installments of the series, passed away at age 79. In memorializing Apted, London *Guardian* film critic Peter Bradshaw celebrated the documentary series as an "epic ongoing masterpiece for the small screen with truly cinematic scope and beyond: current-affairs television which had the scale of cinema, combined with the Mass Observation Project and the Roman census" (Bradshaw 2021: para. 1). In tracing the *Up* series' influence, Bradshaw claims that it registered an "incalculable effect on British social realist cinema from the early 1960s to the present day – as well as the thinking of the British progressive left – as it asked us to ruminate on the inescapability or otherwise of class, and what narratives were possible for working people" (*ibidem*: para. 3). In Bradshaw's appraisal, the *Up* series is an "unforgettable TV masterpiece" (*ibidem*: para. 8).

Beyond noting accolades for the *Up* series, I am attuned to analyzing the imagined community of the United Kingdom that is cobbled together across the nine installments in the documentary series between 1964 and 2019. Inadvertently if palpably, *Up* has constructed what Benedict Anderson (1983) theorized as an *imagined community* of quasi-familial togetherness in the U.K. In demonstrating how *Up* convenes an imagined community for the U.K., I will analyze its construction across 56 years with a focus on three participants in the series (John, Jackie, and Neil). In closing, I will also address the reinvigorated ferocity of

socioeconomic class striation in the U.K. – initiated by Thatcherite neoliberalism, turbo-charged by Conservative Party austerity since 2010 – that calls the future imaginability of an imagined community into doubt given the prevailing intensity of socioeconomic division. However, prior to these analyses, I will embed the documentary series in extensive context as concerns its origins and the presenting characteristics of its participants.

2. Introducing *Up*: origins

The impetus for the original *Up* program broadcast on 5 May 1964 was charged with sociopolitical interests. Manchester-based Granada Television was a commercial upstart, guided by left-leaning sensibilities. A showcase program for Granada was *World in Action*, led by Australian émigré Tim Hewat. As an outsider, Hewat was alert to the (in)famously striated U.K. class system that continued to condition the lives of its subjects – even as the U.K. public generally assumed class determinism was a relic of the past.

According to Gideon Lewis-Kraus, Hewat "was looking for a novel way to expose the lie of the new egalitarianism" in the U.K. (2012: para. 24). Hewat's original, and unused, idea for the opening sequence of the seminal *Up* documentary implicated an aerial shot of 20 children lined up on a street. A voice-over would announce that, "five are going to be winners", the rest of the children are "going to be losers"; and, as concerns the objective of the documentary, "we're going to show you why" so many are destined to fail due to the structuring structure of the U.K. class system (Lewis-Kraus 2012: para. 25). Hewat's concept for the opening shot was not employed in *Seven Up!* – but Apted observes that, "We refined, softened, made cinematic, but the message" of intense class division in the U.K. "was still there loud and clear" (Apted 2009: 360).

When the *Seven Up!* project was getting off the ground, Apted was a 22-year-old graduate of Cambridge University who identified with the political left. After Cambridge, he completed Granada's trainee program. Apted later said, "I was very angry about the English class system, the waste of people, the prejudging. Every society has a class system, but the English one is different" *(ibidem*: 321). Following his Granada training, Apted was hired as a researcher to assist director Paul Almond on *Seven Up!*

A Canadian, Almond did not know the U.K.'s educational system first-hand. Thus, Apted and another assistant were tasked with scouring English schools for seven-year-old children from distinctly different class backgrounds who were expressive before the camera. Subsequently, Apted "contributed to the seated interviews" with the children in the seminal *Seven Up!* that featured "leading questions designed to elicit maximally contrastive answers" in the framework of the children's' socioeconomic standing (Lewis-Kraus 2012: para. 31). Looking back,

Apted (2009: 360) writes that, "*Seven Up!* was pure tabloid journalism" that squared with his socialist convictions.

From what is captured in the 40-minute runtime of *Seven Up!* "maximally contrastive answers" is precisely what the children served up. One child, Andrew, was selected from an elite pre-preparatory school. On camera, he spoke of reading *Financial Times* and projected that he would subsequently attend Charterhouse and Trinity Hall at Cambridge – predictions that proved accurate as concerned his trajectory as a young adult into the 1970s. Andrew and his similarly posh colleagues were cross-cut with Paul who was living in a charity home. When asked about his university plans, Paul answered with his own question: "What does university mean?" In *Seven Up!* "these seven-year-olds unselfconsciously performed the hierarchies of class – theater all the more devastating for its actors' innocence" (Pedersen 2020: para. 3). However, the children's answers were not merely performances, theatre, or acting. As the subsequent *Up* documentaries showed, Paul never attended university and worked a series of manual labor jobs across adulthood. By contrast, following Cambridge University, Andrew became a solicitor at an international firm. While both men seem to be broadly satisfied with their lives through *63 Up*, class origins conditioned their lives' divergent paths.

What the program revealed about how children at age seven see their place in their world caused a sensation. *Seven Up!* "landed like a grenade". According to Apted, "the whole country was shocked – people were just gobsmacked by the rifts in English society" (Lewis-Kraus 2012: para. 34).

As the *Up* series continued across decades, Apted simultaneously compiled a solid career as a film director after leaving the U.K. for California. Among his director's credits are the Academy Award-recognized *Coal Miner's Daughter* from 1980 and an explosion-fest James Bond entry (1999's *The World Is Not Enough*). However, when *Up* beckoned every seven years, Apted put aside other plans in order to return the film that has become the work for which he was most known.

2.1. The participants

As noted, the 14 documentary participants cross-hatched U.K. society, most notably as concerns socioeconomic class. Three of the seven-year-olds were drawn from an elite, pre-preparatory school in the London district of Kensington (Andrew, John, Charles), while four hailed from the council estates of London's East End (Jacky, Sue, Lynn, Tony). Two were rural children, one from the aristocracy (Suzy) and one who grew up on a farm in the thinly populated Yorkshire Dales (Nick). Another pair of children were drawn from a middle-class Liverpool suburb (Neil, Peter) while two participants, Symon and Paul, were discovered in a "charity home" (a British euphemism for orphanage).

Nine of the 14 participants appeared in each of the nine installments of the *Up* series through 2019. One participant, Charles, dropped out and never returned after 1977, "unwilling to serve as a poster boy for class privilege" (Pedersen 2020: para.

8). Charles's departure was rancorous and forty years later Apted sniffed at Charles's "rather undistinguished career with the BBC" as the seven-year-old documentary subject went on to become a documentary producer as an adult (quoted in Pedersen 2020: para. 8). Other participants have taken hiatuses of various durations before returning (Symon, John, Peter). Suzy expressed strong ambivalence about participating since she was 14 and finally sat out *63 Up*. One participant, Lynn, died suddenly due to an accident in 2013 at the age of 57.

Two participants lived abroad permanently (Paul in Australia, Nicholas in United States) and one did so temporarily (Bruce in Bangladesh). Bruce and Nicholas were teachers for all of their adult lives, whereas Peter was only briefly and seemingly unhappily. In the family register, all 14 were married at least once, almost all had children – and, Symon, one of the children discovered at the orphanage, went on to foster parent more than 100 children with his second wife. One participant (Tony) admitted to marital infidelity with his wife seated next to him, although they remained married with children and grandchildren when *63 Up* rolled around.

All of the children recruited for *Seven Up!* were from England – which is to say none hailed from the other nations (Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland) that compose the U.K. One of the 14 children was mixed race (Symon), a proportion that over-represented people of color since, almost 50 years later, the black and mixed-race population still only constituted 5-percent of the U.K. (Plecher 2020). On the other hand, only four of 14 initial participants were female – and two were mainly and telegraphically referred to as "Jackie's friends" in the original *Seven Up!* In 2012, Apted conceded the obvious: it was a "'horrible error'" to have drastically underrepresented women in the original project" as males constituted 71-percent of participants (Gompertz 2012: para. 1). With hindsight, Apted further posits the enhanced role of women since the mid-1960s was "the biggest societal change in the lifespan of the show" (*ibidem*: para. 2).

2.2. Reception and impact

Across decades, critical appraisal of the series has been positive and reaches panegyric levels. The lead-in to Gideon Lewis-Kraus' *New York Times Magazine* piece hails the films "the most profound documentary series in the history of cinema" and he appraises it as "one of the greatest works of art of our time" (Lewis-Kraus 2012: para. 40). Roger Ebert characterizes *Up* as "the noblest project in cinema history" (quoted in Lewis-Kraus 2012: para. 34). By 1998, when the series and its subjects were still at the cusp of the middle of middle-age, Ebert rhapsodized that: "I feel as if I know these subjects, and indeed I do know them better than many of the people I work with every day, because I know what they dreamed of at 7, their hopes at 14, the problems they faced in their early 20s, and their marriages, their jobs, their children, even their adulteries" (Ebert 1998: para. 14).

The series of films has also scaled the ivory tower and generated academic attention of a (mostly) approving sort. In the scholarly journal *Ethnography*, editor

Michael Burawoy writes, "Celebrated filmmaker Michael Apted received the 2008 American Sociological Association's Award for Excellence in the reporting of Public Issues" that recognizes "non-sociologists who are effective in disseminating sociological perspectives to a general public" (Burawoy 2009: 317). In Ruth Milkman's nominating letter for Apted, she notes that, beyond its specifically English character, the "'film series had a worldwide following'" (quoted in Burawoy 2009: 317). There have indeed been *Up* spin-offs in, for example, the United States, former Soviet Union and South Africa, although none have approached the impact of the original U.K. *Up* series.

Across a half-century, Apted conducted the interviews steadfastly off-camera in a "restrained baritone" as he pursued what "amounted to an existential audit" of his subjects every seven years (Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 7, para. 42). Alongside acclaim, criticism of Apted's methods have been less restrained than the filmmaker's baritone. Susan Pedersen describes the *Up* series "as one of the most revelatory documentaries about social change ever made" (Pedersen 2020: para. 2). The series, she notes, has inspired "hordes of passionate fans" – although she speculates that the fans' dedication is "as much in spite of as because of Apted's direction" (*ibidem*: para. 2). Pederson laments Apted's "patronizing manner and leading questions" (*ibidem*: para. 4), citing his conduct in *21 Up* toward the trio of young working-class women (Jackie, Sue and Lynn). Pederson chastises Apted for "enacting the very class relations he deplored" while his interview "subjects stoutly rejected his analysis" (*ibidem*: para. 4). In the light of what Pederson sees as Apted's "initial propensity to treat his subjects as stereotypes, his urge to goad rather than sympathize", she asks whether one can love the art and detest the artist (*ibidem*: para. 5). For his part, Apted (2009) sees the power relations as tilted toward the documentary participants since the project could not proceed without their participation and he did not screen material without their permission.

3. Socioeconomic class: A verdict?

As noted, the original premise of *Seven Up!* was that, into the 1960s, the U.K.'s class system exercised robust influence over the lives of its subjects. The premise was simply assumed as confirmed by the children's interview discourses at age seven. However, the premise was not initially set up to be tested, longitudinally, as *Seven Up!* was conceived as a one-off project without contracts or plans for later follow-up. What, then, is the verdict on the impact of socioeconomic class after more than 50 years of observation of the 14 subjects' life trajectories? From his platform as a well-known film critic, Ebert avers that class presents as significant in the series by 1998. He adds, in qualification, that class standing was not established as alpha and omega. While the upper-class children followed clearly signposted paths to success, Ebert finds more variability among the other participants. Ebert also couches his conclusions in U.S.-style exceptionalism. He claims that "It is evident that class

counts for more in Britain than in America" (Ebert 1998: para. 12). It is an assertion for which Ebert furnishes no evidence – and it is indeed the same assertion of classism in decline that Granada Television set out to debunk in the U.K. when it launched *Seven Up!*

For his part, Apted qualified the original emphasis on socioeconomic class-as-destiny as he continued to work on the documentaries. On one hand, he foresaw a bleak future for East Ender Tony when filming for *21 Up*. Apted explains:

> "[I] bet the farm in *21 Up!* that Tony would end up in jail. He lived in a pretty violent environment, and was making quite a lot of cash running bets at an East End greyhound-racing track for some pretty unsavory looking characters. It didn't look like the future held much promise, so I had him take me round to all of the crime hot-spots in anticipation of shooting *28 Up!* from one of Her Majesty's prisons" (Apted 2009: 362).

Apted later confessed, "I was wrong and embarrassed" for his assumptions about Tony (*ibidem*: 362). In Apted's defense, I will interject my own doubts about Tony's future. In viewing *Seven Up!* for the first time in April 2020 on DVD, and without having previously researched each child's later outcomes, I fingered Tony as someone likely to have problems with the law for apparent hyperactivity and reckless brashness.

While Apted was visioning a bleak future for Tony, he was also retreating from the initial class premise that had driven the series at the outset. "As the children got older", Apted observed, "we got more involved in the drama of their growing up, and we got less interested in the political context"; the documentary series was becoming "a snapshot of a generation" (*ibidem*: 321). By the advent of *56 Up* and *63 Up*, promotional trailers were sentimental and soft-focus as concerns the gracefully aging subjects of the documentary; a stark contrast with the series' original impetus to present an unsparing look at class structure.

In my parsing of the series, I see that the privileged, posh children (John, Andrew, Suzy) all became posh adults. However, the scorecard is more mixed as concerns the other children's destinies. Neal, of solid middle-class origins, spent extended periods of adulthood in improvised housing. He presents the series' most striking instance of downward mobility although, by age 42, Neal's situation vastly improved. By contrast, East Enders Tony (taxi-driver, part-time actor and entrepreneur) and, more so, Sue (university administrator) clearly realize "class promotions" over the course of their adult lives. At the same time, they do not disavow their origins that are "'always working class'" (Sue, quoted in Pederson 2020: para. 30). In other words, class matters – particularly for those subjects who are buffered from life's vicissitudes through elevated class standing at the outset.

As the 14 participants in the series changed over time in ways expected (more wrinkles and girth, thinning hair) and unexpected, the class system itself was simultaneously being transformed. The post-1979 shift to Thatcherite neoliberal

("free market") economics would make the course of life more hard-edged for the generations that have followed *Up*'s baby-boom, 1950s-born cohort of participants. At *Up*'s outset in 1964, the filmmakers

> "did not foresee the decline of the British economy's manufacturing base, the fragmentation of the working class, the rising number of white-collar jobs and Thatcherism's destruction of union power. It also didn't foresee the expansion of middle-class consumerism or the rise of the predatory gig economy" (Joe Moran, quoted in Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 68).

That is, the now embedded post-Thatcher, neoliberal economic structure is more dynamic, destructive and precarious than the Keynesian version of the capitalist economy that prevailed when the *Up* series participants made their way through their schooling and early adult years. In this view, it is of particular importance for the non-privileged participants in the *Up* series that they enjoyed a full twenty-years to chart their courses in life prior to the neoliberal capitalist relations that Thatcher's Conservative Party ushered in after 1979.

In Pederson's opinion, "When Apted let go of class, he lost sight of other transformations as well" (Pederson 2020: para. 14). In Pederson's narration, "even as inequality worsened", she finds that "people resisted labelling themselves by class: the very word seemed snobbish or blinkered" (*ibidem*: para. 23). Pederson is alert to the fact that "collectivist entitlements and values" of State assistance "cushioned" the non-elite *Up* participants' "early difficulties and underwrote their later successes" (*ibidem*: para. 26). Sue's reliance on the "dole" as a young, precariously positioned single mother is the lead example of cushioning by State entitlements that made a difference in keeping a family on course. However, Pederson implies a trade-off between a more "open" economy and race and gender as categories that are "as generative of social identities and social politics as class" (*ibidem*: para. 23) – one promise of "progressive neoliberalism" (Fraser 2017) that celebrates diversity on one hand (good! I say), but that gives up on fair allocation of economic resources on the other hand (bad, I say – as well as hopelessly lacking in political imagination).

As demographer Richard G. Wilkinson (2005) has documented, a society's degree of class division is not merely a matter of seminar room buzzwords. Class division is a matter of life and death in its deep and diffuse impact on the subjects of intensified class division. In my reading of the *Up* series, it is difficult to miss that the participant who passed away young (due to a sudden accident) was working class; she had also experienced recurrent health problems of sufficiently significant magnitude to merit mention in the series. The other participant who experienced significant health problems by her forties and was indeed unable to continue working long before any of her peers was also from the working class. By *63 Up*, another participant was experiencing serious, potentially lethal health problems – and, while he had been highly successful, he was also not one of the posh children. None of

these problems characterize *Up*'s born-to-the-elite set. Unlike Wilkinson's large-scale demographic studies, the *Up* sample is very small – but the pattern is striking.

While traces of class division are evident throughout the *Up* series, I will now pivot to address something that is supposed to pull the participants together into a consolidated group for the documentary series' original audience; that something is the nation or, more pointedly, what is imagined to be a "nation".

4. What is an "imagined community"?

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* has been immensely influential in scholarly discussions of the nation since its publication in 1983. Although Anderson orients to the historical development of nationalism in centuries past, his theorizations illuminate contemporary societies as, day-by-day, they reproduce the nation. Anderson's big idea is that nationalism is often experienced as super-organic; but, look more closely, and one may see that the nation is an invention, the contrived efflux of cultural practice that envelopes its subjects. In the traditional village in which people lived for millennia, vanishingly little was mediated and activity was enacted face-to-face with people one knew for all of one's life. Ties in a village are super-organic and materially potent in everyday life. Anderson is concerned with how a claim on the modern, national subject may occur within the recent invention of nations of millions of people who are almost all strangers to each other. Indeed, although it pivots on a largely imagined communion of citizens, nationalism's hold on its subjects may be so tight that they are willing "not so much to kill but to die" for the nation (Anderson 1991: 7).

Anderson observes that, by the twentieth century, to possess a nationality was regarded as a fundamental human right. At the same time, while every nation is characterized by systematic unfairness, Anderson observes that nations are "*always* conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (emphasis added, *ibidem*: 7). A further conundrum around this ostensible comradeship: in even the smallest nation, a subject will only know a relative handful of co-nationals. In the reality of practice, the "family" of the nation is overwhelmingly composed of total strangers. For Anderson, the realm of imagination weds a citizen's limited personal experience of his or her co-nationals to the oceanic feeling of nationalism and its aura of community.

Anderson posits novels – written in the vernacular, rather than in Latin – as significant elements in the crystallization of European nations. In turn, literary plots furnish a model by which the reader understands the fundamental structuring of society. Specifically, the plot of a novel depends on a timeframe in which the characters and plotlines are, firstly, pulled together by a shared calendrical space; and, secondly, the characters and plotlines are suspended in the same medium, to wit, the medium of a particular society. A novel's narration depends on a sense of "meanwhile" in which the reader understands that the characters are in the same time-frame but carry out disparate activities unbeknownst to each other. Anderson's

boilerplate example implicates an ensemble of different characters in a novel: two characters are having an affair while other characters eat dinner, shop, play pool, and get drunk in separate but occasionally overlapping plotlines. This commonplace narrative structure in a media text presents a model for the reader to imagine what happens as concerns cascades of simultaneous storylines in a modern nation. In other words, a novel's characters are understood to be "'embedded' in societies" (*ibidem*: 25) – and so are the readers who internalize this model of how the real-life subjects of a society behave within the medium of a nation, with its overlapping subplots among co-national subjects that constitute a coherent national society.

And what does this have to do with the *Up* documentaries? By the mid-twentieth century, television supplanted books as the new medium that gripped society's imagination. Moreover, like the characters in nation-building novelizations, the participants in the *Up* documentaries largely do not know each other; they were semi-arbitrarily summoned together as representative of English types. The *Up* participants are nonetheless negotiating their way through time and space as U.K. subjects (even if they may leave the U.K. by, for example, residing in one of its far-flung former colonies). The sense of "meanwhile" heavily perfumes the *Up* participants' individual plotlines as, in different segments of the documentary's narration, John does this, while Jackie does that, and meanwhile Neil does the next thing (and so on) – activity, in aggregate, implied to be constitutive of the U.K.

In being summoned together by the shared national text, centred in time as well as national space, Anderson further suggests that the audience may invest the nation with the aura of the sacred. He characterizes the ecumenical morning ritual of reading a newspaper – a ritual that "is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull" – as akin to a prayer ritual (*ibidem*: 35). In the case of the nation, the scripture is secular – the commodified newspaper – and it summons a shared sense of nationhood into being. Anderson writes,

> "[...] each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he [sic] performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. […] What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned? At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life" (*ibidem*: 35-36).

Anderson adds that "fellow-readers […] connected through print formed in their secular, peculiar, visible invisibility, [constitute] the embryo of the nationally imagined community" (*ibidem*: 44). Mass media is, in this view, essential to the imagined community as it furnishes a vicariously shared experience among strangers. Moreover, Anderson's "fellow-readers" of the newspaper can readily

morph into television viewers in the twentieth century moment in which *Up* emerged. *Up* convenes real U.K. subjects with real lives, in U.K. spaces (including former colonies), existing "meanwhile" to each other across the real time of 56 years. The documentary series presents its participants to millions of U.K. subjects as exemplars of themselves – and as people whom the audience has vicariously known for all their lives, since the series' 1964 debut. In such ways, *Up*'s construction of the 14 subjects' life trajectories, across more than half a century, may recruit a feeling of "deep, horizontal comradeship" (*ibidem*: 7) for the U.K. public that watches.

5. Three faces of an imagined community

In its construction of the 14 participants' lives across 56 years and 17 hours of runtime, the *Up* series largely reproduces Andersonian "deep, horizontal comradeship" as constitutive of U.K. identity. The documentary series is called *Up* – not *Down* – and the narratives it constructs around its participants are mostly uplifting, particularly in later installments in the series as families reproduce into their next generation. Even the most downwardly mobile of the participants, Neil "the exception" to class destiny "that proves the rule" (Mead 2013 para. 14), is presented as realizing redemptive successes later in life.

In sketching particulars of how the *Up* series constructs an imagined community, I will telescope in on three storylines that particularly interest me as concerns *Up*'s imagining of national community; namely, John, Jackie, and Neil.

5.1. From snob to philanthropist

John Brisby may not seem an obvious selection in making the case that the *Up* series presents a benign imagined community for the U.K. John was likely the most unsympathetic member of the ensemble as young person. Ebert dismisses him as "an upper-class twit at 21 [who] refused to be interviewed at 28" (1998: para. 12). John was one of the three participants recruited from a pre-preparatory school in Kensington at age seven where students were introduced singing songs in Latin. At age 14 in *Seven Plus Seven*, he presents himself as aggressively pre-Thatcherite, announcing that he is "a bit more reactionary than most" while clad in "three-piece tweed" (quoted in Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 35). Seven years later in *21 Up*, John dons a Prince of Wales suit and permits the documentarians to film him while hunting for "hares with his Oxford chums" (*ibidem*: para. 39). Acting like an upper-class villain from central casting, he opines that autoworkers could send their children to pricy schools if only they valorized education. In Pederson's appraisal, John at this age is "the most opiniated and seemingly snobbish of the posh boys" (Pederson 2020: para. 10). At 21, John also tetchily pushes back at Apted during his interview for suggesting that his privileged situation was the product of "indestructible birthright" rather than his own work and talent.

Peeved at how he had been presented in the documentaries, John skipped out on *28 Up*. He returned for *35 Up* on the condition that he could promote his charitable works in his ancestral Bulgaria – and that he would not have to talk to Apted on camera. Claire Lewis, Apted's lead assistant, conducted the interview. Stung from his earlier portrayals in the series, John refers to participation in the *Up* series a "little pill of poison" injected into his veins at seven-year intervals (quoted in Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 67). Poison notwithstanding, by age 35, John scaled the summit of his profession as a barrister and "wears the wig and silk as a Queen's Counsel" (*ibidem*: para. 67). Revising earlier impressions, John reveals that his father died when he was nine and his mother went to work to support his education. The seemingly incorrigible posh also served a year in the army. In *56 Up*, John states, "I don't regard myself as particularly typical of the type that I was no doubt selected to represent", since "apart from everything else, I'm three quarters foreign" (quoted in Pederson 2020: para. 10). John is indeed descended from the elite of Bulgaria (his great-great grandfather was the first Prime Minister of Bulgaria).

By *35 Up*, John's efforts to channel aid to post-communist Bulgaria places him in a sympathetic light unimaginable for the 21-year-old snob. John firmly denounces Brexit in *63 Up* for isolating the U.K., a contrast with his earlier arrogant bombasts. And the implication of John's evolution on camera? Even the seemingly aggressive and elitist members of the U.K.'s population are – once one gets to know them and the youthful bluster is tempered – charitable, outward-looking people, contributors to the national family and its imagined connectedness within the U.K. and beyond.

5.2. Family ties

Jackie Bassett was one of the three *Up* series children drawn from the same working-class school in London's East End. Like John, she may appear to be a counter-intuitive selection as a face for a positively-valenced imagined community of the U.K. Aside from Neil, discussed below, Jackie has probably had the most difficult life of any of the participants. Jackie married young – and like her friend Sue, but unlike Lynn (happily married to the same man until she passed away), Jackie was divorced young as well. A second marriage also did not work out and, as a mostly single mother, Jackie raised three children. In turn, child-rearing was further complicated by an arthritic condition that prevented Jackie from working beyond her early 40s.

Jackie has also had an at times stormy relationship with Apted. Tensions erupted in *21 Up* when Apted peppered Jackie, Lynn and Sue with questions that revolved around domestic matters. Apted even went so far as to ungraciously ask Jackie if she felt she had met enough men before settling down for marriage. Jackie put her head down in this moment, and silently acted out her rage.

Twenty-eight years later in *49 Up*, the moment is revisited. Lewis-Kraus avers that, "Jackie's insurrection in *49* remains one of the most arresting and significant

moments in the entirety of the program", that followed "decades of chafing at his [Apted's] authorial control" (Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 46). Specifically, Jackie explains that Apted prompted the working-class trio of women with questions that assumed limited (domestic) horizons for them in contrast with the questions asked of the males. In Jackie's appraisal, Apted seemed oblivious to the changing currents of gender and feminism in the 1970s.

In the *49 Up* exchange, Jackie's grievances were further exacerbated by ones closer at hand from *42 Up*. Jackie was bothered by the documentary's discourse on her arthritic (dis)ability that, she claimed, emphasized what she could not do rather than what she could. These moments of confrontation between the filmmaker and the documentary subjects were included in the broadcast cut of the film as the *Up* series did not hide its long-nursed intramural tensions.

How do these confrontations advance the consolidation of an imagined community? A community that is constructed to idealized and contrived specifications lacks fissures or frictions; but a properly imagined community may convey more texture. Consider this exchange between Jackie and Apted in *63 Up*:

> "I know if I picked up the phone and said, 'Michael, I need help,' you would be there." Jackie's voice began to catch, and her eyes shone. "You would say to me, 'Where, when and how?' and if it was humanly possible you would help me, I know that. I know you care about me, and I care about you, but that didn't stop me having to have a go at you. Well, we're a family, families fall out, families have arguments, but we are a family" (quoted in Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 88).

Jackie begins to break down as she claims that there will be no more installments of *Up* for her, "Because I'm not having someone else sitting in that chair and someone else sitting behind the camera. I wouldn't be able to trust them the way I trust all of you" (quoted in Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 90). In this moment, Jackie references the fact that Apted had exhibited signs of decline and was already regarded as not likely to orchestrate a *70 Up*. Indeed, as noted, Apted passed away less than two years after *63 Up* was broadcast.

Apted's lead assistant on the program, Lewis, corroborates that the production team regards the subjects of the documentary in familial terms as well (Solazzo 2019). And one family begats another: The ties between Apted and Jackie and other *Up* series participants bleeds into a national family – U.K. family, growing up together in a shared space and timeline, negotiating the trials and joys of the series' 56-year sweep.

5.3. No brit left behind

Neil is the *Up* participant who had the most difficult trajectory through adulthood. Indeed, I recall the shock in watching Neil's first appearance in *21 Up*. Other

participants were reaching what Apted called "gamecock maturity" (quoted in Lewis-Kraus 2019: para. 38) as, for example, Bruce attended math tutorials and Nicholas threw himself into physics at the U.K.'s top universities. By contrast, the opening shot of Neil in *21 Up* captures a young man in the cold in shabby clothes, working light construction with a bad complexion and defeated body language. In the next shots, he retires alone to a barely furnished squat. Matters did not get better in the actual interview in which Neil radiates anger at his parents and the transcript of his life to that juncture. The other participant who was not thriving at 21, Suzy, seemed cynical and bored. However, she showed no signs of sliding into society's shadows or of a lack of material necessities (By *28 Up*, Suzy married a solicitor and became the mother and housewife that she would remain).

The contrast with Neil's younger, pre-21 persona has been often noted. Lewis describes him as having been "the most lovely, vivacious, charming seven-year-old" whom U.K. audiences embraced (quoted in Solazzo 2019: para. 14). One of Lewis' first tasks after joining the series' staff was to locate Neil for 28 *Up*. Neil was so far under the radar that it took three months to find him, a process that Lewis compared to locating a missing person (Lewis-Kraus 2019). In the subsequent interview by a loch that Lewis described as "'profound and moving'", Neil grappled with emotional problems, poverty, and a lack of permanent shelter (quoted in Solazzo 2019: para. 16). "Homelessness meant something" to *28 Up*'s viewers "because it was someone they'd seen as a child" (Lewis, quoted in Solazzo 2019: para. 16).

Once again, here is an *Up* participant whose life as narrated by the documentary becomes, counterintuitively, a monument to the U.K.'s imagined community. As concerns Neil, *Up* construct a community in which Brits carry on and no one is left behind. In a "dignified and moving way" (Mead 2013: para. 5), Neil turned his life around starting in *42 Up*. By *63 Up*, Neil had been a local elected councillor for the Liberal Democrat Party, been married (and separated), and was continuing to be active in his church as a lay preacher. The once precariously sheltered wanderer still presents as a prickly loner. However, he has acquired a small cottage in France, a very middle-class success, through an inheritance from his deceased mother.

In Dave Simpson's 2019 story in the London *Guardian*, Neil is characterized as a unifying U.K. point of reference as his life story has "gripped a nation" across decades. From cute and precocious, to sullen and down-and-out, Neil is a figure who has finally generated robust respect by picking himself up off the floor. The U.K.'s fascination with Neil began in *Seven Up!,* Simpson claims, when his peers proclaimed that they wanted to work "at Woolworth's" (Lynn) or attend Cambridge (Andrew). Neil, by contrast, visioned a more quixotic future as an astronaut or a bus driver, callings that presaged his nomadic movement across the disparate spaces of the U.K.

Neil maintains that the *Up* series presents Apted's "interpretation" of the course of his life and does not correspond with his own appraisal of it (quoted in

Simpson 2019: para. 4). Although he stopped watching the series in which he features 42 years earlier, and largely avoids television, Neil reports that

> "people tell me I'm portrayed as triumphing over the odds […] but that's not how I see my life at all. I'm grateful for the successes, but I see my life ultimately as a failure. I've failed in most everything I've tried to do" (quoted in Simpson 2019: para. 4).

In other words, Neil places his interpretation of his own life in contrast with the sweep of *Up*'s construction of it that suggests an imagined community where Brits are "triumphing over the odds".

In his portrait for the London *Guardian*, Simpson also puts aside Neil's testimony to rally to an imagined community of successful, can-do British people: "'If you can change the neighborhood you live in', he [Neil] says, 'you can change the world.' His eyes are sparking, just like that would be astronaut back in 1964" (*ibidem*: para. 15). Neil is always already cute and precocious and seven-years-old. In this view, matters work out, whatever the tribulations, for U.K. subjects within an imagined community of deeply connected comrades. The documentary series' constructions of its subjects' lives is, of course, not made up out of whole cloth. However, *Up* and the discourses about the series are encrusted with deep-seated yearnings for the nation as a coherent, connected, successful-against-the-odds, quasi-familial – and, in this view, *imagined* – community.

Conclusion: Community unimaginable?

This chapter suggests strong continuity between Anderson's concept of the "imagined community", developed in a 1983 book, and the *Up* documentary series as it played out from 1964 to 2019. Does anything complicate this picture? Indeed, despite the U.K.'s exit from the European Union in 2020 and apparent retreat into itself, the U.K.'s prospects for constructing an imagined community may be far more vexed in the present moment than when Granada Television launched *Seven Up!*

The economic doctrine of neoliberalism that was implemented by Thatcher's government in 1979 and intensified by her Conservative Party inheritors in the past decade may be at the heart of the "United" Kingdom's disunity. Neoliberal tropology prioritizes the private over the public and the entrepreneurial individual over collective action and interests; according to Thatcher's neoliberally-inflected aphorism, there is no society, only individuals. In David Harvey's characterization, neoliberalism is "a theory of political economic practices that proposes human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedom within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade" (Harvey 2005: 3). Given its demonstrably walloping impact on subject populations, twentieth-century neoliberal experiments were first

implemented by coercion; notably, in Chile where "liberation" of the market was enforced by a viscous military dictatorship.

In contrast with the mayhem of Chile's 1973 coup and its dark aftermath, the United Kingdom's turn toward a neoliberal regime was inaugurated by Thatcher's election in spring 1979. Thatcherism's neoliberal experiment was thus launched when the *Up* series subjects were in their early twenties and their life paths had already been conditioned by the U.K.'s post-World War II Keynesian measure of compromise between capitalism and socialism.

Since its implementation in Chile and the U.K., followed by large swaths of the globe, the neoliberal program has been associated with de-taxation and enhanced concentration of wealth among the already super-wealthy in a neo-gilded age "restoration of class power" (Harvey 2005:16). Wages of laboring classes have, in parallel, stagnated despite galloping increases in productivity in recent decades. Neoliberalism has also been characterized by spiking debt (personal, State, corporate) and economic crises that have become more severe and frequent as compared with the decades immediately after World War II. At the same time, union power has been gutted (Harvey 1989). As decades of a liberated market bear their bitters fruits, political philosopher Nancy Fraser describes the neoliberal regime as "a lethal combination of austerity, free trade, predatory debt, and ill-paid work" (Fraser 2017: para. 1). In a neoliberal order, corporate interests hover above the political fray while have-nots scrounge and battle each other for scarce resources.

At the time when the documentary participants could see retirement coming in *56* and *63 Up*, the Conservative administrations of David Cameron (2010-16) and Theresa May (2016-19) were stepping up the neoliberal regime via austerity programs that further strained social ties in the U.K.

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights Philip Alston observes that, "Although the United Kingdom is the world's fifth largest economy, one fifth of its population (14 million people) live in poverty". Moreover, "1.5 million of them experienced destitution in 2017", defined as wholly lacking everyday necessities (Alston 2018: 1). By 2018, Alston observes that poverty terrorizes one in three U.K. children and, in the Cameron-May years, reliance on food banks and homelessness surged. In the neoliberal U.K., "life expectancy is falling for certain groups", "the legal aid system has been decimated" with slashed public investment in "policing services, closed libraries in record numbers, shrunk community and youth centers and sold off public spaces and buildings" (*ibidem*:1). For him, the "harsh and uncaring ethos" signals "radical social re-engineering" toward socially-atomized, market-steered, neoliberal specifications (*ibidem*: 1, 5).

As noted at the start of this chapter, Apted has passed away. It is unlikely that there will be a tenth installment of the *Up* series when its subjects turn 70 years old. The series has wound down and *Up* is edging into the past tense; and so is the world in which it emerged. The U.K.'s class division has been given a new, harder edge following decades of neoliberalism after 1979, further intensified through ferocious austerity. It is straightforward to assume an attendant implosion of social solidarity

in these conditions, in which even imaging an imagined community becomes an increasingly mind-bending challenge.

One of the last lines of questioning that Apted directed toward his subjects in *63 Up* probed their attitudes toward Brexit. In turn, Brexit would seem to unify the U.K. for no longer power sharing with Brussels and 26 other nations. Brexit has, however, undoubtably aggravated pre-existing social tensions in the U.K. along social, geographic, and political lines. Moreover, with the advent of social media and its infamous "filter bubbles", citizens of all nations have become more siloed off from each while recruited into incompatible narratives. In the U.K.'s case, Martin Moore (2018) discusses the Conservatives Party's deployment of social media in the 2015 general election. Specifically, Conservatives enacted a covert and devastating "black widow" strategy using social media; and, in doing so, they electorally annihilated their coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats! Intensified socioeconomic striation, simmering Brexit resentments, a media environment ineffably more fragmented than when Granada Television launched *Seven Up!*: the upshot is that the *Up* series has concluded a 56-year project that imagined a national community, just as the very imaginability of a national community in the U.K. was being diminished by the political, socioeconomic, and media environment.

A Dedication

I first watched the *Up* series that I had long heard about during Spain's strict March through May 2020 quarantine. The DVDs were a means of passing time at night when the day's work was done. Composing this chapter thus presents a gesture toward regaining control against the horror film circumstances of 2020-21. In this spirit, I dedicate this chapter to the countless and dispersed victims of COVID-19.

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Internationalization of Gastronomy-related Terms

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1. Introduction

Discussions on the globalization phenomenon and the effects thereof have become commonplace nowadays. This evidently applies to internationalization as well, which also interferes with the gastronomic field, among many others, because, as Richard C. Delerins, anthropologist and specialist in eating behaviours points out: "Les lois de l'échange et le *marché du vocabulaire culinaire* [emphasis added] signalent l'évolution des comportements alimentaires" (online). We find ourselves in a world culinary market, which puts its mark on the significant number of culinary terms that are borrowed, adapted or integrated as such in all languages of the world.

In this paper, our main focus is to observe the phenomenon of gastronomic internationalization based on a large, well-defined oral corpus consisting of 1637 terms and 896 phraseological units provided by the eight seasons of the *MasterChef Romania* cooking competition (seven seasons of *MasterChef Romania* and one season of *Celebrity MasterChef Romania*), broadcast by the Romanian television station ProTV between March 20, 2012 and November 14, 2019, consisting of an overall number of 157 episodes and approximately 222 transmission hours.

2. Xenisms

One of the most important features of the internationalization phenomenon of gastronomic terminology is the presence of a significant number of xenisms. The term *xenism* refers to a word that has recently entered the language, that has still not adapted to it and that is being received as a foreign element. In the *Dictionary of Language Sciences* (2001: 574), it is defined as "a recent neological word, borrowed with the same form of its etymon and that has not adapted to the Romanian language system yet, which the speaker perceives as belonging to a lexical / grammatical system foreign to the Romanian language" [our translation]. Petru Zugun offers another definition of the term: "by xenisms we understand 'loans of meaningful linguistic units' – words and phraseological units which, for the most part, were intentionally preserved with the same etymological form and meaning and that are used either as parts of a sentence or as sentences relating to syntactic units belonging to the common language" [our translation].

Also called by other linguists *exoticisms* or *foreignisms* (Ciolac 2016a: 37-60 and 2016b: 399-407), xenisms are structures that have recently entered the Romanian language and that are well represented in the gastronomic field, as shown in the figure outlined by us below:
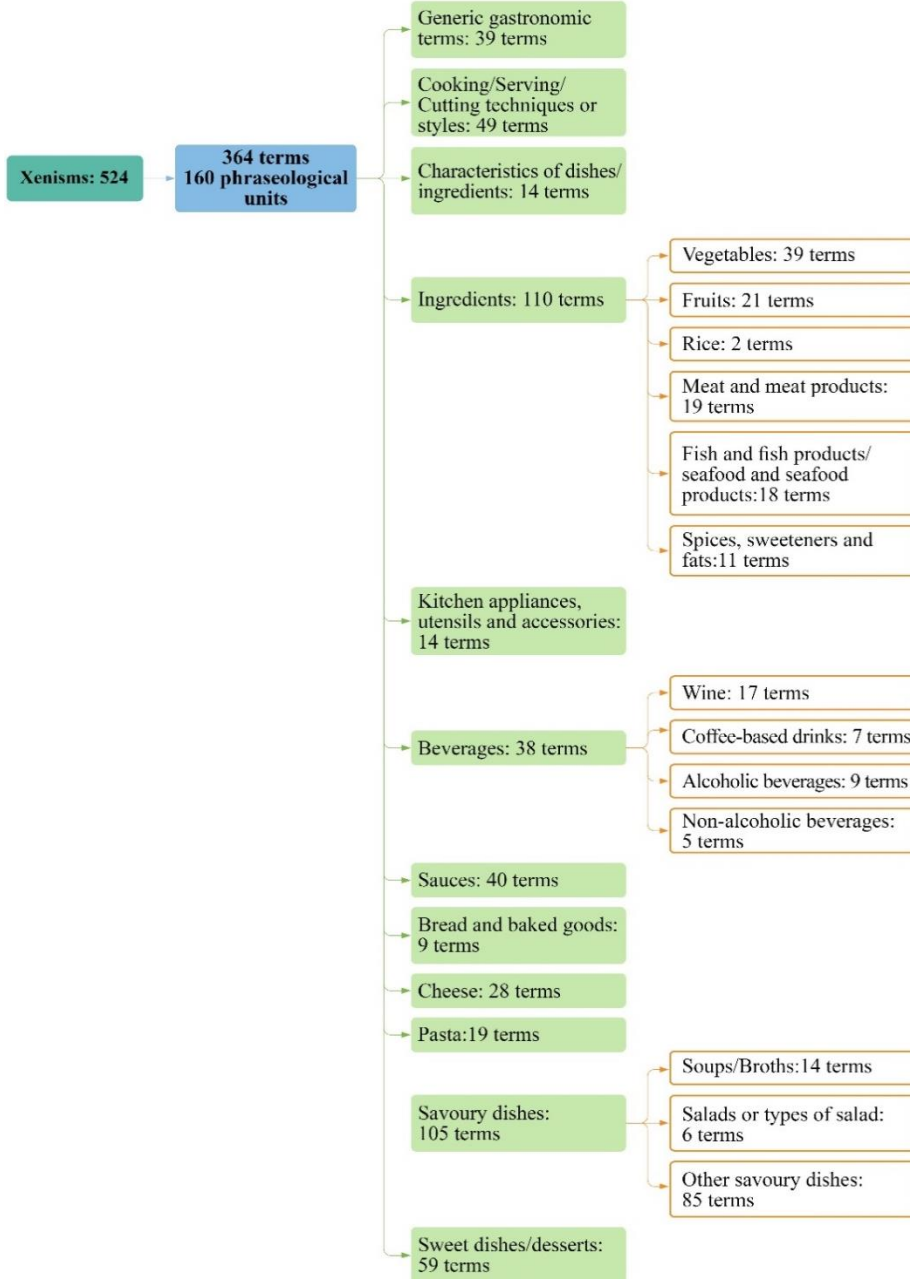

Figure 1. Xenisms provided by the Corpus subjected to our analysis

Upon a detailed analysis of our corpus, we were able to extract a large number of examples of xenisms, which, in our view, illustrates the globalization of people's tastes (food wise) and, implicitly, the internationalization of the Romanian gastronomic language:

1. **Generic gastronomic terms**: *amuse-bouche, antipasto,-i, apron, barista, barman, batter, boulangerie, breakfast, brunch, catering, chef, dish, fast-food, fine dining, finger food, fish, haute cuisine, homemade, hors-d'oeuvre, leftovers, liaison, main course, mise en place, mix(ed) grill, mousse, plate, plating, pub, raw vegan, shot, snack, sous-chef, spice, steak, steak house, stuffing, supermarket, topping, vegan*;

2. **Cooking / Serving / Cutting techniques or styles**: *à blanc, à la carte, à la crème, à la créole, à la dauphinoise, à la florentine, à la grecque, à la marinara, à la provençale, à la russe, al dente, al forno, al gorgonzola, (alla) puttanesca, alla romana, (all') amatriciana, au court bouillon, au four, au gratin, au jus, au lait, bain-marie, barbecue, biryani, (to) blind bake, brunoise, (to) butterfly, cacciatore, carbonara, chiffonnade, (en) cocotte, confit, dauphinoise, (to) deep-fry, dessécher, (to) dice, en papillote, fondue, milanese, noisette, Parmigiana, quatro formagi, quenelle, sous-vide, stir-fry, sunny-side up, tuil(e)*;

3. **Characteristics of dishes / ingredients**: *crispy, crunchy, deep-fried, flavour, juicy, light, medium rare, moist, overcooked, salé(e), spicy, sucré(e), tender, well done*;

4. **Ingredients:**
   a. **vegetables**: *apio, baby carrots, baby spanac, bok choy, broccoli, carciofo, (ciuperci): champignon, cremini, enoki, King Oyster, pleurotus, porcini, portobello, shiitake, chili, chives, cipolla, cress, (fasole) Mung, funghi porcini, ginger, jalapeño, (varză) kale, lemongrass, mangetout, mangold, melanzane, nori, pak choi, pomodori sechi, potato, quinoa, radicchio, sakura mix, sedano, sweet potatoes, watercress, yam, zucchini*;
   b. **fruits**: *apple, avocado, carambola, cherry, cranberry, goji, green apple, jackfruit, kaki, kiwi, lemon zest, lime, mango, maracuja, (măsline) kalamata, pecan, physalis, pomelo, tomatillo, tonka, zest*;
   c. **rice**: *arborio, basmati*;
   d. **meat and meat products**: *bacon, Black Angus, black pudding, canard, chorizo, coquelet, foie gras, mortadella, pancetta, pepperoni, pork chops, poussin, prosciutto, prosciutto cotto, prosciutto crudo, ribs, spare ribs, T-bone, würst*;
   e. **fish and fish products / Seafood and seafood products**: *butterfish, baby squid, black tiger shrimps, coquille Saint Jacques, haddock, halibut, lobster, monk-fish, oyster, (pește) John Dory, pollack, scallop, scampi, sea bass, shrimp, somon fumé, surimi, tiger prawn*;

    f.   **spices, sweeteners and fats**: *aceto balsamico, agar-agar, bouquet garni, brown sugar, candied ginger, five spices, garam-masala, ghee, oregano, pepperoncino, pepperone, vegeta*;

5. **Kitchen appliances, utensils and accessories**: *blender, chiller, chinois, mixer, napron, peeler, ramechin, shaker, slow cooker, sous-vide, steamer, timbale, toaster, wok*;

6. **Beverages**:
   - **a.** **wine**: *Cabernet, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Chianti, Marsala, Merlot, Pinot, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Porto, prosecco, Retsina, Riesling, Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, (oțet din vin de) Xérès (Sherry)*;
   - **b.** **coffee-based beverages**: *caffé latte, caffé macchiato, cappuccino, espresso, ice coffee, Irish coffee, ristretto*;
   - **c.** **alcoholic beverages**: *amaretto, Bloody Mary, Cointreau, gin, limoncello, ouzo, sake, tequila, whisky*;
   - **d.** **non-alcoholic beverages**: *ice tea, granité, grenadine, milkshake, lassi*;

7. **Sauces**: *aioli, beurre noisette, chutney, coulis, demi-glace, dip, dressing, fish sauce, gravy, guacamole, harissa, hoisin, hot sauce, ketchup, oyster sauce, passata, persillade, pesto, piri-piri, pistou, ravigot, relish, sabayon, salsa, sauce marseillaise, sofrito, sos barbecue, sos beurre blanc, sos / sauce cassis, sos diable, so s /sauce Diane, sos Madera, sos Marie Rose, sos sweet chilli, (sos / sauce) velouté, sos Worcester(shire), sukiyaki, (sos) Tabasco, tzatziki, wasabi*;

8. **Bread and baked goods**: *ciabatta, crostini, focaccia, graham, (pâine) naan, panko, pretzel, toast, tortilla*;

9. **Cheese**: *Asiago, bleu fromage, blue cheese, bocconcini, Brie, burrata, Camembert, Cheddar, Comté, cottage cheese, Edam, emmental(er), feta, Fontina, fromage blanc, Gorgonzola, Gouda, Grana Padano, halloumi, Limburger, Manchego, Manouri, mascarpone, mozzarella, Pecorino, ricotta, Roquefort, tofu*;

10. **Pasta**: *alphabet pasta, Barilla, cannelloni, farfalle, fettuccine, fusilli, linguine, noodles, orecchiette, orzo, penne, penne rigate, ravioli, soba, spaghetti, tagliatelle, thai noodles, tortellini, vermicelli*;

11. **Savoury dishes**:
    - **a.** **soups / Broths**: *alphabet soup, avgolemono, bisque, bouillabaisse, chowder, cioppino, consommé, court bouillon, gazpacho, hideg meggyleves, minestrone, okroshka, pistou, vichyssoise*;
    - **b.** **salads or types of salad**: *Caesar salad, caprese, coleslaw, panzanella, (salată [de]) bœuf, salată iceberg*;
    - **c.** **other savoury dishes**: *beef Wellington, bœuf bourguignon, British pie, burger, buritto, (pizza) calzone, carpaccio, ceviche, chateaubriand, cheeseburger, chicken fingers, chicken nuggets,*

chicken strips, chips, choucroute, civet, club sandwich, coq-au-vin, cordon bleu, cotoletta alla milanese, curry, dumpling, duxelles, egg Kerala, empanadas, enchiladas, English breakfast, fajita, falafel, filet mignon, fish pie, French fries, gougère(s), gyros, hamburger, hotdog, lobster Thermidor, manti, (pizza) margherita, mash, meatball, melci bourguignonne, miso, Monte Cristo, nachos, nugget, ossobuco, ouevos à la flamenca, paella, papas rellenas, pissaladière, pizza, pommes croquettes, pommes Duchesse, pommes Macaire, porridge, potato William, quesadilla, quiche, quiche lorraine, ragu, raita, saganaki, salmorejo cordobés, saltimbocca, samosa, sashimi, shepherd's pie, skin potatoes, souvlaki, spaghetti carbonara, spring rolls, stroganoff, suprême, surf 'n' turf, sushi, tagliatta, (pastă) / (pui) tandoori / tandoori, tapas, tempura, teriyaki, Thai curry, turnedo Rossini, vindaloo, vol-au-vent;

12. **Sweet dishes / desserts**: *amaretti, American cookies, baba au rhum, banana Foster, banana split, Battenberg cake, biscotto,-i, Black Forest, brownie, cake, cannoli, cheesecake, chocolate fondant, chou(x), choux à la crème, clafoutis, cremă custard, crème anglaise, crème brûlée, crème caramel, crème Chantilly, crème fraîche, crème mousseline, crème pâtissière, crêpe(s), crêpe Suzzete, croquembouche, crumble, cupcake, dacquoise, dulce de leche, fondue, fudge, gelato, île flottante, lava cake, macaron, marshmallow, millefeuille, moelleux aux chocolat, Mont-Blanc, muffin, müsli, Nutella, pain perdu, pancake, panettone, panna cotta, pâte brisée, Pavlova, Saint-Honoré, sponge cake, stracciatella, syllabub, tarte maison, tarte Tatin, tartiflette, tiramisu, waffle.*

From a quantitative point of view, the number of no less than 524 xenisms extracted from our corpus is significant (20.69%), but what we consider relevant is the fact that these structures are perfectly integrated in the vocabulary (gastronomic technolect) used by the *MasterChef Romania* competitors and that they are in no way perceived as "foreignisms".

3. Terminological doublets and triplets

The international feature of gastronomic terminology is also reflected by the presence of a very large number of foreign words and expressions, especially of English origin, which can give rise to a phenomenon called anglicisation. When excessive, anglicisation can endanger the "well-being" of Romanian gastronomic terminology and even more.

The tendency to use foreign terms over local / domestic terms is a common practice among *MasterChef* participants, which, in our view, can have two possible causes. First and foremost, the origin of the competitors or professional chefs

participating in the cooking-show, who speak little or no Romanian, and who tend to replace the Romanian terms that they are not acquainted with and substitute them with more accessible terms, either in their mother tongue, or in a foreign language at hand, of international circulation, that they master – English and, in some cases, French. This assumption explains the use of terms such as *apple* (*măr*), *cipolla* (*ceapă [onion]*), *carciofo* (*anghinare [artichoke]*), *apron* (*șorț*), *salé* (*sărat [salty]*), *sucré* (*dulce [sweet]*).

A second cause that determines the large number of free equivalences between the terms included in our corpus, extracted from the *MasterChef Romania* cooking-show, is a trend influenced largely by the (competitive) nature of the show: the participants' strive to impress the judges, to amaze them, to stand out by means of their exceptional dish, even in terms of the name they give to it. Thus, a *cotlet în stil milanez* [Milanese-style cutlet] sounds less extravagant or professional than a *cotoletta alla milanese*, a dish called *melanzane alla Parmigiana* might be slightly much more appetizing than *vinete cu parmezan* [eggplants and parmesan], an *île flottante* is much more interesting for a customer than a domestic dish called *lapte de pasăre* [meringues with vanilla custard], and the same goes when a participant flavours the cream of a *cannoli* with a little *lemon zest* (instead of the usual *coajă de lămâie* = lemon peel), or adds *aceto balsamico* (and not *oțet balsamic* [balsamic vinegar]) to the salad dressing.

All these are tricks that can contribute to the enrichment of the culinary language, but which can also endanger the Romanian language, in view of the tendency of excessive anglicization we mentioned previously. However, given their increasing use within the language spoken by chefs, the tendency and perhaps the pressure to include such terms in lexicographical sources is pervasive and we are therefore witnessing this impending phenomenon[1].

We have identified several such examples of gastronomic terms (GTs) in the corpus subjected to our analysis, all of which we have included in the table below:

GT in Romanian	GT in English	GT in French	GT in Italian
șorț	*apron*		
măr	*apple*		
anghinare			*carciofo*
cipolla			*ceapă*

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[1] See Ana Maria Gal's remark in *Foreword* (DGE 2007: 7), by means of which the author motivates her decision to include in the dictionary certain words that are actually the import names of certain terms: "At this moment, on the Romanian market, we can see that several imported foods are marketed under their English names or their names from another language (e.g. *celery*, *chives*, *ginger*, *lime*, *sole*, etc.), although we do have Romanian correspondents available for some of them, but these are not very popular, or we could find Romanian correspondents that are more understandable and buyer-friendly, but these products are not very popular and, therefore, their correct classification is not possible" [our translation].

cotlet			cotoletta
parmezan			Parmigiana
proaspăt,-ă	Freş / fresh	fraîche	
crocant,-ă	crispy		
	crunchy		
prăjit în baie de ulei	deep-fried		
suculent,-ă	juicy		
	moist		
răscopt, răscoaptă	overcooked		
sărat,-ă		salé(e)	
îndulcit,-ă		sucré(e)	
condimentat,-ă	spicy		
picant,-ă			
fraged,ă	tender		
a tăia cuburi	to dice		
creson	watercress		
	cress		
vafă	waffle		
umplutură	stuffing		
pandişpan	sponge cake		
spaghete			spaghetti
crevete	shrimp		
	prawn		
ţelină			sedano
biban(-de-mare)	sea bass		
cartof,-i	potato(es)	pomme(s)	
farfurie	plate		
tăieţei	noodles		
brioşă	muffin		
vânătă			melanzane
chiftea	meatball		
bezea	marshmallow		
limetă	lime		
resturi (de mâncare)	leftovers		
ghimbir	ginger		
găluşcă	dumpling		
fel de mâncare	dish		
ceapă			cipolla
fluture	butterfly		
aromă	flavour		
savoare			
gust			

cepşoară	*chives*	*cibulet (ciboulette)*	
negresă	*brownie*		
aluat	*batter*	*pâte*	
cartof dulce	*sweet patato*		
batată			
coaste	*ribs*		
spumă		*mousse*	
gofră		*goffre*	
aperitiv	*starter*		
gustare	*snack*	*hors-d'oeuvre*	
		amuse-bouche	
friptură	*steak*		
grătar	*barbecue*		
mic dejun	*breakfast*		
de casă	*home made*	*maison*	
la cuptor		*au four*	*al forno*
în sânge	*rare*		
bine făcut	*well done*		
ciuperci			*funghi*
oţet balsamic			*aceto balsamico*
roşii uscate			*pomodori sechi*
afumat	*smoked*	*fumé*	
cu căpşuni		*fraisier*	
sos de stridii	*oyster sauce*		
coajă (de lămâie)	*(lemon) zest*		
sos de peşte	*fish sauce*		
plăcintă cu peşte	*fish pie*		
salată Caesar	*Caesar salad*		
orez arborio	*arborio rice*		
brânză albastră	*blue cheese*	*bleu fromage*	
brânză cu mucegai			
zahăr brun	*brown sugar*		
fel principal	*main course*		
cartofi prăjiţi	*French fries*		
cartofi pai			
lapte de pasăre		*île flottante*	

Table 2. Terminological doublets and triplets with equivalent in Romanian

A graphical representation of the terms and phraseological units in English, French and Italian that have a correspondent in Romanian is available below:
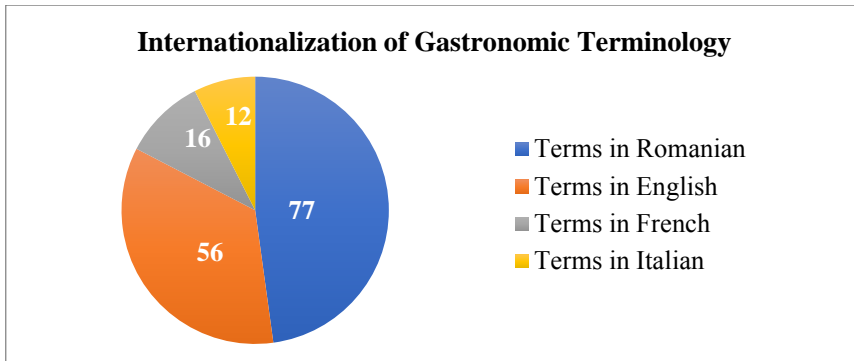
Internationalization of Gastronomic Terminology

Terms in Romanian 77
Terms in English 56
Terms in French 16
Terms in Italian 12

Figure 3. Internationalization of Gastronomic Terminology in our Corpus

Upon close examination of the table above, we notice that our corpus includes:

i) 9 terminological triplets, where the term or phraseological unit in Romanian "rivals" with terms or phraseological units in English or French;

ii) 65 terminological doublets, where the term or phraseological unit in Romanian rivals with:

- 48 terms or phraseological units in English;
- 11 terms or phraseological units in Italian;
- 6 terms or phraseological units in French.

In our opinion, the occurrence of such terminological phenomena (doublets and triplets) has two causes:

i) the manifestation of a communicational snobbery whose main consequence, on the long term, is the loss of identity, specificity, richness and variety of Romanian gastronomic terminology;

ii) the participation, in the cooking competition, of several foreigners or other individuals who have been living abroad for a long time and for whom it is much easier to use the English, French or Italian words instead of their correspondent in Romanian.

Conclusions

The internationalization of gastronomic terminology is achieved by means of the use of xenisms, foreign terms which find their way into the Romanian language. The 524 xenisms identified in our corpus, which accounts for a percentage of 20.69% of the overall number of terms included in our corpus, demonstrate the liveliness of the phenomenon and its natural manifestation within the vocabulary used by the *Masterchef Romania* competitors.

Our aim of investigating gastronomic terminology by means of a quantitative analysis of such a large television oral corpus, a corpus that is homogeneous in terms of thematic view, partial and open at the same time, but representative of the

gastronomic field, revealed, on the one hand, the multiple origins thereof, the significant number of "foreignisms" (as Antonia Ciolac calls them), the massive internationalization of this terminology, and, on the other hand, the unbreakable bond between gastronomy and cultural identity, as well as the cultural openness and cross-cultural awareness, as the internationalization of taste (food-wise) plays, we hope, an effective role in the enhancement of tolerance and solidarity.

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Absinthe in Advertising Discourse

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1. Introduction

Absinthe, also known as "green fairy", is a strong alcoholic green-colored beverage, usually commercialized at 70 degrees, and a controversial herbal spirit, obtained from the leaves of a species of wormwood, anise, fennel to which other herbs are added. The herbal spirit drink also represents a stimulant of gastric secretion since it contains many bitter substances.

Absinthe is quite powerful, as it is known to have twice the strength of other spirits. So, it is understandable why the emerald green alcoholic drink became the favorite choice amongst artists, poets and intellectuals of the 19th century[1]. The drink gradually became popular not only amongst these categories, but also with European citizens, being eventually banned from countries like France, Switzerland, Belgium and the United States before the First World War.

The green spirit was the genuine item or symbol associated with la Belle Époque, which rendered it even more spectacular and mysterious. It was thus linked to or thought of in connection with legendary drinkers like the vulnerable and sensitive poets or painters or musicians like Van Gogh, Verlaine, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Erik Satie or Toulouse-Lautrec. It was the epitome of the tormented and twisted souls, of the romantic disillusioned dreamers, of wealthy reckless hedonists of that era.

The green drink derives its name from one of its common ingredients – *Artemisia absinthium* – even though it is a spirit infused with lots of other botanicals and herbs: fennel, anise. The specific type of wormwood ingredient (Artemisia absinthium) is renowned for its high levels of thujone, a chemical compound believed to have hallucinatory effects on the mind. The wrong presupposition linking a pleasant aperitif with hallucination helped unjustly demonizing both the compound – thujone – and the drink; it was, in fact, the improper process of fabrication, distillation and the overconsumption of alcoholic drink which led to health problems or poisoning.

Absinthe's popularity increased in the 19th century after a long period during

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[1] https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/the-devil-in-a-little-green-bottle-a-history-of-absinthe (accessed 17 February 2021).

which phylloxera destroyed vineyards and wine production and during which the price of wine augmented. But the prohibition equated with the attempt of vintners to regain control of the consumers' market and anti-alcohol movements had an impact on maligning the "Green Fairy". Nevertheless, nowadays, to the horror of some, but to the surprise and delight of other consumers, US and British companies have drawn agreements with producers of absinthe from Spain or from the Czech Republic to bring in as many variants of the light green alcoholic drink. While Swiss drinkers are forbidden from drinking it, modern Americans can consume it in small quantities and for personal use. Europeans can enjoy themselves, sipping it and tasting a beverage from the main producer on this continent, Pernod-Ricard.

Advertising absinthe is currently pervasive in the online environment on specialized sites and in reviews. Smart marketers have grown aware of the fact that the power of persuasion of publicity increases in online prints or traditional prints containing examples of linguistic and visual metaphors associated with this peculiar drink. Potential or actual consumers are thus convinced more effectively of the inherent qualities of the spirit being promoted. Not only does absinthe advertising rely on images but it also makes use of linguistic metaphors.

If we draw a comparison between the different degrees of attention paid to several alcoholic drinks as objects of study from a linguistic, cultural and social point of view, we notice that wine is the most investigated beverage (Caballero and Diaz-Vera 2011; Negro 2012; Caballero and Suàrez-Toste 2010, 2008; Caballero, 2009). Secondly, we find out that several authors pay attention to the study of the language of beer advertising discourse (Lantolf and Bobrova, 2012; Hamer, 2017), but none tackles the linguistic, artistic or cognitive perspective in absinthe advertising discourse. That is why the aim of our study is to classify and analyze characteristics of the figurative language used in the advertising discourse about absinthe. We also isolate some categories of cognitive metaphors associated with absinthe tasting, starting from a corpus of examples from English advertising discourse and identify several examples of visual metaphors associated with it.

2. Particularities of the linguistic and pictorial metaphor in absinthe advertising

As regards examples of conceptual metaphor, we will not focus on analyzing commonplace instances of the anthropomorphic, organicist-animist metaphor, which are present in the metaphorical schemata specific to all spirits advertising; we wish to identify peculiar instances of the cognitive metaphor that are found in English reviews and advertising discourse on absinthe. The corpus selected for the study of figurative language used by tasters of specialized reviewers in English media discourse is analyzed from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory, developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1993, 2006). In order to identify aspects of the metaphorical schema specific to absinthe advertising, we chose examples from a

corpus of excerpts of English absinthe tasting reviews and ads found on NYTimes.com and on http:// www.wormwoodsociety.org.

In a review published in 2009 in the *Ney York Times* by Eric Asimov, we find striking images associated with absinthe: "ABSINTHE? So devil may care, so *deliciously disreputable*, so *... louche*. But it's *poisonous*, no? It *eats your brain* and *drives you crazy*!"
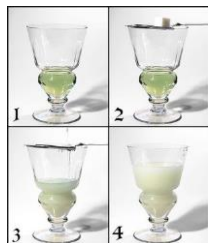
We find peculiar variants of the organicist metaphor, based on the association of the green drink with a scandalous individual, who is not respectable in character and in appearance, who is in a nutshell endowed with a bad reputation.

There is a word-play on "louche" which has a double meaning: 1. "disreputable" either in an appealing or in a rakish way, 2**.** the final clouded effect[1] and condition of the light green drink after cold water is added to it.

The next two examples found in the same excerpt illustrate the unusual association between absinthe and a worm or parasite that is capable of migrating and which eventually settles to feed on the part of the human body it is invading – the head. Not only does this worm "eat" the drinkers' brain, but it also leads to madness ("It eats your brain and drives you crazy").

Other examples of metaphor are found in an *Absinthe Tasting Guide* published by the Wormwood Society – America's Premier Absinthe Association & Information Network. This absinthe tasting guide takes into consideration six criteria that help assess the pleasant spirit: appearance (including hue, depth, clarity), louche, aroma, flavor, finish, overall impression. These criteria are calked on the main characteristics of the appropriately made absinthe that date back to the 19th century. Each of these criteria is analyzed according to five scoring tips, discriminating the key qualities for each of it. Scoring tips from 1 to 5 illustrate numerous instances of cognitive metaphor associated to absinthe tasting and we believe the most interesting of them fall under the categories: aroma, flavour, mouthfeel and finish.

Finish represents the lingering flavor impressions and tactile palate sensations obtained after the drink has been swallowed by the taster or expectorated. Its key qualities range from "clean" to "pleasant", while 4 and 5 scoring tips range from "intriguing", "interesting" to "exceptional" and "balanced". If we take into account the absinthe element (finish) and the linguistic metaphors associated with it, we can also draw the subdivisions of its organicist-animist metaphorical design: while personality and temperament features are reflected by three of these instances ("intriguing", "interesting" to "exceptional"), physical traits / appearance are shown by the other two ("clean", and "pleasant").

Flavor and mouthfeel key qualities of absinthe range from "balanced" to "interesting", "refreshing" and its highest scoring tips range from "correct",

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[1] Source of image: https://www.absintheaccessories.org/how-to-drink-absinthe.html (accessed on the 1st of March, 2021).

"idiosyncratic", "enjoyable", "complex", "well balanced". We thus notice that in the metaphorical design associated with flavour we discover the same subdivisions "physical traits" and "personality and temperament features" to which a third subdivision is added: economic status, showing absinthe's wealth ("rich").

Aroma results from smells of the fundamental components, making up the "trinity" (wormwood, anise and fennel) as well as from olfactory impressions from the combinations of other ingredients added to the three constituents. The key qualities related to aroma range from "balanced" to "complex" and alluring", while scoring tips range from "weak" or "strong", to "peculiar", "alluring", "distinctive" and "expansive". The same subdivisions "physical traits" and "personality and temperament features" are uncovered with a distinction, by comparison to "flavour and mouthfeel": there are more examples of linguistic metaphor falling under "physical traits and anatomy" ("alluring", "strong", "weak").

As regards the visual metaphors associated with absinthe we chose several prints and tried to study them starting from Forceville's typology of pictorial metaphors (1994, 1996, 2002). His classification discriminates four different categories according to the way the target and the source are physically rendered in the particular advertisement:
- integrated metaphor rendered both verbally and visually;
- hybrid metaphor where both the target and the source are linked together so as to conceive a new object;
- pictorial simile emphasizing that both the source and the target are separately identified and shown;
- contextual metaphor where only the target can be identified, while the source domain can only be understood or speculated from the visual elements present in a given context.

Most of the advertisements in our corpus of study are examples of vintage prints from the 19th century and from the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays absinthe advertising is more common in specialized reviews or on internet sites.

The majority of vintage prints in our corpus of study are examples of pictorial similes where absinthe increases its appeal to male consumers in the target-public by showing and drawing an analogy between the mild aperitif and a woman drinking it. In the first advertisement[1], we notice a sensual blonde holding a glass of absinthe in the left hand, slightly leaning her head back.

In the second one[2], which represents in fact an original lithograph printed in colors on wove paper, dated and signed on the right *1896 / Privat Livemont*, we observe a red-haired seminude whose body is draped in transparent gauze. She holds a glass of absinthe in her right hand, whilst the wormwood vapours resulting from the still are molded in the shape of vegetal clouds.

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[1] Source of image: https://cs.nga.gov.au/detail.cfm?IRN=8908 (accessed 17 February 2021).
[2] Source of image: https://clarkfineart.com/artists/la-belle-epoque/privat-livemont/absinthe-robette/ (accessed 17 February 2021).

We understand how some of the key qualities found in the Absinthe tasting guide ("alluring", "pleasant", "enjoyable") make up the mapped characteristics of absinthe in these late 19th century advertisements.
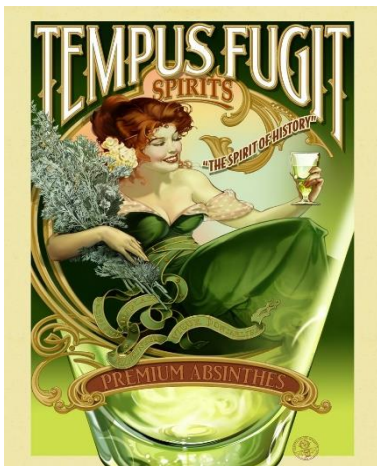
A second example of visual metaphor associated with absinthe drinking and tasting is a metonymy. A glass of absinthe in the hands of a red-head, holding a bundle of wormwood, stands for the whole container – the Premium Absinthes bottle, by Vieux Pontarlier – whose shape is partially guessed in the third drawing from our corpus.

"The spirit of history" spirit[1] tries to capture the essence of La Belle Époque while at the same time it addresses the male consumers showing them that time flies ("Tempus fugit") and that they should live and enjoy the present moment, celebrating it with a glass of their favorite drink, in the company of a beautiful woman.

Conclusions

From the corpus study of the way in which metaphors are expressed visually and linguistically in absinthe advertisements in English, we conclude that the pictorial design mainly relies on the pictorial simile and on metonymy.

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[1] Source of image: https://fineartamerica.com/featured/vintage-poster-tempus-fugit-absinthe-vintage-images.html?product=beach-towel (accessed 17 February 2021).

The analysis of cognitive-semantic metaphors has also demonstrated that in order to promote the alcoholic beverage several features of absinthe are emphasized: aroma, flavour, mouthfeel and finish. These are illustrated within the metaphorical design by the categories "personality and temperament features" and "physical traits" of the anthropomorphic metaphor. Other examples uncover the unusual association between absinthe and a worm or parasite.

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