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**Student of Two Masters:  
David Lodge and the Dual Tradition of the Novel**  
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*Abstract*

*The article examines David Lodge's indebtedness to James Joyce and Graham Greene, self-elected precursors whose Catholic sensibilities appear to be the only connecting link between them. Although Lodge has now abandoned the religious thematics relating his early *The Picturegoers* and *The British Museum is Falling Down* to Joyce and Greene, the duality of aesthetic principles emblemized by those "two masters" remains an abiding interest informing his postmillennial novels *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*. However, the rival poetics of "modernism" and "realism" are here represented by Henry James and H. G. Wells, with the emphasis shifting towards the latter.*

*Keywords: David Lodge, postmillennial, bio-fiction, novel, modernism, realism*

"But Greene's awfully sordid, don't you think?" says Polly.  
"But Waugh's so snobbish."  
"Anyway, it said in the *Observer* that they're the two best  
English novelists going, so that's one in the eye for the Prods."

**The eye of the beholder: Lodge's elective affinities**

The exchange quoted above comes from a dialogue taking place between two young persons, Michael and Polly, during a lull in a dance party in David Lodge's mid-career novel *How Far Can You Go?* Although Michael would sooner contemplate Polly's frontal endowment than the relative merits of Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* and Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, he is ready to settle for talking books to impress his pretty interlocutor with his advanced literary tastes. The two of them have rather different preferences when it comes to individual writers, though: Graham Greene's preoccupation with the drama of damnation and redemption acted out in the writer's sad tropics in the middle of nowhere or the seedy outskirts of grey English cities is too depressing for Polly; Michael, for his part, has no time for the ritual capers of the aristocratic saints and sinners populating Evelyn Waugh's baronial mansions.

Apart from their possibly gender-related differences in tastes, Polly and Michael both agree, tacitly or otherwise, that in the cultural contests of the early sixties, it is their co-religionists, the English Catholic novelists, who carry the day. The young ones' shared aesthetic judgement seems to be reinforced, for once, by the "official verdict" published in the world's oldest Sunday paper, *The Observer*: yes, Waugh and Greene, both converts to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church are the two best English novelists going. And that, as Polly gloatingly observes, must be bad news for England's Protestant majority: "one in the eye for the Prods" (Lodge 1981: 25). Despite the flippancy of the young woman's remark, with all that is behind it, the quip offers itself as a suitable starting point for an examination of how David Lodge's fiction can be located between the poles of more-or-less conventional

types of the novel as represented by Graham Greene or even H. G. Wells here, and what is commonly regarded as formal experimentation associated with James Joyce or Henry James there. In simpler terms: between modernism on the one hand and realism on the other.

### **Arriving at the crossroads: Lodge's Joyce is Greene**

Returning to my motto above, it would be a grave error to conclude from it that the implied author of *How Far Can You Go?* shares the thoughtless bigotry suggested by Polly's anti-Protestant jibe. Such an assumption would be given the lie, among other things, by the central significance of the Lutheran Søren Kierkegaard's existentialist philosophy in Lodge's later novel *Therapy*. Indeed, any form of religious dogmatism or exclusionism is wholly irreconcilable with the liberal position occupied by Lodge within the church, as correctly noted by J. Russel Perkin (2014: 7), which even led the novelist to describe himself at one point as an "agnostic Catholic" (qtd. in Bergonzi 1995: 43). Accepting others, or the religious Other, does not, however, mean disavowing his own for David Lodge. The writer of half a dozen or so novels regularly appearing in surveys of Catholic fiction, Lodge has never gone on record to reject the label "Catholic novelist" – unlike Graham Greene, and very much unlike his other self-chosen precursor, James Joyce.<sup>1</sup> Tellingly, the spiritual growth of Mark Underwood, the hero of Lodge's first novel *The Picturegoers*, runs a course diametrically opposed to the developmental trajectory followed by Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Mark, an intellectual doubter and an uninhibited womanizer at the outset, eventually relinquishes his literary and amorous aspirations to embrace the vocation of the Catholic priest. Mark's spiritual growth clearly reverses the direction taken by the mental progress of the *Portrait's* protagonist. Rejecting his spiritual advisor's invitation to enter the priesthood, Stephen Dedalus chooses the apparently broader path of becoming an artist "transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life" (Joyce 2004: 196).

Both *The Picturegoers* and the *Portrait* could be regarded as conversion narratives, except that the former is of the genuine sort, patterned on the St Augustine of the *Confessions*, whose conversion implied the acceptance of the Pauline injunction to "walk honestly [...], not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities" (Romans 13:13, the Douay-Rheims Bible). How impure the ambition of the *Portrait's* Stephen to become a liberated artist may or may not be is open to debate, but his opting for the life of the artist rather than the saint or the martyr suggests what he would have thought of St Paul's warnings against living the life of the dissolute sensualist. In any case, Stephen defiantly refuses at novel's end to serve that in which he no longer believes "whether it call itself [his] home, [his] fatherland or [his] church" (Joyce 2004: 219). Lodge's Mark, for his part, finds, rather than loses, his religious faith, and decides to serve, at the cost of renouncing the pleasures of the flesh and even those of the intellect, that which he has eventually come to believe in.

In spite of such thematic reversals, the list of Joycean allusions in the novels of David Lodge could be added to almost indefinitely. A near-comprehensive account of such analogies has in fact been compiled by J. Russell Perkin who, in a substantial chapter of his study *David Lodge and the Tradition of the Modern Novel* titled "Lodge Rejoyses,"<sup>2</sup> offers a survey of Lodge's salient Joycean negotiations (2014: 62–90). These include a diversity of discourse-types used in *The Picturegoers* from the narrative pattern of the Homeric

homecoming or *nostos* or the female interior monologue in *The British Museum Is Falling Down* to the sudden shifts of perspective and style in Lodge's last truly Catholic novel *Therapy* – all borrowed, in modified form, from *Ulysses*.

In spite of their frequency, his Joycean echoes are still less conspicuous in Lodge's novels than his various playful allusions as well as earnest tributes to his strongest precursor invoked in my prefatory quote – Graham Greene. Lodge's sometimes transparently autobiographical engagements with his most significant Catholic preceptor are as numerous in his scholarly publications – ranging from his MA thesis on Greene to a chapter each in his late essay-collections *The Year of Henry James* and *Lives in Writing* – as they are ubiquitous in his fictions, again, from *The Picturegoers* to at least *Therapy*. From major thematic parallels such as self-abnegation, literal and metaphorical border-crossings, as well as instances of miraculous healing, to paragraph-long exercises in virtuoso pastiche and tongue-in-cheek parody, Greene is invoked at virtually every narrative turn that Lodge's novels take. Here it is a character called Grahame, with the mute “e” transferred from Greene's surname to his Christian name, there a forbidding library partition appearing in the shape of “a green baize door” (see Perkin 2014: 12), the latter being a recurrent motif of sinister liminality in Greene's autobiographical writing, that reminds the attentive reader of the master's ghostly presence.

As for Lodge's other major source of serious intertextual play, there is little in the way of family likeness connecting James Joyce to Graham Greene. The specific Christian denomination shared, at least temporarily, by the two great precursors may be one of the few meeting points. But just as England and America are said to be two countries divided by a common language, so are Joyce and Greene separated by their common religion – Roman Catholicism. An Irish-born cradle Catholic, Joyce left his faith as a young man prompted by his artistic-intellectual convictions, while Greene, the son of a liberal Anglican Englishman, converted to Catholicism mainly for biographical reasons at about the same age that the Irish giant of modernism left it. Further complicating the matter is the fact that his friend Cranly's assessment of Stephen Dedalus's spiritual position in the *Portrait* can be applied to Joyce himself: even in apostasy, his mind remained “supersaturated with the religion” in which he said he disbelieved (Joyce 2004: 213). Conversely, Greene insisted that he was not a Catholic novelist per se but a novelist who happened to be a Catholic. Even though such assertions should be treated with some reservations, it can be safely said that Joyce's apostasy was as half-hearted as Greene's belief was, to say the least, unorthodox. But then the real difference between the two of them does not lie in the true character of their respective ecclesiastic affiliations. What really sets Lodge's two paragons apart from each other as writers is not so much a matter of religious creed as it is of artistic credo.

Greene's frequently voiced reservations about Joyce's achievement are instructive here. Although he admired *Dubliners* and regarded “The Dead” as “the finest story in the language” (qtd. in Hoskins 1999: 184), and cited a resounding line from the famous sermon on hell in the *Portrait* to suggest the terrors of his own schooldays at St John's in Berkhamsted (Greene 1979: 14), Greene found *Ulysses* one of the most overrated classics – in fact “a big bore” (qtd. in R. Greene 2007: 288). In that respect the writer of cheap westerns in the film-novella *The Third Man* can be regarded as an ironic self-portrait of sorts. Unlike Rollo Martins, Greene was of course neither ignorant of the existence of James Joyce nor was he clueless about the meaning of the term stream of consciousness. And yet the satire of the farcical writer-meets-readership scene in which Martins admits to never having heard the name of Joyce cuts both ways. The bourgeois snobbery of the Viennese literary circle in

which Martins is bombarded with questions about current novelistic fads is as much the object of ridicule here as the pulp-western writer's philistine anti-intellectualism. That is not the only reason for suspecting a degree of deliberate identification on the part of defiantly anti-modernist Greene and his Joyce-ignoring hero. Aside from being a heavy drinker who nevertheless has a sensitive conscience, Martins is, after all, in the process of writing a story to be called *The Third Man*, the title of the "entertainment" authored by his own creator, Graham Greene. In short, the attitude to James Joyce of semi-autobiographical character and implied author alike can be said to be ambiguous at best and dismissive at worst.

We can only guess what Joyce, who tended to keep whatever opinions he had about his literary competitors to himself, and in any case did not live to see Greene's rise to fame, would have thought of the younger novelist's anti-modern modernism. It is known for a fact, however, that defending the thick opacity of his *Finnegans Wake* Joyce explained, in a letter to his magnanimous but worried sponsor Harriet Weaver Shaw, that much of human existence could not be "rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language, cutanddry grammar and goahead plot" (Ellmann ed. 2003: 318). Although "wideawake" is not a quality one would readily attribute to Greene's dark thrillers and existential spy-stories, his grammar, if not necessarily "cutanddry," is mostly fairly regular and always sufficiently intelligible. More importantly, the action-packed plots of Greene's metaphysical thrillers do have a tendency to run away with his fugitive characters and breathless readers alike. Having the non-events of an ordinary weekday in a provincial city fill a book "the size of a telephone directory," as Greene described his copy of *Ulysses* (Greene 1974: 97), would have been unthinkable for the writer of not only the "entertainments" *Stambul Train* and *A Gun for Sale*, but even of such undisputed classics as *Brighton Rock* or *The Power and the Glory*. Greene is not on record to have said anything as harsh as Evelyn Waugh did when speaking of "the failure of modern novelists" and accusing James Joyce and his followers of "presumption and exorbitance" (qtd. in Gorra 1990: 182). He would, however, have agreed with his own, later, commentator who argues "that Greene's popular thrillers were in part a reaction to the high modernism of writers such as James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, and Virginia Woolf, whose esoteric experiments with language were disengaged from immediate social concerns and inaccessible to a large segment of the reading public" (Diemert 1996: i).

Poles apart as Joyce and Greene may have been, David Lodge has found the narrow strip of overlap between the two of them to build his own dialectical theories and dialogical novels upon. This he accomplished by discovering the Joycean about Greene and the Greene-like about Joyce, which qualities he cleverly blended together in his fiction. A characteristically Lodgean way of doing so is where he borrows the matter from one and goes on to treat it in the manner of the other. Behind, for example, his self-description revealing an early tendency to transpose, in his own words, "some characteristically Greenian themes [...] into a less luridly lit, more suburban milieu" is a paradoxical move of borrowing from the less expected of these two sources (Lodge 1996: 71) – James Joyce. Bernard Bergonzi, who finds the descriptions of lower-middle class interiors in *The Picturegoers* "disturbingly accurate" (Perkin 2014: 42), is right in identifying the closest parallels of Lodge's micro-realism in the scrupulous meanness of the early Joyce. *The Picturegoers* may ultimately be a straightforward narrative of conversion through self-renunciation in the style of Greene's *The End of the Affair*, the naturalistic descriptions metonymically suggesting the humble lifestyle of the average lower-middle-class Catholic family could come right out of Joyce's earlier works – the stories in *Dubliners* or parts of the *Portrait*. The enumeration of such cheap religious bric-a-brac at a point in *The Picturegoers* as "the plastic holy water stoup askew on

the wall, the withered holy Palm, stuck behind a picture of the Sacred Heart [...] and the statue of St Patrick enthroned upon the dresser” in the description of a Catholic “dwelling-place” provide us with a material clue to the tenants’ social standing as well as their religious affiliation (Lodge 1993: 44) – much the same way as a faded photograph of a long-departed priest in a dusty room or a cup of watery tea drained to the dregs do in Joyce’s earlier writings.

If such a metonymical move is something that one would expect to be taken over from Lodge’s paradigmatically anti-modern Greene, rather than the arch-modernist Joyce, the reverse can be witnessed where it is Greene, not Joyce, who Lodge turns to for certain decidedly *modernist* – or, in his own terminology, metaphorical – practices. In most of these instances Lodge follows Greene, who is himself indebted to T. S. Eliot, in that he yokes together abstract and concrete phenomena in similes like the one describing, in *The Picturegoers*, a seminary dropout as the “fellow [who] carried his failure before him like a monsternace” (qtd. in Perkin 2014: 41). Lodge’s vaguely Eliotian image is reminiscent of how the “whisky priest” in Greene’s *The Power and the Glory* “drank the brandy down like damnation” (qtd. in Perkin 2014: 40-41).<sup>3</sup> Using an as yet pre-modern, or naturalist, Joyce to complement a sometimes deceptively modern-looking Greene, does not, however, prevent Lodge the critic from locating Greene in a somewhat uneven but largely continuous tradition of the English realist novel.

While recognizing the unavoidable influence of the great modernists on Greene and his compeers in the 1930s, Lodge believes the latter to have “challenged the modernist version of reality [...] reverting to norms of non-literary descriptions not very different from those observed by Bennett and Wells” (Lodge 1977: 46). Beginning with the great Victorians and the lesser Edwardians the realist, or metonymical, line of descent then returns, after the High Modernist moment, with the “Silver Age” writers represented by Isherwood, Orwell, Waugh, and Greene himself, to resurface, after a brief modernist revival in the forties, with the anti-moderns or new-realists, the Angries and the Movement generation of the post-war period represented by C. P. Snow, William Cooper, and Kingsley Amis among others.

### **Biography all out or the art that makes life: between Wells and James**

The structuralist schema of Lodge’s theoretical work *The Modes of Modern Writing* is constructed around a binary opposition where traditional realism and experimental formalism – Lodge’s metonymic and metaphoric poles – vie for pre-eminence in the history of the Anglo-American novel. The confrontation of these competing aesthetics takes centre stage in two of Lodge’s late, postmillennial, novels: *Author, Author* (2004) and *A Man of Parts* (2011). In his successive ventures into the increasingly popular genre of the biographical novel, Lodge gives fictionalised treatment to the richly documented turns in the creative lives of two more of his self-chosen precursors – Henry James and H. G. Wells respectively. What makes *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* particularly interesting in the context of the rivalling traditions of the English novel briefly surveyed in Lodgean terms above is that the writer-protagonists of these bio-fictions of Lodge embody poetics perhaps even more starkly opposed to each other than those embraced by James Joyce and Graham Greene.

Representing and commenting on Henry James’s extended and ultimately disastrous drive “to achieve fame and fortune as a playwright” followed by the life-altering consequences of the failed campaign to conquer the popular theatres of London (Lodge 2008:

21), *Author, Author* constitutes a new departure in Lodge's long and distinguished career as a novelist. In terms of temporal setting, subject matter and tone, *Author, Author* was Lodge's "first 'period' novel, and [his] first about a real person; its predominant mood was elegiac, its comedy muted, and its hero was celibate from start to finish" (Lodge 2008: 64). With its time-span extending from the Edwardian *belle époque* to the end of the interwar period, its historical protagonist characterized by feeble and ambiguous sexual appetites and dying without the consolations of a loving family or a truly appreciative audience, *Author, Author* is indeed very much unlike Lodge's earlier novels. From *The Picturegoers* to at least *Thinks...*, Lodge's narratives had all been set in the present or recent past of their writing, featured intensely libidinous imaginary characters, and tended to make the reader laugh out loud at every other turn – very much unlike the bio-novel featuring Henry James.

Despite these conspicuous differences, there is almost as much continuity yet as there is disruption between *Author, Author* and Lodge's previous fictions. The motif of international peregrination is certainly there: Lodge's Henry James travels widely in Britain and continental Europe, while, along the way, giving expression to some very strong opinions on the perceived vulgarity of the modern world, especially as retrospectively seen in his native America, a country serving as a major point of reference in Lodge's campus novels *Changing Places* and *Small World*. Also present are here, as elsewhere in the Lodge canon, the themes of art, religion and science with their varying degrees of relevance to the great issues of human existence. "Consciousness is my religion, human consciousness. Refining it, intensifying it – and preserving it," says Lodge's Henry James at one point (2004: 90). If observing, rendering and nourishing the intricacies of human consciousness are at the heart of the Jamesian-Lodgean writer's *art*, observing and interpreting mental processes are no less important for the *science* of the psychologist. It is not without precedent in Lodge's fiction of psychological exploration that Henry's brother William James makes repeated appearance – as he does in *Author, Author*. Consciousness is also the domain of today's cognitive scientist and even of the literary scholar open to interdisciplinary approaches as variously represented by Prof. Ralph Messenger and Dr Helen Reed – one coming from the humanities, while the other from the sciences –, whose conflicting worldviews do not prevent them from falling for each other's romantic charms in *Thinks...*, Lodge's science-*faction* novel written immediately before *Author, Author*. The later Lodge as a critic can himself be seen as a representative of the scientifically-minded humanist for whom the functioning of the human mind is a major preoccupation, as witnessed by his collection of essays *Consciousness and the Novel*. What connects these divergent interests addressed in *Author, Author* to each other is the writer's concern with the observable and knowable world as its peculiarities are registered by the perceiving mind. In a word, there is a version of thematic, as well as formal, realism – psychological realism as it may be – present in *Author, Author*.

It is, however, with *A Man of Parts*, Lodge's second, and to date last, contribution to the genre of bio-fiction that science and, with it, science fiction, takes centre stage. Science fiction is a mode of writing removed just as far from Henry James's aesthetically refined novels as H. G. Wells's space and time travellers can be from the drawing rooms and formal gardens of James's crafted plots. And yet, H. G. Wells already plays a walk-on part in the frame story as well as the core narrative of *Author, Author*, mainly, but not exclusively, as a foil to the figure of the central character, Henry James. Appearing to the latter as "the very embodiment of the new scientific age" (Lodge 2004: 345), the younger writer makes a favourable first impression on a middle-aged Henry James with his originality, courage and self-belief. Later on, however, Wells's cruel caricature of James's style and person in the

younger writer's satirical pamphlet *Boon* makes the old and ailing master ill-disposed to respond gracefully to Wells's congratulatory telegram received on the occasion of the now bedridden James having been awarded the Order of Merit.

As it turns out from both of Lodge's bio-novels, there is more to the *Boon* incident than meets the eye, even if it is euphemistically referred to as a *jeu d'esprit* at a point in *Author, Author* (32). Wells's caricature of the elder novelist and his circumambient style in the image of "a magnificent but painful hippopotamus" could perhaps still be overlooked. The younger novelist's unsparing description of the late Henry James's art as "a church lit but without a congregation [where ] on the altar, very reverently placed, intensely there, [is] a dead kitten, an eggshell, a bit of string" cuts to the quick (Wells 2008: 92). Should the meaning of the cruel witticism elude the reader, Wells's position is made crystal clear in an exchange between the younger novelist and an admirer of his in *A Man of Parts* itself. When Wells admits to Amber Reeves that "there are things in [James's] *The Wings of the Dove* that [...] he couldn't do", the young woman responds by querying whether what James can, but other writers can't, do is worth doing at all (Lodge 2011: 218). Needless to say, Wells gladly accepts the compliment made at the expense of James.

What is worth doing, according to Lodge's H. G. Wells, is exploring and faithfully representing what really matters – reality. "Who would read a novel if we were permitted to write biography – all out?" is the rhetorical question Wells asks in his *Experiment in Autobiography* (qtd. in Maunsell 2018: 135). Opposed to that, the post-Joycean experimenter with sophisticated metafiction, parodic intertextuality and radical indeterminacy as we know Lodge from *The British Library Is Falling Down*, from his virtuoso campus trilogy, or from the postmodern Catholic novel *Therapy* would have wished his reader to prefer what Wells would abandon: the novel of unambiguous fictionality. The writer of Lodge's last two works to date would, however, likely opt for biography "all out." Not only does everything remain verifiably close to historical fact in both *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*, where philological reliability is documented by long bibliographies appended to both works, but – as the acclaimed Wells-scholar Patrick Parrinder astutely observes – *A Man of Parts* is "sprawling and [...] diffuse, rather like one of Wells's own novels" (2011: n. p.) – and, as one might add, rather like Wells's model and creative ideal: life in the raw.

## Where to Lodge?

It would be a mistake to identify, without due reservations, the later David Lodge with the emerging "artistic movement" envisaged by David Shields in his seminal "manifesto." However, such components identified by the American writer-academic as "a deliberate unartiness: 'raw' material" and, most importantly, "a blurring (to the point of invisibility) of any distinction between fiction and nonfiction" (Shields 2010: 5) are qualities emphatically present in David Lodge's later, semi-fictional, work. To (re-)classify Lodge as a representative of what goes by the name of the metamodernism would be as inappropriate as earlier attempts to squeeze him into slots labelled as "postmodern" or "neo-realist". The Lodge-phenomenon is too large and too elusive to fit into any ready-made categories. And yet, in the light of his last two postmillennial (non-)novels he appears to be only too willing to satisfy the reader's "reality hunger" discussed at length in David Shields's "manifesto" of the same title.



Whether the writer of *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* will have the time or inclination to return from the Wellsian to the Jamesian pole is as yet to be seen. Perhaps the aging Lodge will one day come to accept James's dictum that "It is art that makes life" (qtd. in Batchelor 1985: 118). For now, it seems that it is truth, or its semblance truthiness, rather than art, "that makes life" for Lodge and his like-minded, younger contemporaries. We will have to wait and see if there is yet another swing of the pendulum, now back to what Henry James knew no substitute for – art. One thing seems to be certain, though: whether it is James Joyce or Graham Greene, Henry James or H. G. Wells who may play a walk-on part in any later novels to be written by David Lodge, the stage will be managed and the script written by the author, the very much alive author, of *Author, Author, A Man of Parts* and all the other novels touched upon in this brief survey.

## Notes

1. In the last volume of his comprehensive biography of Greene, Norman Sherry concludes that by 1989 the writer's "faith seemed almost nil" (Sherry 2004: 682). The stages of Joyce's separation from the Catholic Church, such as his rejection of the priesthood, his refusal to "make his Easter duty" for his dying mother's sake, the surreptitious baptism by relatives of his son Giorgio against the express paternal wish, etc., are only too well known to be rehearsed here. Not even "Catholic agnostic" Greene would have gone quite so far (qtd. in Sherry 2004: 682), let alone Lodge, whose self-avowed agnostic Catholicism (note the deliberate and meaningful reversal of noun and modifier) was an expression of intellectual uncertainty rather than a gesture of spiritual or emotional renunciation.
2. Perkin's chapter-heading echoes *ReJoyce*, the punning title of Anthony Burgess's 1965 introduction to James Joyce.
3. The analogy should not be overstated here, as the comparison of an abstract concept ("failure") to a concrete one ("monstrance") seems to be less original – or modern – than reversing the conventional functions of tenor and vehicle by comparing a tangible – or, as is the case here, potable – phenomenon of material reality ("brandy") to an abstraction ("damnation"). Here the precursor – Greene – seems to have gone further than the descendant – i.e., Lodge.

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# **Truthiness, Collectivity, and Overlapping Subjectivities: Margaret Atwood's Take on Current Metamodern Trends in *The Heart Goes Last***

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## *Abstract*

*The paper analyses the metamodern concepts of truthiness, collectivity and multiple identities in Margaret Atwood's novel *The Heart Goes Last* (2015). The novel opens with a sweeping economic crisis that leaves most Americans without a job, home, and income. Academics and corporations have come up with a Positron Project that is designed to eliminate crime and unemployment by house and facilities sharing by two alternating families who spend one month in their home and the other as inmates in prison. The initially utopian project soon turns into a closely monitored dystopia, securing its income from selective euthanasia or illegal organ harvesting. The seeming safety and comfort of both the prison and the artificial community turn out to be fatal for interhuman relationships and the identity of the protagonists. Atwood, once again, voices her concern over the political and social manipulation that often stands behind communal utopian projects, especially the readiness of individuals to give up their freedom in exchange for a false security and their willingness to believe in the propaganda presented to them by those in power. The novel, similarly to other Atwood's works, reflects current social, political and ecological issues, and with her sense of humor and irony, uncovers human motivations (which are not always pleasant) behind the optimistic call for collectivity, truth, and responsibility. Without resorting to sarcasm or mockery, her novels are a reminder of human failings, which she presents as natural and unavoidable.*

*Keywords: Margaret Atwood, metamodern sensibility, modern collectivity, dystopia*

Current social and ecological concerns are interconnected with the rising popularity of sharing and collectivity. Yet, despite the new sense of optimism and hope, the most popular genre for both readers and writers is dystopia, besides dark Scandinavian crime novels. The online social networks create a global platform for spreading awareness of conflicting political desires, economic instabilities and ecological concerns that are no longer perceived on purely national, but rather on a global level. The new collective care and interest in world affairs, however, also allows for a collective or political response, which largely presents the above-mentioned struggles as challenges that can be tackled collectively and successfully. Online groups, politicians, or celebrities are using the power of the global network to advertise their social engagement, optimism, and authentic and sincere interest.

My university students are worried about the burning forests in Siberia or cry over stray dogs in Sri Lanka, yet at the same time show little or no interest in local history and politics. The new-coming generation has adopted a new sensibility, oscillating between often contradictory buzzwords including the worship of taken-for-granted individuality and the modern collectivity, sharing of flats, cars, gardens and personal financial independence, freedom of choice and decisions and state-provided safety, utopia characterized by stable economy and sustainable ecosystem, and the acute sense of dystopia, authenticity and the love of performance and staging, sincerity and irony, faith and lack of belief, all wrapped up in an authentic moderate optimism.

While artists from post-communist countries are generally less enthusiastic and trusting of the new collectivism due to their long-term experience with the prescribed sharing practice and its less pleasant sides, Western writers are only slowly beginning to voice their concern over the political or social manipulation that often stands behind communal utopian projects. One of the current critical or rather warning voices addressing the conflict between the communal optimism and (unchanging) human nature, belongs to Margaret Atwood (b. 1939). She has become widely famous for her dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985, the sequel *The Testaments* was published in 2019) that became popular after the Hulu's 2017 TV series adaptation. In her work, Atwood reflects current social, political and ecological issues and with her sense of humor and irony, uncovers the truly human motivations (which are not always pleasant) behind the optimistic call for collectivity and responsibility. Without resorting to sarcasm or mockery, her novels are a reminder of human failings, which she presents as natural and unavoidable.

Her novel *The Heart Goes Last* (2015) addresses all the above-mentioned metamodern sensibility clashes and hopes, picturing a new utopia, which gradually turns into a critical dystopia, and eventually, at the end, a satire with an open ending, leaving the protagonists to rely on their (often poor) choices once again. The story is set in a near-future after a sweeping economic crisis. The protagonists, a married couple Stan and Charmaine (without known surnames) decide to solve their financial struggles by joining a utopian, socio-economic project Positron that is based on communal sharing. Everyone is allocated a house and a job but every second month they have to serve as inmates in the local, private-owned prison. The seemingly stable and loving relationship of Stan and Charmaine, as well as their happiness, starts crumbling apart once their new life turns into a comfortable routine. One of the major concerns of the novel is, therefore, the conflicting desire between social and financial security on one side, and adventure, romance, and personal freedom on the other; showcasing the consequences of fear, self-deception, and desire that lead the protagonists into a willing surrender of their moral values and freedom.

Stan and Charmaine are presented as prototypes of an average, common couple. The sense of their familiarity and proximity to the reader, despite their specific situation, is reached by providing their first names only. They are not Mr. and Mrs., only Stan and Charmaine, the neighbors living just down the road. They have no supernatural power, no extraordinary inner or outer strength; they are just a common married couple facing a situation that is well beyond their imaginative powers.

In the opening of the novel, the couple lives in their car, feeling bewildered, angry, and helpless. As Stan observes:

[E]verything went to ratshit. Overnight, it felt like. Not just in his own personal life: the whole card castle, the whole system fell to pieces, trillions of dollars wiped off the balance sheets like fog off a window. . . There were hordes of two-bit experts on TV pretending to explain why it had happened – demographics, loss of confidence, gigantic Ponzi schemes – but that was all guesswork bullshit.

(Atwood 2015: 9)

Stan never questioned the logic or stability of the system, he simply followed the everyday routine, having a stable, though not a very exciting job, and equally dependable and not a very exciting marriage. His choice of Charmaine for a wife reflects his desire for a peace and quiet, as he saw her as an “escape from the many-layered, devious, ironic, hot-cold women he'd tangled himself up with until then; [...] Transparency, certainty, fidelity: his various

humiliations had taught him to value those. He liked the retro thing about Charmaine, the cookie-ad thing, her prissiness, the way she hardly ever swore” (Atwood 2015: 66). He chose Charmaine to be safe from his destructive desires, saving himself from any potential frustration, pain, and loneliness. The same can be said about Charmaine who admired her husband because she could depend on him. Yet her fragility and decency is only a part of her social mask, as she contemplates prostitution, trying to persuade herself that fulfilling her sexual desires and getting paid for it, would benefit her marriage, as she would increase her earnings in a secretly pleasurable way: “Though she’d had a tiny flash of excitement, like peering in through a window and seeing another version of herself inside, leading a second life; a more raucous and rewarding second life. At least more rewarding financially, and she’d be doing it for Stan, wouldn’t she?” (Atwood 2015: 26). Both protagonists thus from the very beginning display dissatisfaction with their lives and marriage, yet, dutifully foreground their socially acceptable selves.

Their disastrous living conditions are eventually solved after Charmaine persuades Stan to join a social-economic project Positron set in the town Consilience. Those who are chosen for the project shall receive housing and job, yet for each month in the town, they have to serve one month as inmates in the Positron prison.

After a night in a hotel with hot running water and fresh white fluffy towels, the visitors have to choose between returning to the harsh reality of living on the streets, jobless and fearful, or starting a new, though permanent life in Consilience. While Stan is doubtful, Charmaine is determined to stay, if only for the towels, as she says. They eventually decide to stay, out of fear, out of insecurity, willing to trade life choices for safety.

The project managers provide them with more than just fresh towels, they give them a story, a grand narrative of success, optimism, and collective comfort and security. What is more, they create a space and specifically choose their target group that would be willing to adhere to their old yet efficient manipulation. To keep their followers in line, they, in the name of safety, isolate them both physically and electronically from the outside world. While this strategy is far from new, the willingness to comply may be surprising in the globalized age. Such obvious ignorance and hopeful oblivion is just another aspect of the metamodern sensibility, that is, the desire to believe and act “as if” it all was true, despite the ever-present postmodern distrust and disbelief. Both Stan and Charmaine want to believe in the new system and the whole project, practicing what Vermeulen and van der Akker (2010: 4) call the metamodern “faith without belief” and adherence to “impossible possibility”:

Unemployment and crime solved in one fell swoop, with a new life for all those concerned – think about that! They themselves, the incoming Positron Planners – they’re heroic! They’ve chosen to risk themselves, to take a gamble on the brighter side of human nature, to chart unknown territories within the psyche. They’re like the early pioneers, blazing a trail, clearing a way to the future: a future that will be more secure, more prosperous, and just all-round better because of them! [...] “Stan has never heard so much bullshit in his life. On the other hand, he sort of wants to believe it.”

(Atwood 2015: 49–50)

The ideology behind the new utopia is therefore dependent on selection of people who are willing to believe it, like Stan and Charmaine. A comedian Stephen Colbert calls such fact-independent claims “truthiness”, that is “something that seems like truth – the truth we want to exist” (Sternbergh 2006). Vermeulen (2015) further develops and explains this concept as follows:

Colbert defines truthiness as the truth of the gut, unperturbed by empirical research or rational thought. It is a truth that feels true to me, or to you, but whose validity is not necessarily confirmed by science. . . “Truthiness” expresses the production of a “truth” according to emotion instead of empiricism; [...] Truthiness puts the truth into question; Truthiness abandons the reality of truth as a legitimate register of signification;

The protagonists thus voluntarily give up their freedom, social and political rights (and their mobile phones), in exchange for physical safety and financial security, all in the name of the greater good of the modern collectivity.

The social and political insecurity, economic instability, and ecological catastrophes in connection with the current trend of mass incarceration, all contribute to the rising concerns over safety and the extent of state control. As David Garland (2001: 194) argues, the

risky, insecure character of today’s social and economic relations is the social surface that gives rise to our newly emphatic, overreaching concern with control. . . . It is the source of the deep-seated anxieties that find expression in today’s crime control culture, in the commodification of security, and in a built environment designed to manage space and to separate people.

In Atwood’s novel, prisons turned out to be the only institution that remained profitable after the economic crisis. Because of the concentration of larger groups of people in minimum space working for no wages under supervision, prison has become the logical center of the new utopia but also the new reality, as inmate work is used for profit, especially in private institutions. The prison itself generates money by selling the products made by prisoners and it also creates jobs, as the inmates need clothes, food, cleaning, and medical services and many others. As Atwood observes in the novel:

Prisons used to be about punishment, and then reform and penitence, and then keeping dangerous offenders inside. Then, for quite a few decades, they were about crowd control – penning up the young, aggressive, marginalized guys to keep them off the streets. And then, when they started to be run as private businesses, they were about the profit margins for the prepackaged jail-meal suppliers, and the hired guards and so forth.

(Atwood 2015: 172)

Atwood makes a realistic, yet highly ironic point by placing the fair, utopian idea of a new self-sustaining community into a prison. If there was not a sufficient number of cooperating prisoners, the population would voluntarily take turns in their roles as seemingly free citizens and inmates. The prison is thus paradoxically upheld as a space enabling communal prosperity despite its original purpose. As Useem and Morrison Piehl observe:

[p]rison is the ultimate intrusion by the state into the lives of its citizens. Prisons impose on their residents’ near-complete deprivation of personal liberties, barren living conditions, control centers that regulate movement within the prison, exterior fences draped with concertina wire, lines painted on hallway floors that limit where inmates may walk, little and ill-paid work, and endless tedium.

(2008: 3)

Yet, the Positron prison is not a place for those who need punishment or who committed any crime against society but common, “middle of the road” citizens, like Stan and Charmaine. To make the project more attractive and desirable, the town was visually set in the 1950s to bring back nostalgia and a sense of domestic happiness, promising the newcomers “gainful employment, three wholesome meals a day, a lawn to tend, a hedge to trim, the assurance that you were contributing to the general good, and a toilet that flushed. In a word, or rather three words: A MEANINGFUL LIFE” (Atwood 2015: 56). While Stan is skeptical, he needs the narrative of hope and renewal, reflecting Seth Abramson’s claims that “metamodernism believes in reconstructing things that have been deconstructed with a view toward re-establishing hope and optimism in the midst of a period [the postmodern period] marked by irony, cynicism, and despair” (Abramson 2017).

Yet, for both Charmaine and Stan, this meaningful life is appealing only for their married personas and while they are out on the streets. Once they settled in their new home, they are not able to communicate to each other what their true desires are; instead, Stan resorts to erotic day-dreaming, and Charmaine to infidelity. On the example of Charmaine, Atwood demonstrates the metamodern concept of multiple or over-lapping impersonations, or personas driven by conflicting desires of the individual, showcasing Seth Abramson’s claim that metamodernism asks us to “overlap multiple subjectivities,” or in other words to “be many people at once without putting any one of them at the forefront” (Abramson 2017). The major desire shifted from the concept of “you can be, whatever you wish, if you work hard enough for it,” into a “create a list of things you want to be and be all of them at once.” Or, in Vermeulen’s (2012) words:

For us, the prefix meta indicates that a person can believe in one thing one day and believe in its opposite the next. Or maybe even at the same time. Indeed, if anything, meta intimates a constant repositioning: not a compromise, not a balance, but an at times vehemently moving back and forth, left and right. [...] without ever seeming reducible to any one of them.

Charmaine is a master of personas and switching of identities. While paradoxically it was her, who persuaded her husband to join the project to enjoy a quiet life together and start a family, after an initial settling in, it is her, who wishes to make the most of her new life. She enjoys the time in prison, which she views as her time off, time without decisions to make, without desires to follow, or problems to solve. She also understands her time as an inmate as her private personal punishment for an affair she started with a man, she and Stan, alternate their house with. “Everyone seems quite happy: having two lives means there’s always something different to look forward to. It’s like having a vacation every month. But which life is the vacation and which is the work? Charmaine hardly knows” (Atwood 2015: 68). She does not view the prison as a restriction but rather as a safe place, where she cannot act on her desire for danger and passion, or live her double life and is given a strict daily regime. There she feels she is not responsible for her action and enjoys the luxury of being a mere follower, no questions asked. Whenever she is caged, she appreciates the burden of decision-making taken off her shoulders.

Her stay in prison is contrasted with the time she spends with her lover who is a real estate agent and therefore has access to empty houses. There she acts on her instincts only, anything is permissible: Only there and with him, she is willing to be anything: “Anything

inside this non-house, inside this nothing space, a space that doesn't exist, between these two people with no real names. Oh anything. Already she's abject" (Atwood 2015: 80).

She constantly justifies herself by claiming what Stan would prefer, how her actions are eventually beneficial for him, or that he would consider it bad taste. "Stan would never put up with her wearing a garish hue like that – Purple Passion is its name, such bad taste. Which is why she bought it: that's how she thinks of her feelings toward Max. Purple. Passionate. Garish. And, yes, bad taste" (Atwood 2015: 74). Little does she know that Stan found her note to her lover with the lipstick kiss and since then he cannot stop obsessing about the mysterious woman who he thinks is their alternate wife. Charmaine, therefore, oscillates between her impersonation of a 1950s perfect sweet wife and a shameless lover, between her love of adventure and puritan morality, and between naiveté and worldliness. She fits into what Greg Dember (2018) marks as one of the major features of metamodern sensibility: "the double frame". This term was first used by Raoul Ehsleman, meaning that metamodern sensibility performs the belief in truth, beauty, morality, innocence, while understanding its ironical impossibility. Or rather, in Charmaine's case, giving up on turning these beliefs into action. Instead, she blames it on chemistry and instincts: "It wasn't Stan's fault, it was the fault of chemistry. People said *chemistry* when they meant something else, such as personality, but she does mean chemistry. Smells, textures, flavours, secret ingredients. She sees a lot of chemistry in her work, she knows what it can do. Chemistry can be like magic. It can be merciless" (Atwood 2015: 77).

The ability of Charmaine to create multiple identities and shift effortlessly among them is further demonstrated on her happiness over her new responsibility in the prison, where she was chosen to terminate those who do not fit:

It's not easy for them to find people willing to carry out the Procedure in an efficient yet caring way, they'd told her: dedicated people, sincere people. But someone has to do it, for the good of all. The first time she attempted the forehead kiss, there was a lunge of the head, an attempt at snapping. He'd drawn blood. She requested that a neck restraint be added. And it was. They listen to feedback, here at Positron.

(Atwood 2015: 94)

The original utopian vision of the project included criminals who were to be mixed with the part-time volunteers, and even they were allowed to go out every second month to either take up civilian work or serve as guards. Those who did not conform suddenly started disappearing, with the official version claiming they were removed to another wing. Only the project leaders and Charmaine know what is really happening. She provides them with love and care during their execution. She pats his arm, then turns her back so he can't see her sliding the needle into the vial and drawing up the contents. "Off we go," she says cheerfully. She finds the vein, slips in the needle" (Atwood 2015: 95).

This function makes her feel important and needed, moreover she always smiles at her clients as she calls them, "with her deceptive teeth. She hopes she appears to him like an angel, more specifically the "angel of mercy. Because isn't she one?" (Atwood 2015: 94). She wants to believe that she is doing the killing in the name of the greater good, or at least that is what she chooses to believe. Charmaine happily follows orders and feels useful, being proud of her high status in the prison. In rare moments when she wonders about organ-harvesting, or protein-enriched feeding, she prefers look away: "But whatever happens, it's bound to be useful, and that's all she needs to know. There are some things it's better not to think about" (Atwood 2015: 96). To Charmaine's way of thinking Atwood demonstrates the



power of truthiness. Despite their collective concerns and desire for safety, individuals still to a large degree remain (and maybe even more so) emotional and sexual creatures who seek to fulfill their desires regardless of social norms, rules or collective good. Charmaine follows the orders as they fit the complex set of self-images she created for herself, without being rational or even without thinking of potential consequences. She lives in the moment, with no regard to the future.

The only time she admits that her job is not in concord with general notions of morality is when she looks outside her small limited world. She realizes there is something wrong when she is taken off her position in prison and is not allowed to go home to her husband. Suddenly, she fears that the project might end and the whole world will know not only about her sexual recklessness but also her prison job. “She has a flash of herself, in a front-page photo, in her green smock, smiling eerily and holding a needle: DEATH ANGEL CLAIMS SHE SENT MEN TO HEAVEN. That would be horrible. She’d be the target of a lot of hate. But Ed won’t let the reporters get in here, and thank goodness for that” (Atwood 2015: 164).

Charmaine puts herself into her private prison of self-deception, constructing her own personal and social narratives, and switching smoothly among them. She is willing to give up anything for her comfort: she chose Stan to offer stability and safety, chose Positron project, and there she chose to look away from death and suffering of others. She uses the metamodern “as-if”, or Colbert’s concept of truthiness as her life strategy, while Atwood shows the destructive consequences of such attitude.

Charmaine does not miss her freedom, does not question the principles, she only, once again, misses her life stability and Stan, not realizing, she was chosen to be a part of Jocelyn’s plan to get Stan out of the Consilience town. Jocelyn and her husband count on Charmaine to follow orders, no matter what they are. When she is offered to be the angel of death again, she feels blessed and believes that she has outwitted the system “She smiles her I-am-a-good-person smile, the smile of an absent-minded angel with a childish lisp. That smile has seen her through many difficult places, or at least it has since she’s been grown up. It’s a Get Out of Jail Free card, it’s a rock concert wristband, it’s a universal security password, like being in a wheelchair” (Atwood 2015: 198). While she thinks, she is the one who determines her future by deceiving others, it is she who is being manipulated.

She does not know yet that it will be Stan into whose arm she shall inject her needle. Her determination to live comfortably and not to lose her privileges in prison is so strong that she does not hesitate and accepts the job, without knowing that she is not actually killing him, only putting him under strong sedatives. Only after her job is done, is she allowed back in the house under the supervision of other women, as she is expected to be a mourning widow who lost her husband in a fire: “She once felt so secure inside this house. Her and Stan’s house, their warm cocoon, their shelter from the dangerous outside world, nestled inside a larger cocoon. First the town wall, like an outside shell; then, Consilience, like the soft white part of an egg. And inside Consilience, Positron Prison: the core, the heart, the meaning of it all” (Atwood 2015: 258).

While Charmaine mourns her security and the limits imposed upon her by society, her marriage, and the Consilience/Positron project, Stan contemplates his attitude to life, his tendency to play everything safe, choose a stable job and a seemingly sweet retro wife not to be over-run by passion or danger:

Tiny threads of petty cares and small concerns, and fears he took seriously at the time. [...] He's been the puppet of his own constricted desires. He shouldn't have let himself be caged in here, walled off from freedom. But what does freedom mean any more? And who had caged him and walled him off? He'd done it himself. So many small choices.

(Atwood 2015: 205)

Stan seems more honest with himself, admitting that his caged life has been a direct result of his life choices that went against his true desires. For his honesty, stability, and unwillingness to fully submit to orders, the alternate wife Jocelyn chose him to act as a part of her larger plan to reveal all illegal activities that were going on within the project. Jocelyn's plan to have Stan killed by his wife, enabled her to smuggle him out of the Consilience town, back into the real world, where his major task was to contact the media to reveal all atrocities: Organ harvesting, prison abuse, sex slaves created by neurosurgery, violation of human rights. Jocelyn's final gift to Stan is not only his regained freedom and a house but also the transportation of Charmaine, who was to be operated to imprint on the project leader and uncritically adore him forever. Instead, it is Stan she imprints on, or so she believes. After the surgery Charmaine feels calm and happy: "The dark part of herself that was with her for so long seems to be completely gone. It's as if someone has taken an eraser and erased the pain of those memories" (Atwood 2015: 399). Suddenly, she is willing to do anything for Stan, both in kitchen and bedroom, fulfilling all his wishes and desires. Yet he cannot get over his doubts: "True, the routine has become slightly predictable, but it would be surly to complain. Like complaining that the food's too delicious" (Atwood 2015: 411). He cannot forget that she was cheating on him and was willing to kill him, this woman whom he considered safe and sweet turned in his eyes into an unreliable and whimsical creature he could no longer trust even after their baby is born, Stan cannot feel truly happy, as his every step is scrutinized and carefully watched by his imprinted loving wife.

Charmaine feels happy, exalted happy as she used to be in prison, as she knows that after the operation she cannot influence the course of her life or alter her feelings. Yet, she questions the authenticity and value of her emotions: "Does loving Stan really count if she can't help it? Is it right that the happiness of her married life should be due not to any special efforts on her part but to a brain operation she didn't even agree to have? No, it doesn't seem right. But it feels right. That's what she can't get over – how right it feels" (Atwood 2015: 402–403). Charmaine is once again, happily submitting to her self-constructed brain-prison, as she knows she has no freedom of choice.

Her idyllic happiness is shattered after Jocelyn tells her, there was no surgery and points out the possibilities that this freedom provides: "'Nothing is ever settled [...] [e]very day is different. Isn't it better to do something because you've decided to? Rather than because you have to?' 'No, it isn't,' says Charmaine. 'Love isn't like that. With love, you can't stop yourself.' She wants the helplessness, she wants [...]" (Atwood 2015: 416). After Stan and Charmaine founded their happy family, their future is, once again, uncertain. Atwood does not offer the readers a happy, romantic ending but a realistic conclusion. Her characters are no heroes and never have been, even when they want to believe in higher principles, their actions are predominantly selfish and childish, and above all, in concord with Colbert's concept of truthiness. The contradicting and oscillating desires of the protagonists are interlinked with their equally hope for a better future.

From a bleak dystopia, Atwood turns the story into a wild satire and parody of modern life and relationships, of utopias and the lasting human nature, be it the craving for

money and power, security, or passion, as the heart always goes last. As she shows here, the seemingly flawless restrictions and ideology are often thwarted precisely by human failings.

Moreover, Atwood addresses the situation in prisons as well, especially private ones which main role has turned from punishment to profit-making, and points out the political and official presence of slavery in the US constitution. She also metaphorically presents the level of self-deception and the variety of self-inflicted prisons people construct, in their search for order, security and safety, for which they are willing to give up their freedom, only to find themselves unhappy again.

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## Space: The Final Frontier of Gender and Globalization

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### *Abstract*

*This paper strives to explore how science-fiction films and television series react to the globalizing tendencies of the postmillennial world via the examination of the treatment of the concepts of local and global in relation to gender in three specific categories. Selected works include predominantly the newest works of the franchise – the J. J. Abrams films: Star Trek (2009), Star Trek into Darkness (2013), and Star Trek Beyond (2016), and the newest television series, Star Trek: Discovery, which started airing in 2017. The pioneer television show, Star Trek: The Original Series (1966-1969) is also provided as a point of comparison to the changes in the depiction of globalization and gender in the franchise.*

*Keywords: globalization, gender, Star Trek*

Since its creation, science-fiction has held a unique position in its possibility of envisioning the future and examining social change via the lens of technological progress. This article offers some exploration into one of the most popular science-fiction franchises, that is, the *Star Trek* universe originally conceived by Gene Roddenberry in the 1960s and continuing well onto the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Specifically, this paper strives to explore how the newest iterations of the *Star Trek* universe, i.e. J. J. Abrams' film trilogy (2009-2016) and the new television show *Discovery* (2017-) construct the realities of globalization via the lens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reality.

Firstly, I will examine two distinct modes of government exemplified in the films and in the television series, namely the federation system and the empire. Secondly, I will explore the concept of the Prime Directive, or the obligation not to interfere in the development of alien species, which directly relates to the concept of globalization and its influence on specific parts of the world, such as developing countries. Thirdly, I will offer a brief analysis of the ways the depiction of gender in the films and in the television series reacts to globalizing tendencies.

The process defining globalization, according to Freeman (2001), is “the spatial reorganization of production across national borders and a vast acceleration in the global circulation of capital, goods, labor, and ideas, all of which have generally been traced in their contemporary form to economic and political shifts in the 1970s” (1007). For this reason, I have selected the original series as a point of comparison for several issues in this paper, seeing as the social, economic and political situation to which the original series reacted in the 1960s was vastly different.

However, globalization cannot be delimited only via the circulation of capital, goods and labor. Cultural globalization, taken to mean a wide availability of some foods, drinks, cultural items and so on, has been a major part of the postmillennial world. A specific aspect of this trade in ideas and cultures has also been understood as a homogenization of cultures, i.e. the prevalence of a dominant culture which comes to integrate, or rather, assimilate, the minority cultures coming into close contact with it. This tendency can also be perceived in all

versions of *Star Trek*: dealing predominantly with crewmembers of spaceships, or, in other words, members of a military, peacekeeping and exploration organization. We rarely see any deviations from the standard dress code or behavior, that is, the standards applicable to a contemporary Western society. If any deviation from this standard is to be found, it is usually done in the privacy of the crewmembers' quarters in the specific way some crewmembers, especially alien ones, choose to decorate or utilize their private space.

The universal translators available to the crew also exemplify this homogenization, providing readily available communication with many different species; this homogenization is directly referenced in *Discovery* when a captain expresses surprise that a colony of Terralysium, inhabited by people directly descended from 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans, speaks "Federation Standard", confirming that the standard language used by what is supposed to be a union of dozens, if not hundreds, of worlds and species, is in fact English.

Ritzer, in 2003, also writes about a specific variety of globalization, which is named "grobalization", derived from the word "grow" or "growth". Grobalization, as Ritzer explains it, means "the striving of nations and organizations towards the growth of their power, influence or profit [...] [and] focuses on the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, and other entities and their desire – indeed, their need – to impose themselves on various geographic areas" (194). This imposition is exemplified both by the Starfleet, and, by proxy, the United Federation of Planets, as well as the dictatorial, militarist empires presented in the franchise.

## **Federation v. Empire**

The issues of globalization have brought into stark contrast the social change, whether positive or negative, which may be achieved via technological development. *Star Trek*, as a text, has repeatedly attempted to explore the possibilities of such social changes, and the basic premise, present in all the films and series, is that "humanity, through technological development, has created a politics (aspiration) of all-encompassing social justice. The technology has created a coherent, singular human society that spans the planet" (Gonzales 2018: 9). This coherent, singular society could be arguably extended across the Federation, seeing as the planets and species of the Federation seen on screen have often agreed to the specific rules, laws and customs of the Federation as a unifying element.

While *Star Trek* warns against the potential dangers of technological advancement such as global destruction i.e. nuclear wars, eugenics or, in essence, technological slavery, globalism in *Star Trek* appears to be hailed as a true advancement of human society. In the original series, the peacekeeping of the Federation is frequently discussed as a cornerstone of civilization and development; in one episode of the *Next Generation* series, first aired in 1992, Mark Twain visits the 24th century and one of the crew members explains to him that "hopelessness, despair and cruelty" as well as poverty have been eliminated on Earth.

Aside from the inherent idealism of viewing globalism as a peacekeeping force, *Star Trek* indirectly comments on the perceived benefits and/or drawbacks of several forms of government, and, by proxy, globalizing tendencies, via ascribing these forms of government

to the protagonist or antagonist forces. Gonzales (2018) explores the three distinct ways of government present in the franchise: that is, the federation, the empire, and neoliberalism.

The federation path to world government is based on the concept of justice known in the academic literature on *Star Trek* as “liberal humanism” - a society with no class, no poverty, no prejudice based on gender, race, or religion (Gonzales 2018: 45). According to Gonzales, it is this justice, in other words, this liberal humanism, which inspires others to become part of this global federation. Within Empire, a group “seeks to politically impose themselves on other (species) societies” (Gonzales 2018: 45). This imposition is achieved through military, i.e. violent, means and deception, and the Empire claims racial and/or political superiority. The neoliberal path is based on a distinction of we/they, and the basic argument is “for a global regime based on practical matters as opposed to ideological, as in the case of the federation and the empire: for instance, expanding trade relations and bolstering international security” (Gonzales 2018: 45). According to Gonzales, *Star Trek* suggests that only the federation route is viable for the human society; in a federation, persuasion and inspiration are the means through which a union of societies seeks to expand its influence and sovereignty, while an empire uses conquest and deception to expand and maintain control. However, I would argue that even the idealistic liberal humanism of the Federation can be often viewed through the lens of we/they, i.e. us/the Other: those in the Starfleet or in the Federation, and those outside it.

However, *Star Trek* offers an excellent opportunity for the comparison of empire and federation, which is why this paper focuses on these two specific approaches. This comparison is most obviously present in those parts of the franchise which deal with a mirror world, or a mirror universe: essentially a universe where the characters look the same physically, but often behave in a completely opposite, usually violent, impulsive and ruthless, manner.

The first iteration of this mirror universe, subsequently revisited in the new films and series, appears in the episode “Mirror, Mirror” (1967) of *Star Trek: The Original Series*, in which Captain Kirk of the Enterprise finds himself, and several of his crewmembers, transported into a parallel, mirror universe where instead of the Federation, the Terran Empire has been established. When Kirk expresses some doubt over the murder of an entire civilization in order to gain some valuable resources, the Spock from the mirror universe replies that “terror must be maintained, or the Empire is doomed. It is the logic of history”. In his response, Kirk reveals a part of the nature of the Federation’s benevolent control, stating that “[c]onquest is easy, control is not”.

The Terran Empire of the original series resembles a mixture of the Nazi Third Reich and the Roman Empire, judging for instance by the gesture crewmembers use to greet Kirk and by the reference to the title of a Caesar. And as such, the mirror universe of the original series may appear a little simplified, or rather, vilified to the point of being a parody of itself in its cruelty and mindless murder.

In *Discovery* (2017), set roughly a decade before the original series’ timeline, the Terran Empire is led by Philippa Georgiou, a woman who is a Starfleet Captain, just like Kirk, in the normal universe. While still an empire of control via military power, fear and pain, Georgiou proves to be a much more complex character than the power-hungry, single-minded Mirror Kirk. She also hints at the evolution of the Terran empire as a consequence of

a collapse of the Earth's civilization, when she discusses the ideals of the Federation juxtaposed against the history of the Empire, and calls equality, freedom and cooperation "delusions that Terrans shed millennia ago" and "destructive ideas that fuel rebellions". Georgiou's full title is revealed to be Her most Imperial Majesty, Mother of the Fatherland, Overlord of Vulcan, Dominus of Qo'noS, Regina Andor, providing an interesting point of analysis due to the fact that her titles seem to be a mixture of feminine and masculine nouns: her majesty, mother, and regina on one hand, Dominus and Overlord on the other. The *Discovery's* Terrans also seem much more capable of concealing, or even suppressing, their violence in favor of deception and strategy, as proven first by a rebel who escapes to the normal universe and poses for some time as his counterpart, Captain of the Discovery, without anyone detecting his true origin in the mirror universe, despite his beliefs being that "[e]very species, every choice, every opinion is not equal [...] The strong and capable will always rise". Later on, Mirror Georgiou herself also ends up traveling to the normal universe and seamlessly adopts the identity of her counterpart, providing an interesting commentary on the social change since the creation of the original series in the 1960s: the real threat of the Empire's ideas does not lie in extreme, utilitarian violence of an obvious antagonist, but rather in the ability of these ideas, and their proponents, to hide in plain sight.

The system of governing as an empire is also ascribed to several antagonistic species or unions throughout the franchise, such as the Klingon Empire or the Romulan Empire; however, Klingons play a unique role in *Discovery*, which refers both to several months of a war between the Klingons and the Federation, and to peace, or at least coexistence efforts, based largely on individual and complicated relationships brought about by a crewmember who is, to put it simply, half-human and half-Klingon. In this, *Discovery* allows for a gradual transition of an empire from the position of an absolute enemy to that of a reluctant, occasional ally, or at the very least, a silent neighbor. And while *Discovery* is not the first *Star Trek* series to explore the idea of peace between Klingons and the Federation, it is the first to do so via personal conflict of such a nature.

Another globalizing force in *Discovery*, which may be viewed via Gonzales' lens of neoliberalism, is the mycelium network, i.e. the network of connections weaved through the whole multiverse, connecting everyone and everything via elaborate pathways invisible to the naked eye. The Discovery is first developing, and then testing the boundaries of, this network, and uses it to travel through both time and space. But the mycelium network, while functioning as an obvious metaphor of the interconnectedness of the world, also provides another aspect of the postmillennial debate on globalization: that is, a real warning sign against ecological catastrophe. In *Discovery*, it is revealed that selfish use of the network's power corrupts this connection to the brink of destruction, as the Terran Empire's ship is "pulling power straight out of the [mycelial] network" while the Discovery of the normal universe "rides along". The scientist working with the mycelium network claims: "I don't think *sustainability* is their main objective [...] the Terrans are egotistical enough to believe they can replenish this resource before it collapses", which brings attention to the ecological theme of the mycelium network: that of sustainability versus the race for economic and political power via the acquisition of energy sources.



## The Prime Directive

While the Federation presents itself as a peaceful, even peacekeeping, force, its Prime Directive is often depicted as an obstacle to the advancement of worlds not deemed developed enough – i.e. lacking warp technology to travel through space the way Federation is capable of. The Prime Directive, i.e. the most important organizing principle of the exploration vessels such as the Enterprise or the Discovery, is never directly cited in the shows themselves, but the closest approximation derived from the usage of it throughout the years would be as follows: “The Prime Directive prohibits Starfleet personnel and spacecraft from interfering in the normal development of any society, and mandates that any Starfleet vessel or crew member is expendable to prevent violation of this rule” (Okuda, Okuda and Mirek 1999). In addition, a more detailed version of the Prime Directive can be found in an 1986 encyclopaedia of the *Star Trek* universe, particularly the Starfleet tenets:

As the right of each sentient species to live in accordance with its normal cultural evolution is considered sacred, no Starfleet personnel may interfere with the normal and healthy development of alien life and culture. Such interference includes introducing superior knowledge, strength, or technology to a world whose society is incapable of handling such advantages wisely. Starfleet personnel may not violate this Prime Directive, even to save their lives and/or their ship, unless they are acting to right an earlier violation or an accidental contamination of said culture. This directive takes precedence over any and all other considerations, and carries with it the highest moral obligation.

(Menke and Stuart 1986: 5)

However, for such a central idea of the Federation, the Prime Directive is often bent, and at times, outright broken. The first filmed reference to the Prime Directive occurs in the first season of the original series, in the episode “The Return of the Archons” (1966), when Spock begins to caution Captain Kirk when he proposes to destroy a computer controlling an entire civilization. Spock mentions a “Prime Directive of non-interference” but is dismissed by Kirk with a claim that the directive “refers to a living, growing culture”. This suggests that Kirk willfully chooses to reinterpret the Prime Directive based on his convictions and moral compass. Later, Kirk argues the computer into self-destruction and leaves behind a team of sociologists to help restore the society to a “human” form, suggesting that even the directive which “takes precedence over any and all other considerations” may be ignored to achieve an outcome viewed by the Federation, and its human population, as acceptable.

In another episode of the original series, Kirk provides weapons for half the population of a planet caught in a guerilla war, simply because the other half of the population is supplied by the Klingons, and Kirk views this as keeping a power balance on that planet. In several other episodes, the crew of the Enterprise similarly interferes with laws or customs of alien worlds to achieve a Federation objective, to save the lives of the crew, or to better the lives of the inhabitants.

The fans of the original series, as well as those that followed, often criticized the Prime Directive, also named General Order One, for this seemingly illogical flexibility based

on writers' current needs. A 2016 article interviewing lawyers about their professional opinion on whether or not the Prime Directive could work as an organizing principle of an organization such as Starfleet sheds some light on the potential reasons for the Prime Directive's rather unstable position, for instance, attributing the Prime Directive to the era in which Gene Roddenberry, the creator of the original series, lived:

[Roddenberry] lived in a Cold War environment where any and every developing nation was valued almost exclusively as a pawn in the conflict between capitalism and communism [...] This background makes the centerpiece philosophy of the show unsurprising. For someone who experienced both the horrors of war first-hand and who saw the damaging impact of the First World's "benevolent" interference in the Third World, the Prime Directive makes perfect sense.

(Farivar 2016)

In the new films, the narrative is rarely set up around the Prime Directive or the exploration of new worlds; the 2013 film, *Star Trek Into Darkness*, begins on an alien world with a population of savage, incoherent people who attack and chase Kirk and then look in wonder at the Enterprise emerging from the sea. This, of course, violates the Prime Directive in a rather ostentatious manner, and Kirk is unapologetic for saving Spock and revealing the starship to the primitive inhabitants of the planet, until he gets demoted for his actions.

In *Discovery*, the Prime Directive is treated in a similar manner: at times willfully ignored in order to advance the Federation goals, save a crewmember or mold the alien society into a shape acceptable by the Federation mindset, in other cases, rigidly enforced when the revelation of technology or truths that could help advance a society are of little to no use to the Federation itself. However, the Prime Directive is also uniquely challenged in *Discovery* via the character of Saru, who learns that the way his people have been sacrificing themselves and dying because they believed it to be the only option is essentially a lie preventing their whole species from attaining a higher state of development.

While Saru himself believes that he is about to die, his one regret appears to be the loss of connection to his locality, to his homeworld: "Somewhere along the way, I lost who I was. So focused on being the best Kelpien in Starfleet. Defined by my rank and uniform until that is all I became". Later on, he learns that the death he considered imminent is simply another developmental stage, one where his people are supposed to shed the fear they constantly live with and attain more physical power. Where the Prime Directive has been treated as a guideline more than a law by several Starfleet captains and officers in the previous shows and films, *Discovery* explores the unique dual position of a man torn between his chosen duty to Starfleet and its laws, and his allegiance to his homeworld and its people. This might reflect the postmillennial struggle between one's allegiance to one's country or ethnic and racial origin and the allegiance to a country or an union of countries, a duality reflected often on social media and in videos made by people discussing the difficulty of balancing one's ethnic, racial or religious background with the identity of a US citizen. However, it could also be the conflict of the local versus global in terms of workplace versus home, as experienced by many people nowadays.

In addition, Saru's struggle ends with the revelation that the species suppressing his people have actually been the prey species before, and Saru's people used to be the predators: the prey species, Ba'ul, have faced near extinction before and were simply attempting to keep such a situation from repeating. *Discovery* once again, as with the Klingons, manages to take a rather appeasing viewpoint, and the episode ends with the conviction that Saru's people and their tormentors, or their past prey, must both move beyond prejudice and fear, and learn how to share their planet in peace.

### **Gender and globalization in *Star Trek***

Saru's storyline, and his homeworld, also explore the local in relation to gender. Where previously, the local, i.e. developing, underdeveloped, and/or rural civilizations of *Star Trek* were usually strongly gendered, Saru's homeworld appears to be a place of equality in terms of gender. The Kelpian men and women are similar in height, appearance, and seemingly in strength and other physical and mental capabilities as well: after Saru's father, the head priest of their village, dies, it is Saru's sister who assumes the mantle, and this fact is never questioned.

Another memorable instance of the local is from a mini-episode aired between season one and two of *Discovery*, where a crewmember finds a stowaway on-board the *Discovery*. The young girl, inquisitive, slightly quirky, and with a genius-level intellect and scientific capabilities, is eventually revealed to be the future Queen of a whole planet, and she ends up helping the *Discovery* crew significantly in the following season by calculating something they would not have been capable without her help.

*Discovery* also discusses gender via the main character and the relationship between the cultural and social implications of humanity. Where Spock, particularly in the 1960s original series, opens the conversation on dual identity in regard to race, ethnicity or religious belief, Michael Burnham of the *Discovery* series takes that duality to the 21<sup>st</sup> century frontier of gender. This gender duality is perceptible not only in Michael's name, behavior, and appearance, but also in her upbringing and storylines. On one hand, Michael is continuously striving towards the ideal of her adoptive Vulcan father, on the other hand, she is visibly influenced by having at first two, and later three, mothers. Her biological mother is revealed to be a radical, strong scientist and a lone-wolf hero on a quest to save the universe from an imminent catastrophe. Michael's adoptive human mother, Amanda, exemplifies the archetype of traditional caring femininity, but also possesses remarkable strength of character, which she extends to the protection of her children, whether biological or adopted. Later on, Philippa Georgiou, whom Michael first knew as her Captain, and who, in her mirror universe iteration, is presented as a ruthless, opportunistic leader, willing to lie and murder to achieve her goals, becomes very protective of and attached to Michael emotionally, offering support and if not guidance, then a sounding board for Michael's moral dilemmas. Michael is shown to be impulsive and self-sacrificing, despite being governed by her adoptive father's Vulcan creed of emotionless logic. At the same time, she is strongly influenced by all the mother figures in her life, even if mostly to define a specific part of her identity against these women. However, Michael does not simply blindly follow the traditional tenets of hegemonic masculinity or abandon all feminine qualities: rather, her journey is about finding the balance between the masculine and feminine, between adherence to Starfleet regulations and following her own gut feeling, between emotionality and rationality.

Even Michael's femininity comes into stark relief in the mirror universe: it is there that she is first seen dressed in anything other than either her Starfleet uniform or the long, genderless Vulcan robes. In the mirror universe, she wakes up in lacy lingerie, pretending to be someone she is not – a Michael from that other universe, and narrates her thoughts:

I can't rest here. Not really. My eyes open and it's like waking from the worst nightmare I could imagine. Even the light is different. The cosmos has lost its brilliance. And everywhere I turn there's fear [...] It's been two days. But they're already inside my head. Every moment is a test. Can you bury your heart? Can you hide your decency? Can you continue to pretend to be one of them? Even as, little by little, it kills the person you really are. I've continued to study their ways, read all that I can. It's getting easier to pass. Which is exactly what I feared the most.

(Fuller and Kurtzman 2019)

While this speech is meant to explore Michael's fears of descending into the ruthless ways of the Terrans, it could easily be read in a gender-related context of attempting to fit into the societal norms and pretending to be something one is not.

The overall approach to conflict resolution and plot advancement in the new films and the new television series can also be read in the context of gender. With the wide variety of crewmembers who have distinct histories, cultures and characteristics, the crew of the *Discovery* is populated with what appears to be true equality, based on merit, character and diversity, rather than artificially adding formulaic women to the narrative. In addition, the *Discovery* television show appears to value conflict resolution via negotiation and intelligence rather than brute force: even the most powerful source of energy, the mycelium network, is used cautiously and respectfully, to navigate the world rather than overpower it.

In comparison, the original *Star Trek* of 1966 was supposed to feature a highly rational woman as Kirk's second in command: however, the network coerced the creator into changing that character into the logical, alien Mr. Spock, and a female character was demoted into the position of a communications officer. The original series created a distinct mythology in the 1960s. As Lawrence (2010) explains, the original *Star Trek* achieved ethnic harmonies in a time of race riots, solved problems in one episode in times of stalemates of Berlin, Korea and Vietnam, and smoothly cruised the galaxy while the US was struggling in the space race (94).

The new trilogy manages to create its own mythology as a direct consequence of the attack of an enemy vessel from a different timeline, which destroys the planet Vulcan. This attack can easily be read as a representation of 9/11, and its subsequent effects on American society and the world, in this case the galaxy, as a whole. In the 1990s, the US and its democracy and capitalism believed to have emerged victorious over other social and political models, and thus, the heroic leadership of the past seemed irrelevant at the time (McVeigh 2010: 200). But just as Captain Pike tells young Kirk that Starfleet has lost some of its ability to be daring and impulsive to "leap without looking", the post-9/11 US society also turned towards narratives of heroism based on gut feeling during the presidency of George W. Bush.

So in the 2009 *Star Trek*, the Federation space is reimagined post-attack in a similar way as the US, and arguably, the world as we know it, has been reimagined since 9/11. The

planet Vulcan, dedicated to rational, logical thinking and control of emotions has been entirely removed from existence, with only several hundred Vulcans remaining alive due to having been off-planet at the time. This could reflect the state of affairs post-9/11, where logic was exchanged for emotion and the need arises for a kind of self-sacrificing, daring hero, willing to disobey rules to do what he believes is right. In this, the new trilogy becomes a narrative of individual heroism, but also of absolute power of a global union against a common threat to the galaxy, with no room for negotiation or peace agreements. The antagonists of the new trilogy are always impossible to reason with and have to be destroyed via strength and cunning of the Enterprise's crew, predominantly Kirk himself; and the local presented in the trilogy is either in the background, mocked to the point of becoming a parody of itself, or in the case of Vulcan, destroyed very quickly and thus becomes a reason for revenge and violence.

In comparison, *Discovery* displays predominantly feminine characteristics of cooperation and emotional connectedness as the right way that gets the crew of the Discovery out of trouble and that ultimately saves the galaxy, and these principles are upheld regardless of the actual gender of the characters. Technology is also understood in different terms: whereas the alien, novel technology of J.J. Abrams' film trilogy is usually dark, dangerous and inherently emotionless, the mycelium network of *Discovery*, as discussed previously, is presented almost as a sentient being with whom the crew needs to cooperate, rather than simply use. The film trilogy takes a much more hegemonically masculine approach to problem-solving, and in its treatment of the problems arising as well as the instances of local versus global, sticks to these principles.

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# **Representation of Street Food in the Russian Media Discourse: Cognitive and Pragmatic Aspects**

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## *Abstract*

*The present paper is devoted to the problem of representing street food in the Russian media discourse. The author investigates social and linguistic factors of street food representation in the media discourse, in particular, the social factors that influence the journalist as well as peculiarities of the linguistic forms of street food representation. The social factors include the place, participants and their characteristics, street food and its peculiar features, such actions as cooking, selling and consuming street food etc. The author also analyzes language units (words, word combinations, utterances) used in the media text to construct a specific picture of the social factor referring to street food. Additionally, the paper studies the realization of cognitive models within the media discourse. The connection between cognitive models' realization and the journalist's pragmatic goal aimed at positively representing street food in the Russian media discourse is also studied. The research was conducted on the basis of an internet version of the national IZVESTIYA newspaper.*

*Keywords: discourse studies, media discourse, food representation, cognitive model*

## **Introduction**

In the Russian media discourse a lot of articles are devoted to food and cooking, however, journalists tend to concentrate on the most essential features of food, paying particular attention to its positive or negative effects. The specificity of the Russian media texts on food depends on the genre of the articles and the journalist's intention to inform and persuade the reader to accept his/her point of view. The Russian media texts also contain cognitive models, the realization of which is determined by the journalists' pragmatic goals aimed at constructing a specific picture of food and cooking in the recipient's mind.

According to Slávka Tomaščíková (2015), media play crucial role in the signifying practices in postmodern societies and in contemporary society media represent the most important channels of cultural mediation. She argues that consumer society through its media offers food representations in numerous forms – in a form of entertainment, education, information. In the present paper we shall try to analyze how the Russian media reflect the practice of eating street food in Russia, i.e. how it offers food representations in the form of information.

The problem of the role of food in human existence has attracted the attention of many scholars. Specific representation of food in the media influences attitudes to food and food practices in the society that lead to the emergence of new ideas and practices. Food has been the object of numerous sociological, cultural, ethnographic, linguistic and philosophical studies, e.g. in the works by Claude Fischler (1988), Ekaterina Ivantsova (2018), Andrey Olyanich (2015), Elena Pozhidaeva and Olga Karamalak (2018), Irina Tresorukova (2018) and others, which corresponds to the tendency of investigating various aspects of human existence.

The research was undertaken on the basis of a sample article by Anastasia Chepovskaya, published on the website of the national IZVESTIYA newspaper. While undertaking the research we have used the methodologies of discourse analysis, cognitive models' analysis and pragmatic analysis. The methodology of cognitive models' analysis was used to identify and analyze KEBAB AS THE MOST POPULAR STREET FOOD IN RUSSIA cognitive model, which is realized in the media text. The methodologies of discourse and pragmatic analyses were applied to the investigation of the social factors that influence the journalist's pragmatic goal.

## Results of the Sample Analysis and Discussion

One of the topics covered by the Russian media texts on food is street food. The analytical article by Anastasia Chepovskaya (2019) is about the most popular type of street food in Russia: "Всего за несколько лет шаурма из недорогого перекуса, часто сомнительного качества, превратилось в культовое блюдо. Ценители мяса в лаваше объединились в многотысячное сообщество, в котором помогают найти «ту самую» шаурму среди сотен посредственных. Для этого созданы многочисленные карты, рейтинги и обзоры лучших киосков, которые набирают миллионы просмотров на YouTube" (Chepovskaya 2019).

### *Cognitive model*

We view the cognitive model as a standardized set of interconnected mental elements, which is stored in consciousness and refers to the constituents of various life situations. The cognitive models may be realized in the form of texts, visual signs or actions (a visit to a supermarket, a trip to another city etc.). A cognitive model is a pattern that people follow in their everyday and professional lives.

A lot of cognitive models in the media texts are connected with food and cooking. In the article analyzed, the journalist tries to direct the reader's attention to the street food and uses the media text to realize KEBAB AS THE MOST POPULAR STREET FOOD IN RUSSIA cognitive model:

General components of the model (macrostructure)	Specific components of the model	Textual elements used to realize the components of the model
<i>PLACE</i>	RUSSIA, CITIES AND STREETS, CITY EATERIES, CLUBS	<i>Мы берем это на улицах: как шаурма стала любимым фастфудом в России; При этом экспериментальные и соответственно более дорогие вариации донеров в России пока приживаются плохо; Чтобы найти лучшую шаурму в Даниловском районе Москвы, корреспондент «Известий» воспользовалась популярным приложением «Где шаверма», в котором тысячи точек с донерами рассортированы по количеству положительных отзывов; В фудкортах и гастромаркетах это блюдо появилось из-за</i>



		<p>высокого спроса: люди ищут понятную и привычную для них еду; Именно поэтому понятную и похожую еду начали продавать в <b>фудтраках</b> и на <b>гастромаркетах</b>; В свое время шаурму продавали в клубе <b>Gipsy</b>, в заведении для золотой молодежи – это было достаточно смелое решение.</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPANTS, THEIR CHARACTERISTICS</b></p>	<p>GENERAL PUBLIC, KEBAB SELLER, FANS OF KEBAB, BUSINESSPEOPLE, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCH, BLOGGER, CHEF, NUTRITION EXPERTS</p>	<p>Почему <b>россияне</b> перестали бояться отравлений и придумали культ мяса в лаваше; В очереди за шаурмой стояла <b>работница коммунальных служб в оранжевом жилете, мужчина в деловом костюме, парень спортивного телосложения и интеллигентный седовласый мужчина в очках в тонкой оправе</b>; По его словам, <b>мужчин</b> за шаурмой приходит немного больше, чем <b>женщин</b>; Шаурма – блюдо, которое затронуло <b>все социальные слои</b>, а в гастромаркеты ходят <b>люди совершенно разного возраста и дохода: и хипстеры, и студенты, и бизнесмены</b>. Люди часто берут еду, которую они знают, благодаря сформировавшейся привычке; <b>Шаурмист</b>, представившийся Аббасом, работает в этой точке примерно пять месяцев; <b>Ценители мяса в лаваше</b> объединились в многотысячное сообщество, в котором помогают найти «ту самую» шаурму среди сотен посредственных; Благодаря <b>стартаперам</b> шаурма у молодого поколения перестала вызывать скверные ассоциации, как это было десяток лет назад; Пытаясь обыграть трепетное отношение потребителей к мясу в лаваше, <b>владелица пермского кафе</b> навлекла на себя гнев местной <b>епархии</b>, которая пожаловалась на оскорбление чувств верующих в рекламе заведения. На постере изображена полуобнаженная модель в образе святой, а вместо крыльев у нее шаурма. В <b>епархии</b> заявили, что решили обратиться в полицию из-за шквала звонков от возмущенных людей; О шаурме говорили и во время «прямой линии» с президентом, когда <b>блогер Амиран Сардаров</b> пригласил Владимира Путина в свою лавку и пообещал назвать донер в его честь; <b>шеф мясных концепций фудмаркета «Вокруг света» Максим Кузнецов</b>; По мнению <b>диетолога Сергея Обложко</b>, шаурма сочетает в себе все элементы, необходимые организму; <b>врач-диетолог, кандидат медицинских наук Маргарита Королева</b>.</p>

ОБЪЕКТ	КЕБАВ	<p>В 1990-е <b>шаурма</b> была обычной едой вокзалов и вещевого рынка; Фактически это блюдо всегда продавало себя само: маркетинговая активность вокруг <b>шаурмы</b> набрала обороты лишь с появлением соцсетей и была инициирована скорее потребителями, чем продавцами.</p>
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OBJECT	INGREDIENTS	<p>Как отмечает диетолог, <b>овощи, куриное мясо и некалорийные соусы</b> являются хорошим способом перекусить в ритме большого города; <b>Свежие овощи, понятный соус, тонкая лепешка</b> – это более чем нормальная и не слишком калорийная еда; На сегодняшний день для большинства шеф-поваров, которые пытаются сделать из шавермы что-то кулинарно значимое, это по-прежнему <b>лаваш со спорного качества соусами, в который что-то завернуто внутри.</b></p>
	POSITIVE ASSESSMENT	<p>В мае о <b>полезности шаурмы</b> спорили врачи. По мнению диетолога Сергея Обложко, шаурма сочетает в себе <b>все элементы, необходимые организму.</b> Как отмечает диетолог, овощи, куриное мясо и некалорийные соусы являются <b>хорошим способом перекусить</b> в ритме большого города; Шаурма <b>снискала популярность</b> благодаря <b>низкой цене.</b> В 1990-х и начале нулевых годов это был <b>самый доступный стритфуд</b> после хот-догов, которые продавались возле станций метро и в местах массового скопления людей. Именно поэтому <b>понятную и похожую</b> еду начали продавать в фудтраках и на гастромаркетах, рассказал в беседе с «Известиями» шеф мясных концепций фудмаркета «Вокруг света» Максим Кузнецов; Благодаря стартаперам шаурма у молодого поколения <b>перестала вызывать скверные ассоциации</b>, как это было десяток лет назад. Несмотря на то, что многие шаурму ругают, <b>практически каждый ее ел</b>, иногда втихаря. На сегодняшний день это, наверное, <b>самый популярный российский стритфуд</b>, даже несмотря на то что это блюдо турецкой кухни, родившееся в Германии; <b>Популярность шаурмы</b> среди прочего он связывает с удобством: <b>ее легко есть на ходу</b>, а за 120-150 рублей трудно найти другое блюдо, которым можно наесться; Бургеры выходят чуть дороже, американский фастфуд приелся, а шаурма в целом достаточно <b>безвредное</b> блюдо; Свежие овощи, понятный соус, тонкая лепешка – это <b>более чем</b></p>

		<i>нормальная и не слишком калорийная еда; В фудкортах и гастромаркетах это блюдо появилось из-за высокого спроса: люди ищут понятную и привычную для них еду; Разве что где-то бывает невкусно, хотя в Москве очень много мест с прекрасной шаурмой.</i>
	NEGATIVE ASSESSMENT	<i>Однако есть две проблемы, мешающие считать шаурму диетическим блюдом: большое количество масла и тесто на концах шаурмы. Другой врач-диетолог, кандидат медицинских наук Маргарита Королева, напротив, призвала не покупать шаурму в городских киосках, а приготовить ее самостоятельно или отдать предпочтение фруктам.</i>
ACTION	PROCESS OF COOKING KEBAB	<i>«В день я готовлю от 20 до 70 лавашей с мясом. Устаю, конечно, сильно, бывает, что весь день не присесть. Смена у нас по 12 часов каждый день, выходных нет. Работаем круглосуточно. Я прихожу к 9 утра, а мой сменщик вечером и работает всю ночь. Раньше я и сам работал по ночам», – рассказал Аббас; Жарить на гриле – это самый безопасный способ приготовления, потому что нет прямого контакта с маслом.</i>
NEW FEATURES	USING AN APP	<i>Чтобы найти лучшую шаурму в Даниловском районе Москвы, корреспондент «Известий» воспользовалась популярным приложением «Где шаверма», в котором тысячи точек с донерами рассортированы по количеству положительных отзывов.</i>

The journalist uses the media text to realize KEBAB AS THE MOST POPULAR STREET FOOD IN RUSSIA cognitive model. This model refers to the positive representation of food and street food in particular in the Russian media discourse as the journalist tries to emphasize its simplicity, convenience and low price, which are usually assessed positively by people.

#### *PLACE component*

The cognitive model realized in the media text has some dominant components, which play a major role in instilling the new cognitive model or renewing the existing one in the reader's mind. The journalist uses various language means to underline these components while introducing the cognitive model. The *PLACE* component is foregrounded by means of the proper names denoting the country (*Россия*), various cities of Russia (*Москва, Краснодар*), a city district (*Даниловский район Москвы*). The journalist also mentions such objects as integral parts of cities (*улицы*) and city eateries (*фудкорты, фудтраки, гастромаркеты*), which are the main places for selling and consuming kebab. The author also includes information about a chic night club, in which kebab was sold (*В свое время шаурму продавали в клубе Gipsy, в заведении для золотой молодежи – это было*

*достаточно смелое решение*) and in this case foregrounding the *PLACE* component serves to emphasize the popularity of this dish among representatives of a different social strata.

Naming various places in Russia is important for connecting such objects as space and food: the journalist associates a particular kind of street food with a particular space. Kebab did not originate in Russia, but is popular across the country, which is proven by the data in the text. The journalist also mentions a foreign cuisine and other places of the world (*это блюдо турецкой кухни, родившееся в Германии*) in order to inform the reader about the origin of this dish and its popularity in other countries.

#### *PARTICIPANTS component*

Another dominant component within the cognitive model is *PARTICIPANTS*, which is represented by the lexical units denoting various people engaged in the process of cooking, consuming and disseminating information about kebab: general public including men and women who often eat kebab (*россияне, мужчины, женщины, люди*), a kebab seller who cooks kebabs (*шаурмист*), fans of kebab (*ценители мяса в лаваше*), businesspeople engaged in restaurant business (*владелица пермского кафе, стартаперы*), a blogger who took part in television question-and-answer session with the president (*блогер Амиран Сардаров*), a chef (*шеф мясных концепций фудмаркета «Вокруг света» Максим Кузнецов*), nutrition experts (*диетолог Сергей Обложко, врач-диетолог, кандидат медицинских наук Маргарита Королева*). The *PARTICIPANTS* component also includes the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church eparchy (*епархия*), who denounced the kebab advertisement that used the religious symbols. This event demonstrates the popularity of kebab as street food in Russia, which is able to unite people of various social, cultural and professional backgrounds. It also proves that food can unite different fields of activity and it often happens in the media space, which becomes a model of the world, in which some objects (e.g., food) are dominant.

The journalist foregrounds the *PARTICIPANTS* component by indicating many people engaged in various activities. Many *PARTICIPANTS* are indicated in order to show the popularity of this dish among different people, to show that many people with different characteristics are engaged in producing and consuming kebab.

#### *CHARACTERISTICS of the PARTICIPANTS component*

The journalist also underlines such component of the cognitive model as *CHARACTERISTICS* of the *PARTICIPANTS*, concentrating mostly on the features of people who enjoy eating kebab. The journalist mentions such *CHARACTERISTICS* of the *PARTICIPANTS* as their occupation and even belonging to a particular subculture (*работница коммунальных служб, хипстеры, студенты, бизнесмены*), clothes (*в оранжевом жилете, мужчина в деловом костюме*), appearance (*интеллигентный седовласый мужчина в очках в тонкой оправе*), social strata (*все социальные слои*), age (*люди совершенно разного возраста*), income (*совершенно разного дохода*). The journalist clearly demonstrates different and even opposite *CHARACTERISTICS* of the *PARTICIPANTS* in order to persuade the reader that kebab is consumed by various people and because of this it has gained popularity in Russia.

#### *CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OBJECT component*

To explain the popularity of kebab in Russia the journalist also foregrounds such component of the cognitive model as *CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OBJECT (KEBAB)*, which includes

ingredients (*овощи, куриное мясо и некалорийные соусы, свежие овощи, соус, тонкая лепешка, лаваш*). This way the journalist stresses the important characteristics of kebab – its simplicity and nutritiousness.

The *CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OBJECT* component also includes its positive and negative features emphasized by the journalist. Assessment is an efficient means for underlining certain components of the cognitive models realized in the media texts. The journalist gives a positive assessment of such *CHARACTERISTICS* of kebab as its benefits for health (*полезность шаурмы, шаурма сочетает в себе все элементы, необходимые организму, шаурма в целом достаточно безвредное блюдо, более чем нормальная и не слишком калорийная еда*), the convenience of eating it in different conditions in the city (*овощи, куриное мясо и некалорийные соусы являются хорошим способом перекусить в ритме большого города, популярность шаурмы среди прочего он связывает с удобством: ее легко есть на ходу*), the low price of kebab (*Шаурма снискала популярность благодаря низкой цене, самый доступный стритфуд, за 120-150 рублей трудно найти другое блюдо, которым можно наесться*). The positive assessment of kebab is also reflected in mentioning its recognisability and popularity (*именно поэтому понятную и похожую еду начали продавать в фудтраках и на гастромаркетах, люди ищут понятную и привычную для них еду, несмотря на то, что многие шаурму ругают, практически каждый ее ел, иногда втихаря, самый популярный российский стритфуд*) and attention of businessmen to kebab (*Благодаря стартаперам шаурма у молодого поколения перестала вызывать скверные ассоциации*). In order to give a general evaluation of kebab the journalist uses a word possessing the highest degree of positive assessment (*в Москве очень много мест с прекрасной шаурмой*).

Some *CHARACTERISTICS* of kebab are evaluated negatively in the article. The negative assessment refers to such features of kebab as the presence of unhealthy ingredients (*Однако есть две проблемы, мешающие считать шаурму диетическим блюдом: большое количество масла и тесто на концах шаурмы*), problematic conditions, in which kebab is cooked (*В подмосковных Люберцах оперативники обнаружили подпольный цех по заготовке мяса для шаурмы. На производстве использовалась просроченная курятина, а работниками были в основном нелегальные мигранты, не имевшие медицинских книжек; По результатам рейда, проведенного Роспотребнадзором осенью 2018 года, выяснилось, что в 251 проверенной торговой точке нарушаются санитарно-эпидемиологические правила; Впрочем, ни случаи отравлений, ни обнаружение цехов заготовки мяса без соблюдения санитарных условий практически никак не отражаются на популярности этого блюда*) and negative opinion of a nutrition expert about kebab (*Маргарита Королева, напротив, призвала не покупать шаурму в городских киосках, а приготовить ее самостоятельно или отдать предпочтение фруктам*). The journalist includes a negative assessment of some of the kebab's *CHARACTERISTICS* into the media text in order to present all points of view on kebab and let the reader come to his/her own conclusion.

#### *ACTION component*

Another dominant component within the cognitive model is *ACTION*, which is represented by the language units signifying the process of cooking kebabs in general (*В день я готовлю от 20 до 70 лавашей с мясом*) and specific methods of cooking kebabs (*жарить на*

*гриле* – это самый безопасный способ приготовления). The journalist also elucidates some features of this process, e.g. the quantity of kebabs cooked and sold during the day (*от 20 до 70 лавашей с мясом*), kebab seller's fatigue (*Устаю, конечно, сильно, бывает, что весь день не присесть*), duration of the working shift and the absence of days off (*Смена у нас по 12 часов каждый день, выходных нет*) and a safe method of grilling kebabs (*Жарить на гриле – это самый безопасный способ приготовления, потому что нет прямого контакта с маслом*). The features of the ACTION component are referred to in the media text in order to prove the popularity of this dish among the representatives of various social classes and relevant benefit for health.

The journalist also says about a new feature that accompanies the process of cooking and consuming kebab, which is using an app to find the best kebab in the city (*Чтобы найти лучшую шаурму в Даниловском районе Москвы, корреспондент «Известий» воспользовалась популярным приложением «Где шаверма»*). Mentioning the app that the customers use to find kebab author combines such spheres as IT and food within the media text, which leads to the changes in the reader's cognitive system: food is becoming closely associated with IT, which is used by the recipient to guide and control his actions connected with food. E.g., he/she can choose a restaurant, a café or a kiosk using an app, thus, consuming food is accompanied by using new IT technologies that assist the recipient in this process. Due to the presence in the media, this model gets fixed in the reader's cognitive system: he/she starts associating and using IT for performing everyday actions.

## Conclusion

The journalist represents *PLACE, PARTICIPANTS, OBJECT, CHARACTERISTICS, ACTION* and *NEW FEATURES* components of the cognitive model as dominant, because they refer to such important elements of the process of consuming kebabs as *the producer – the process of cooking – the product – the consumer – place*, which at first actualize a more generalized CONSUMING STREET FOOD cognitive model in the reader's mind. The journalist also renews this cognitive model by filling the *FOOD* component with information about *KEBAB*. Along with actualizing CONSUMING STREET FOOD cognitive model the journalist introduces a new cognitive model, concentrated exclusively around kebab as the most popular street food in Russia. In this case kebab as such becomes a linking element between two cognitive models:

### CONSUMING STREET FOOD ↔ KEBAB ↔ KEBAB AS THE MOST POPULAR STREET FOOD IN RUSSIA

Foregrounding the specific components of the cognitive model(s) is determined by the journalist's pragmatic goal to demonstrate the convenience and nutritious qualities of kebab as the most popular type of street food in Russia. We suppose that the author does not intend to advertise this particular dish, she wants to emphasize the peculiarities of consuming street food in Russia in general (convenience of eating it, good taste, low price, effect on health etc.) and represents kebab as a type of food that meets all these requirements. The journalist also intends to demonstrate simplicity and convenience of kebab that meets the requirements of people belonging to various social strata. In the media text kebab is represented as a medium uniting various people, activities, countries (*Russia, Turkey, Germany*), businesses

(*street kiosks, restaurants, clubs* etc.). The journalist's pragmatic goal corresponds to the idea that simple and convenient objects are necessary for a human existence. Consequently, the journalist creates a positive representation of kebab as street food in the media discourse due to the concentration on its positive features, though the media text contains negative assessment of some *CHARACTERISTICS* of kebab.

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# Food for Thought? The Cultural Appropriation of Food in Contemporary Media

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## *Abstract*

*The paper discusses the concept of cultural appropriation in contemporary media, which has recently caused heated debates. It focuses on food as the subject of controversy and follows a sample of recent cases where the production and sale of culturally authentic food items have led to concerns among people of various ethnic backgrounds. The author raises the question whether the striving for greater cultural sensibility, sensitivity and diversity has, in fact, created more division.*

*Keywords: food, cultural appropriation, cultural sensibility and sensitivity, contemporary media*

## **Introduction**

On the face of it, a cancelled yoga class at the University of Ottawa in 2015<sup>1</sup>, a pair of shoes designed by the pop singer Katy Perry in 2019<sup>2</sup> and a high school prom dress worn by the American Twitter user and influencer Keziah<sup>3</sup> might not seem to have much in common. However, these cases and the ensuing opprobrium online have all contributed to bringing the term *cultural appropriation* into wider cultural discourse. In these days of, on the one hand, heightened sensitivity and sensibility and, on the other, increased reactionary behaviour (all fuelled by the instant (over)reaction mechanism of social media), it seems one only has to go online for a few moments to find the latest controversy involving the claiming or appropriating of one culture's practices or rituals by another. In the days preceding and following the preparation of the original conference contribution that this article expands upon, both Madonna<sup>4</sup> and the reality show-cum-entrepreneur Kim Kardashian<sup>5</sup> came under scrutiny for co-opting cultural markers that were not their own. Madonna was criticized for attending an awards ceremony wearing an outfit inspired by traditional Berber dress while Kardashian faced a backlash from the Japanese community for launching a range of female underwear (or *shapewear* as she calls it) under the name *Kimono*. While she has since renamed the lingerie *SKIMS* (her capitals), the initial shock and disappointment shown was huge. One might ask whether these are examples of a growing trend among westerners to adopt, integrate and appropriate the traditional and sometimes sacred cultural practices of a specific cultural group or is the backlash just another side-effect of our over-digitalised lives nowadays where online comments and reaction, likes and dislikes have become more important than searching to truly understand not just our behaviour but also the behaviour of cultures and peoples outside our own group.

The present paper will try to bring the subject of food into the wider debate on cultural appropriation. Food is not often a topic in the discourse on appreciation versus appropriation as it seems an innocuous enough item more conducive to cultural exchange. Furthermore, where is the line between authentic tribute and appropriation, and is it really possible to 'understand' a culture's food without being part of it? By using three recent case studies where food (or, more accurately, the reproduction of authentic or traditional foodstuffs by



people from outside of the source culture) has been at the centre of accusations of cultural appropriation, it is the intention of the present contribution to create space for a deeper consideration of the role food plays in every distinct national or ethnic cultural group and subgroup. Is each of us, as a cultural actor, only free to enjoy the food a given group of people prepares and eats while actively being present and immersed in that culture or can those ideas, flavours and recipes be brought home by us in order to recreate those culinary cultural experiences as well as possible? On the other hand, attention will be paid to the question whether the cultural appropriation of food is the price one pays for globalisation and greater freedom to travel and explore the world. The more one travels, the more one experiences, the more one wants to replicate those tastes, experiences, etc., at home. As the philosopher Barthes (1979: 14) put it in *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* – “every exploration is an appropriation”.

### **Cultural Appropriation: A Background**

While *cultural appropriation* might just seem like 21<sup>st</sup> century buzzwords, the concept has been around for almost 50 years. Cultural appropriation was first conceptualised, academically, by the author Coutts-Smith (1976) in the publication *Some General Observations on the Concept of Cultural Colonialism* and, as the title suggests, it was initially specific to the study and discourse of colonialism. Although Coutts-Smith did not actually use the words *cultural appropriation*, he was the first author to synthesize Marxist ideas of class appropriation (the idea that the dominant social and economic class appropriates and defines high culture markers) with cultural colonialism, which is, in other words, how western cultures claim or appropriate cultural forms (e.g. art forms) originating from peoples who have suffered oppression or are/were the victims of colonisation. By the 1990s, the term had become established within academic discourse and has been a part of popular discourse since 2012.

According to Bradley (2015: 12), cultural appropriation is the “adoption or theft of icons, rituals, aesthetic standards and behavior from one culture or subculture by another”, while Young (2005: 136) describes it as “the taking of something produced by members of one culture by members of another”. Cultural appropriation comes from contact between two cultures, one often a dominant or imperial culture and the other a cultural-ethnic group or minority. Bradley (2015, 12), states that cultural appropriation can be triggered by any or all of the following:

- imperialism;
- capitalism;
- oppression;
- assimilation.

Rogers (2006: 477) divided cultural appropriation into four subtypes:

- Exploitative cultural appropriation – in which members of the dominant culture appropriate without substantive reciprocity, permission, and/or compensation. In the US, an example of this would be Elvis Presley’s appropriation of music originated by African Americans;

- Appropriation as cultural dominance, in colonised contexts, is the use of a dominant culture's element by members of a subordinated culture in a context in which the dominant culture has been imposed;
- Appropriation as cultural exchange reflects reciprocal exchange of cultural elements between cultures with roughly equal levels of power;
- Appropriation as transculturation describes a situation in which cultural elements created by multiple cultures, such that identification of a single originating culture is problematic.

After discussing this list with a friend and colleague, I would suggest a fifth form which can be termed *voluntary cultural appropriation* whereby people living outside of their own culture appropriate it to better fit the tastes of the dominant culture in which they live. As examples, one can consider the often culturally inauthentic dishes served in Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese or Indian restaurants in the UK and the USA (for more on this, cf. note 12 at the end of this text).

### **Cultural Appropriation: Where and why?**

Small nations or minority groups face great difficulties establishing their identities when bordered by powerful states and national groups thus it is “crucial [to] preserve unity within established borders” (Magocsi 1975: 4). However, it is often *their* cultural practices which are appropriated by larger, dominant groups, rather than the other way round. The way in which smaller cultural groups interact with bigger, dominant groups has two levels; local and sovereign/imperial. The local level refers to the language (or dialect) spoken, the customs practised, songs, literature, food, folk dress and the religion practised by a group of people which, while different to the majority population of a country, has a close affiliation to other minority cultures in neighbouring regions while the sovereign or imperial level is more geographical and political and takes into account the minority group's relationship to the dominant one in terms of its location, often on the periphery of the dominant culture. This peripherality allows such groups to maintain a “degree of cultural separation” (Porter 2013: 313) which is eroded or endangered by cultural appropriation.

As can be seen, while cultural appropriation as an academic and, later, popular piece of terminology is a late 20<sup>th</sup> / early 21<sup>st</sup> century phenomenon, the practice of cultural appropriation is much older. If one takes even a casual glance at 20<sup>th</sup> century popular culture, one can find plentiful evidence of cultural appropriation or accusations thereof. Musicians such as Elvis Presley (as mentioned above), Paul Simon and Peter Gabriel – to name but three – have all been accused of actual or historical cultural appropriation<sup>6</sup>, the yin-yang symbol has a history of being co-opted for fashion credibility or financial gain since the counter culture movements of the 1960s and even the Hollywood great, Elizabeth Taylor, was accused of cultural appropriation for one of her signature roles – Cleopatra<sup>7</sup>. More modern examples of this phenomenon include the French couture label Chanel's \$1,930 luxury boomerang and the outfitters Canada Goose selling “authentic” Inuit coats online for \$5,000 – \$7,500 (Reuters 2019). Cultural appropriation may occur for some noble reasons – political critique or the questioning of assumptions for example – however, cultural appropriation is driven in the main by its profitability; it sells and sells well.

Cultural appropriation occurs without any real understanding of why the original culture took part in these activities. As examples here, one could cite the proliferation of dreadlocks among non-Rastafarian communities or the spread of Bindis among non-Hindu/non-Jainist women. It also occurs without knowing the meanings behind these activities and this, in turn, leads to culturally significant artefacts, practices and beliefs being converted into meaningless pop-culture or are given a completely different significance than they originally had attached to them.

## **The Cultural Importance of Food**

The preparation and consumption of food is as significant a cultural marker as language, clothing, music, religion, literature, art, or sport. Rozin (1999: 22) considers food to be “a principal means of establishing ethnic identity and distinctiveness”. Montanari (2006 Introduction) sees food as “culture when produced, prepared and eaten” whereas, for Mintz (1985: 4 quoted in Hissom 2016: 13), “what we eat, how we eat it, and how we feel about it are phenomenologically interrelated matters; together, they speak eloquently to the question of how we perceive ourselves in relation to others.”

Food is an immediate cultural marker, it is often many people’s first point of contact with a new culture; a traveller arrives somewhere tired, overwhelmed and hungry and food gives them some immediate comfort or reassurance that this foreign land or city is not as daunting as they might have feared. Wong (1993: 57 quoted in Hissom 2016: 20) considers food a “genuine gesture of sharing [... an] appeal for acceptance by the mainstream customer”.

However, in the modern world, which is driven by the all-pervading influence of social media, a world where it is possible to instantly share information in the form of blogs, Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook posts or Tweets on any subject, from almost anywhere in the world, at the swipe or touch of a finger, food has become yet another area of popular culture to experience a surge in deliberate or perceived acts of appropriation. Like music and fashion before, food has undergone a process of cultural gentrification; food has become aspirational – the amount of time many people take to capture the perfect food selfie or the ever growing number of farmers’ markets, ‘destination’ restaurants and food fairs and fads (Caveman diets, the Street Food boom, the raw food and slow food movements to name but a few recent examples) bear witness to this trend. Food is merely the latest area of popular culture to be fetishised by TV personalities, writers, bloggers, vloggers and influencers and hand in hand with this fetishisation of food comes cultural appropriation. The American food writer and broadcaster Zimmern (2014 online<sup>8</sup>) acknowledges, with great self-awareness, that people like him are part of the problem saying “[w]e go around the world and take a look at the things people haven’t seen before and haven’t fetishised yet. And then we’ll fetishise. People to blame are folks like me who run around the world, holding up foods and saying, ‘Hey, fetishise this!’”. While one’s attitude towards the food of a particular cultural group can influence attitudes and understanding of said cultures, for Hissom (2016: 22), “members of the dominant culture are not concerned that their singular experience of cuisine represents cultural locality [but] in that singular experience representing what they believe to be an authentic cultural experience” and it is in this dichotomy between what actually *is* authentic as practised by the indigenous group and what people from an outsider group *believe* to be authentic that the cultural appropriation of food can be found.

## Cultural Appropriation of Food: Three Case Studies

Over the course of the last two years, two celebrity chefs and one world famous high street chain all became embroiled in the cultural appropriation debate leading to calls of racism, cultural ignorance and insensitivity, exploitation and abusing indigenous cultures for profit and entertainment. Firstly, the English author, cook and media personality, Jamie Oliver came under fire both in the press and online over what was then his latest range of cook-at-home dishes, sauces, spice mixes, etc. In the past, Oliver had become something of a social crusader, working closely, following the success of his show *Jamie's School Dinners* (Channel Four Television, 2004), with the British government to improve the overall quality of the meals served in UK schools. Later, he became synonymous with promoting simple, healthy meals that could be cooked quickly at home by even the most unskilled of cooks and later, in 2008, opened a chain of Italian restaurants – Jamie's Italian – which have since hit hard times (all but the three branches at Gatwick Airport closed when administrators were called in in May, 2019<sup>9</sup>). In 2018, however, Oliver angered representatives of the Afro-Caribbean community in Great Britain by launching a range inspired by the traditional jerk spice mix used in West Indian cuisine. The focus of much of the ire was the range's microwaveable rice dish, which was purported to use the above mentioned authentic jerk flavouring. The story even reached the Washington Post (2018 online<sup>10</sup>), who covered it mentioning the fact that Oliver's blend of spices did not adhere to the correct ingredients, substituting the traditional Scotch Bonnet or Bird's Eye chillies for Jalapeno peppers, which are more commonly used in Mexican and Central American cooking reporting that the rice dish by Oliver did not “contain many of the ingredients traditionally used in a Jamaican jerk marinade”.

Also in 2018, the former professional footballer turned chef turned reality TV star, Gordon Ramsay hit the headlines after he announced the launch of his new show, broadcast by the National Geographic network, *Uncharted*, which would see him head to far flung destinations in search of new culinary delights and then prepare locals *their* food *his* way while they watched. Understandably, the format of *Uncharted* caused no little uproar online prompting one journalist to write: “[W]hy does it take a white chef to ‘discover’ [their] cuisine and present it as if it were a spectator sport?” (Sukhadwala 2018 online<sup>11</sup>). The third example of cultural appropriation involves one of the most recognisable of British brands displaying some surprising levels of cultural (in)sensitivity towards one of Britain's largest ethnic groups – Indians – and one of Britain's most popular foods – curry. The British love affair with Indian food is well documented; curry is now the UK's favourite dish (according to Morrissey-Swan<sup>12</sup> (2018) and two staples of UK Indian restaurants; Tikka Masala and Balti were thought to have been cooked for the first time in Britain – Glasgow for the Tikka Masala and Birmingham for the Balti. Earlier in 2019, the food arm of the upmarket high street store, Marks and Spencer, launched a new addition to its ready-to-eat food range. The product in question was a sweet potato Biryani wrap aimed, supposedly, at vegetarians and vegans with a penchant for Indian food. However, controversy was not far off. Firstly, M&S spelt the word “Biryani” incorrectly (on packages, it was written ‘Biriyan’) and then, to compound matters, commentators pointed out the inaccuracies in the recipe; an authentic Biryani is a rice-based dish, it may contain meat or be vegetarian, but the fundamental ingredient is rice and the version on sale in Marks and Spencer's stores was rice-free.

Secondly, the choice of a tortilla style wrap, more a feature of Mexican cuisine, caused further consternation and, to top it all off, the choice of sweet potato, a native plant of Central and South America, led to more anger and with one journalist accusing Marks of “taking advantage of Indian food to make money while not providing an authentic and traditional meal” (Hockaday 2019 online<sup>13</sup>).

These three cases highlight the pitfalls of cultural appropriation – a misunderstanding of authentic elements of a cultural group, fetishising the everyday elements of a group’s culture and its practices to create hype or demand, the attaching of new or false meaning to the original components and the claiming of a group’s cultural practices for financial gain or entertainment.

There is another side to the debate surrounding the cultural appropriation of food and it is that, in order for new cultures (and their food) to become known and, ultimately for the indigenous people of said culture to at least profit from the co-opting of their culture by members of the dominant, outsider group, knowledge of their food must, somehow, be spread. In the words of Qui (2015 quoted in Stevens online<sup>14</sup>), an American-Filipino chef and former winner of the Top Chef reality show, “food is not a trend, it’s heritage and culture, but in order to get exposure, it needs to get noticed” and that ‘food adventuring’, in spite of the many problems that come with it can be “a true appreciation of culinary diversity, or, more importantly, of the diverse cultures that produce the culinary delights they enjoy” (Cappielez 2015 quoted in Stevens 2015 online, cf.<sup>14</sup>). In the same 2015 article, Qui goes further by adding: “If you come from an open place, I feel that you can truly appreciate and discover a culture’s cuisine from its core”.

## Conclusion

The cultural appropriation of food, whether actual or perceived, deliberate or unintentional, has become something of a hot topic in recent years. For some it is a *cause célèbre*, every indiscretion, no matter how minor or major, is treated with equal disdain and punished to the maximum in order to show every culture the sensibility and sensitivity it deserves after centuries of oppression and imperial rule. For others, it is something of a *bête noire*; a symptom of a wider problem, proof that the politically correct, indignation-fuelled, liberal mind-set has finally run out of so-called ‘real problems’ to worry about and has turned its attention to food in order to satisfy an appetite for controversy. Whichever side one personally takes or whether that standpoint is somewhere in the middle, it is important to consider several issues in order to avoid making the same mistakes as others. The website, *everydayfeminism.com*<sup>15</sup>, has published a self-check list to help guide people through the ever more sensitive area of cultural appropriation. The main bullet points can be summarised as follows:

- Which cultural group does the item or practice that I am considering belong to?
- Is the said group oppressed and how?
- (How) Do I benefit from this?
- Is my behaviour likely to cause offence to anyone?
- Do I have a personal reason or justification to participate and engage with the practice?
- If unsure, do not do it.

Another website, *The Atlantic*<sup>16</sup>, sets out its own guidelines to avoiding cultural appropriation and includes such advice as making sure you:

- ‘Acknowledge the origins’ of any practice or ritual or behaviour;
- Do not turn the sacred into accessories;
- Remember that culture is fluid and that “cultural appropriation can sometimes be the savior of a cultural product that has faded away”;
- Remember that appropriation and diversity are not the same thing;
- Engage with other cultures on more than the aesthetic level;
- When commercial considerations are at play, remember to give credit and pay royalties if possible.

To conclude, I believe that it is possible to explore a culture and be fascinated by it without appropriating it – appropriation comes by trying to “match”, “change” or “claim” or benefit or profit from that culture without proper research. By branding every expression of culture which is different from ours outside of its original authentic context as appropriation, are we not, in fact, creating more divisions and putting up more walls than we are tearing down? The key, I think, to whether something is appropriation or not is whether something is done because of a genuine love for and attempt to understand and appreciate a culture or whether it is driven by the profit or entertainment principle. If one prepares, for example, a curry or makes pesto at home (even if one does not adhere strictly to the original, authentic, recipe) because of a love of Indian or Italian food and does not try to pass the end product off as “your own” *per se*, then it cannot be classed as appropriation. However, if one re-creates something without doing proper research or paying close attention to the meaning and significance of the cultural practice being re-created and it is done for personal gain without acknowledging the source culture, then it can be considered to be appropriation. In the words of the cartoonist Shing Yin Khor (AKA Sawdust Bear) (2014<sup>17</sup>) whose comic *Just Eat It* is an excellent resource in the ongoing and ever-changing world of cultural appropriation:

Stop thinking. Just slurp the noodle in your mouth. I don’t need you to tell me about your spiritual awakening, or your surprise at how modernized our cities are, or how charmed you were that English was so widely spoken [...] Eat, but don’t expect a gold star for your gastronomical bravery. Eat, but don’t pretend that the food lends you cultural insight into our ‘exotic’ ways. Eat, but recognize that we’ve been eating too, and what is our sustenance isn’t your adventure story. Just – eat it.

#### Notes:

1 The class was cancelled due to some ‘cultural issues’ students had with the class. The instructor added that there was a ‘cultural appropriation issue because yoga originally comes from India’.

2 Perry’s shoes featured prominent red lips and a face design in black and tan versions. The shoes were removed by stockists including Walmart over concerns that the shoes promoted and condoned the use of ‘blackface’.

3 She (Keziah) had attended her prom in Utah wearing a traditional Chinese cheongsam, or qipao, dress prompting one Twitter user to write ‘my culture is not your prom dress.’

4<https://www.thenational.ae/lifestyle/fashion/madonna-s-vma-outfit-appropriation-of-the-berber-culture-1.762255>

5 While ‘Kimono’ could be argued to be merely punning on Kardashian’s name, the potential to cause offence must surely have been apparent to all involved.

6 Paul Simon's heaviest criticism came around the release of his 1986 album 'Graceland' and its 1990 follow-up 'The Rhythm of the Saints'. For both records, Simon recorded with indigenous musicians (South Africans in the case of 'Graceland' and Brazilian Amazonians for 'Rhythm') and was attacked for repackaging, for personal profit, authentic music as his own. Upon leaving Genesis in 1975, Gabriel himself became more interested in polyrhythmic music and began experimenting with non-Western sounds and musicians. His work on his solo records and, later, the creation of the World Of Music And Dance (WOMAD) festival combined with the building of his Real World studio in Box, near Bath and the establishing of the record label of the same name led to the 'world music' boom of the late 1980s/early 1990s. While Gabriel undoubtedly paved the way to global stardom for musicians like the Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour and the Pakistani Qawwali singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Gabriel was not immune to accusations of profiting on the back of other cultures' music.

Gabriel and Simon are not alone here; the world of music is littered with instances of cultural appropriation to greater and lesser degrees from Sting to Madonna to more recent examples including the New York band Vampire Weekend's use of traditional African rhythms on songs such as 'Cape Cod Kwassaa Kwassaa'.

7 A white woman playing an Egyptian queen.

8 <https://www.mmtimes.com/lifestyle/dining/14895-fetishize-this-when-food-adventuring-trivialises-cultures.html>

9 'Jamie's School Dinners' ultimately led to a broader campaign to improve the quality of school food called 'Feed Me Better', for more on the collapse of Jamie's Italian cf. <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2019/may/21/jamie-oliver-jobs-administrators-restaurants-jamies-italian>

10 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=%2fworld%2f2018%2f08%2f20%2fchef-jamie-oliver-accused-cultural-appropriation-his-jamaican-punchy-jerk-rice%2f%3f>

11 <https://metro.co.uk/2018/08/03/cultural-appropriation-of-food-is-not-ok-so-i-wont-be-watching-gordon-ramsay-uncharted-7791627/?ito=cshare> Ramsay is a good, high profile, example of the 'fetishisation' of food talked about by Zimmern; a representative of an outsider group raving excitedly about a new food or culinary experience which, in turn creates a buzz and a novelty value that is then exploited in the wider cultural context for profit as well, as in Ramsay's and National Geographic's case, for entertainment. A cautionary tale in this area of food fetishising is that of Quinoa. The grain, native to Bolivia and Peru, has formed a staple part of the traditional diet there for 3,000 years but has been marketed in recent years as a 'superfood' with miraculous health benefits. As a consequence of this fetishisation and the subsequent surge in demand, the crop has now become too expensive for the local growers to eat. Cf., <https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/health-and-wellness/quinoa-superfood-now-too-expensive-for-poor-growers-to-eat-20150114-12nxyb.html>

12 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/food-and-drink/news/curry-became-britains-favourite-home-cooked-dish/> (accessed 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2019)

13 <https://metro.co.uk/2019/01/29/top-chef-accuses-ms-of-cultural-appropriation-over-vegan-biryani-wrap-8408269/>. To provide some background, one online resource describes a Biryani as "made with meat and basmati rice, vegetables, and various types of spices. [e.g.] Hyderabadi biryani: This biryani is one of India's most popular types of biryani. It incorporates goat meat that is marinated and cooked along with the rice and is seasoned with coconut and saffron". <https://www.thespruceeats.com/all-about-biryani-1957507>

14 <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/jun/01/food-adventuring-cultural-appropriation>

15 After <https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/05/avoid-cultural-appropriation/>

16 After <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/10/the-dos-and-donts-of-cultural-appropriation/411292/> Number one on the *Atlantic's* list - 'Blackface is never OK' - was left off my paraphrasing as I felt it should be self-evident. An example of cultural fluidity is the American jean which is nowadays made from a fabric that would be unrecognizable to the Bavarian born originator of the jean – Levi Strauss – yet America remains the cultural home of this garment if not the actual

original birthplace. One could argue further that black tea's popularity in the UK is another example of the fluidity of culture. Tea leaves cannot be grown naturally in the UK, therefore, tea cannot be considered to be authentically British but, because of trade during the British Empire, the practice of tea drinking has been very strongly associated with, especially, English culture ever since.

17 <http://www.sawdustbear.com/portfolio/just-eat-it/>

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# Walls - The New Symbols of Culture Wars in Documentary Discourse

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## *Abstract*

*Reece Jones published an article titled Borders and Walls: Do Barriers Deter Unauthorized Migration?<sup>1</sup> in 2016 in which he argues that border walls have never been effective tools to prevent migration and can only serve as “symbols that demonstrate that politicians are doing something to address the perceived threats brought by unauthorized movement”. Walls as symbols became the centre point of political discourse in the western world particularly in Europe and the USA. They have become the symbols of shame and oppression in one interpretation and simultaneously the icons of patriotism and the manifestation of the right for self-defence in another context. The objective of this paper is to find answers to the question of how the symbol of walls in documentary films is used to build politically motivated messages and create the realm of subjective reality so characteristic of the postmodern era.*

*Keywords: walls, immigration, documentary film, political propaganda*

## **Politicising the Walls**

Border walls have become prominent symbols of ideological division offering a wide range of arguments for and against separation. Though the topics of border protection and national sovereignty have always been present in political discourse, recent developments in international migration placed them in focus. Representatives of the political Left, for example the European United Left and Nordic Green West European Parliamentary Group (2005), see border walls and fences as the physical manifestations of oppression and isolation and have adopted a vocabulary that portrays these structures as objects of shame in their publication *Lampedusa and Melilla: Southern Frontier of Fortress Europe*. The political Right, for instance Cohen (2019), on the other hand, voices an opposing standpoint and argues for the maintenance, expansion, and enforcement of border control facilities highlighting the security functions of the walls and the importance of border control in protecting national interests. A similar bipolarity is observable in the interpretation of the symbolic meaning of border control facilities when the standpoints of the citizens of the target countries and the views of the immigrants wishing to enter these target countries are contrasted.

The objective of this paper is not to take a political position about the question but to analyse the symbolic meanings of border-control facilities in the documentary film *Walls of Shame-Fortress Europe: The Spanish-Moroccan Border* (2007), which was the second episode of a four-part documentary series featuring old and new border walls in different places of the world. The film was produced by Al Jazeera, the Qatari state-funded broadcaster, and was first broadcast in 2007. This production offers an insight into the situation on the borders of Ceuta – the Spanish enclave on the African continent – using classical documentary and non-fiction elements. I will argue that by using classical documentary tools: authoritative voice-over, expert

opinions and authentic footage from the archives of different news agencies, it is possible to create a documentary film that will operate at the level of subjective reality and has the characteristics of a propaganda video. As Sklar (2016) points out, subjective reality and relative truth in documentary film production have been analysed at least since the 1930s and have become an integral part of the postmodern world view, philosophy and aesthetics.

### **The Phenomenon of Walls in Literature**

Literature on the topic of borders and border control reflects the diversity of opinions about walls either as symbols of *global apartheid* in the work of Loyd, Mitchelson, and Andrew (2012) or depicting border protection facilities as parts of the project to build *fortress Europe* as Peter and Snyder (2000) argue. These views however all seem to revolve around one central problem, i.e. the walls are portrayed as the ultimate obstacles in the way of global unity; as Robertson defines it “[...] the crystallization of the entire world as a single place” (March 1987: 10). Many authors, for example Croucher (2004), support the idea that globalization has achieved a level at which besides the free movement of capital, products, and services, it is time to introduce the free movement of people too. The globalisation argument seems justifiable; however, it raises questions and requires a deeper analysis as free movement of people has considerably greater political, security, and cultural implications than free movement of capital, products, and services.

Societies and cultures are dynamic systems and as such have always been in perpetual transformation throughout the history of mankind. It is therefore natural and predictable that these changes provoke counter reactions and lead to justifiable protective measures when an influx of masses with considerably different culture, traditions, and value systems appear in a relatively stabilised society in greater numbers. Consequently, the right to protect the established value system in any society also appears as a natural demand. As Mittleman (1997: 10) points out

The manifestations of globalization [...] include the spatial reorganization of production, the interpretation of industries across borders, the spread of financial markets, the diffusion of identical consumer goods to distant countries, massive transfer of population within South as well as from the South and East to the West, resultant conflicts between immigrant and established communities in formerly tightknit neighbourhoods, and emerging world-wide preference for democracy.

Naturally, argumentation for or against the necessity of border control – notably the erection of walls – often depends on the actual preferences of the individuals in any society. As Heath (2019) shows, the citizens of the target countries mostly support extensive border control, however, ideological disputes are always perceivable. By growing migration pressures, a greater polarization of societies is possible.

It is also important to underline that anti-immigrant and strong border control sentiments are not universal and there are strong power centres – pro-migration academic circles, NGOs and political parties – which openly support immigration and actively work on the integration of as many migrants in the different EU member states as possible. These groups have developed

strong arguments to support and justify their motivation and activities. The majority of the arguments used by the pro-immigration activist groups portray border control measures as shameful, unnecessary, and harmful steps of the nation states; interpret them as the manifestations of the revival of colonial attitudes and a re-emphasis of a racist culture which roots in the exploitative nature of neoliberal capitalism. As Loyd and Mitchelson (2015: 5) indicate in the Introduction of their volume “Walls and cages share common economic and political histories at the global scale” which has roots in oppression, exploitation and subordination of less developed territories of the world. These groups argue that migration belongs among the universally recognized human rights and the right of the individual to move across and into the territories of sovereign nation states is stronger than the right of the nation state to protect its own territory by legal regulations and by physical barriers.

### **Documentary Film and Subjective Truth**

Documentary films, by their nature, must or at least should portray their subject objectively. Being a non-fiction genre, a child of realism, facts play a crucial role when documenting any event. As it is declared on the webpage of the American Society of Aesthetics by Walley (2011),

It might therefore seem that documentary could only be legible against the backdrop of the fictional narrative cinema, as an “alternative” defined less by its own inherent qualities than by its presumed differences from fictional cinema (differences that become value-laden: truth vs. illusion, social engagement vs. escapism, honesty vs. manipulation, etc.)

The postmodern interpretation of truth and reality has however considerably transformed our view about the world that surrounds us and has questioned the validity of any explanation which dared to usurp the right of being superior to alternative suppositions. Extensive application of technical innovations in documentary films, such as virtual reality, computer animations, and computer aided modelling – just to mention a few of the most influential ones – have multiplied doubts about the possibility to comprehensively depict reality. Digital technologies in parallel with the rapid spread of telecommunication gadgets have allowed the individual to create personal niches with personalized laws and rules of the game. This personalization of reality is acceptable in fiction films when, for instance, the trainman in the film of the Wachowski brothers *Matrix Revolutions* (2003) says, “Down here, I’m God!” but raises questions in documentary films. Thus, if reality – because of its relativistic character – cannot be fully depicted, it seems better to offer the viewer a personalized version of *truth*.

Documentary has also become a tool for influencing, and the turn of the twenty-first century has witnessed the return of propagandistic features mainly in politically biased documentary films. The popularity of the genre has contributed to the rapid spread of propaganda-like productions in this age of disinformation and fake news. Political and economic power centres have invested considerable energy and financial means to develop their own news agencies – such as Russia Today, Al Jazeera, CCTV, etc. – which have successfully contested the quasi monopoly of the Western-dominated world of news broadcast and documentary markets. Thus, audiences have witnessed the proliferation of alternative interpretations of reality and today, agencies compete not only in the speed of providing up-to-date information about the

key events in breaking news, but also in *designing truth* according to the expectations of the market they work for. The very same event, situation or process can be portrayed considerably differently in the news products, and the spectator receives news and documentaries as processed produce which already contains all the ingredients that the consumer prefers. The object of the following analysis from the Al Jazeera's *Walls of Shame* (2007) series is an excellent example of these processes and by implementing genuine documentary tools, is able to re-create the type of reality which best serves the needs of its target market. The following analysis is an effort to highlight the aesthetic and semiotic tools used by the producers of the film to achieve their goals.

## **Analysis and Interpretation of the Documentary Film**

*Walls of Shame – Fortress Europe: The Spanish Moroccan Border* (2007) is the second from a four-part series of documentaries from the production of Al Jazeera which deals with the characteristics and effects of border control facilities in different parts of the world. The subject of this documentary film is the border wall and other border control facilities around Ceuta – the Spanish enclave which lies on the north-eastern peak of Morocco. The filmmakers' main purpose was to introduce the effects of strict border control and administrative restrictions to minimize illegal entry into the enclave which is politically a Spanish – thus also a European – territory. The filmmakers purpose is not only to present an objective analysis of the situation, but also to portray the border control zone as a terrible and inhuman complex that is in many aspects not only similar to, but in its nature identical with the border control fences used by the Nazi or Stalinist totalitarian regimes. The choice of the title of the documentary *Fortress Europe* is a direct reference to the Nazi *Festung Europa*, which was a widely used term during World War II by both the German and the Allied propaganda machinery and is well known in western culture with all its negative connotations.

It is evident from the choice of the title that the filmmakers' primary intention was to argue against border control using emotionally biased terms. The authoritative voice-over during the first scene underlines this intention when states that “This is the southernmost outpost of fortress Europe” while a section of the historical *las Murallas Reales* – the Royal City Walls of medieval Ceuta – is shown. From the medieval city walls, the camera slowly moves to the modern border control facilities while the commentator continues in the presentation of Ceuta as “one of the last *vestiges* of Spanish rule in Northern Morocco” deliberately evoking anti-colonialist sentiments. Although the listener is informed in the second part of the introductory sentence that “it has been European for more than five-hundred years”, the fact that “Madrid insists it will *never* relinquish control” over the territory openly suggests that this land belongs to Morocco and for moral reasons should be given up by Spain. The filmmakers try to persuade the audience that the Spanish presence in the territory is an *anomaly* and thus everything that is connected with this anomaly is inherently immoral and unacceptable. Due to this biased interpretation, the audience is immediately confronted with the problem which was described by Sklar (2016: 727) as “Indeed the basic ambiguity in documentary lies in distinguishing the false from the true” and this seems to be in connection with the post-postmodern schizophrenia that if truth is relative, fact-based analysis cannot create usable outcomes. What Sklar (2016: 727)

describes as “[...] the two methods of documentary – the direct and the vicarious, the unmediated experience and the interpretative commentary – and often in simultaneous juxtaposition” is precisely reflected in the first scene. This bipolarity characterizes the whole film when it repeatedly depicts dualities that always represent a quasi-antagonistic system of the conquerors and conquered, the rich and the poor, the wealthy Christian Spaniards and the poor Muslims compatriots, the colonizers and the colonized, etc. As Buráková states, however, “[...] the end of postmodernism and its victimary discourse of history has shown that the binary understanding of the roles of victim and perpetrator is not sufficient for a full understanding of the atrocities of the twentieth century or the violence of the twenty-first century or even history as such” (2019: 97).

The film can be rather categorized as a propaganda product and not a real documentary for a series of reasons; one example of this is the evidently pro-Muslim anti-European attitude. An example of this biased representation is the highlighting – and in certain aspects – exaggerating the role of the medieval cartographer Al Idrisi, who was borne in the town of Ceuta in 1099. The narrator states that “Al Idrisi’s maps made possible the great voyages and discoveries, which subsequently led to colonization and as in the case of Ceuta the presence of Europe in Africa”. Highlighting Al Idrisi’s work as if it had been the only available source of geographical information for the colonizers is at least ambiguous and raises further questions about the genre of the analyzed work. Al Idrisi’s person is evidently not highlighted because of his work as cartographer but because his person highlights the pre-colonial status of the town.

In the following scene, the border fence and the *holding center* are depicted as symbols of a police state where immigrants are kept for months in a place which “is not a prison” but resembles one because “there are constraints”. On the other hand, thousands of *legal* visitors of Ceuta are allowed to enter the town on a daily basis to buy goods and then take these products to Morocco for resale. The visual presentation of the poor retailers who carry their bags of purchased goods in their hands walking from and to the town through a hole in a brick wall enforces the exploiter-exploited duality. The narrator’s comment that “Spanish authorities turn a blind eye – knowing how profitable this trade is to the city” underlines the propagandistic character of the depicted situation. If there had been a need for a non-biased portrayal of the situation, the filmmakers might have highlighted that such trade was profitable for the Moroccan retailers too.

A further – and maybe the most important – division line in Ceuta is described in the next scene when a representative of the Union of Ceuta’s Muslims, Muhammad Ali, is speaking about religious conflicts which spring from the Spanish intentions to create a European city out of Ceuta and their wish to Christianize it. If data are analyzed, it becomes evident that the majority of the population of Ceuta is Spanish Catholic: out of the total population of 85,000<sup>2</sup> approximately 36,000<sup>3</sup> were Muslims in 2018 which is roughly 40% of the total population of the town and this ratio has been long lasting. Preserving a cultural heritage and maintaining a status-quo can hardly mean assimilation or forced conversion primarily because the town itself has been under Spanish administration for five-hundred years now. A relatively numerous and thriving community of Muslims on the contrary is rather the proof that this town has been able to provide freedom and prosperity for all of its citizens. This view is emphasized by Juan Luis Arostegui, the representative of the People’s Socialist Party of Ceuta, who emphasizes that the

Spanish population's main concern is not the Muslims in the city but the Moroccan intentions to annex Ceuta, which has long been a multicultural town. The Spanish majority thus would like to maintain Ceuta's cosmopolitan status while there is an open wish in the Muslim community to invite Morocco to occupy the town and forcibly join the place to the *African motherland*.

This division is portrayed by the narrator as the "invisible wall", which is in the minds of the people and is built along religious lines. Muhammad Ali underlines that the Christian population does not want to share the city with the Muslims but rather stay in isolation. As a proof, the film shows footage about the allegedly impoverished quarter El Principe Alfonso, taken by a head camera of a biker. The scene shows a narrow medieval street – an alley – which is clean and runs in between houses which are in good condition – at least in much better condition than for example the Moroccan village homes of Hensala shown later in the documentary. Thus, the voiceover that emphasizes neglect and marginalization and their consequence: poverty of Muslims and the footage showing a clean and well-kept street are in conflict and the visuals do not underpin the argumentation of the narrator. The clothes of the people walking in the streets in this neglected quarter are nice and tidy and they generally look more like middle-class citizens than oppressed servants.

In the second part of the interview, Mr Muhammad Ali argues that Muslims are offered only short-term work contracts whereas Christians have the possibility to find permanent job positions, which allow them "to stay and have roots in Ceuta". This suggests that Christians from Europe also come in big numbers to the Spanish enclave and search for jobs which is not the situation. This comment re-creates the image that a Christian conquest is going on in a settlement, which *should* belong to Muslims.

Cultural marginalization of Muslim inhabitants of Ceuta is also strongly perceivable according to Mr Ali because "only Christian holidays are celebrated" there. The following scene, depicting a Catholic first communion celebration is intended to support his words. The Catholic priest, however, takes a different standpoint emphasizing that *all faiths* and cultures – including the Jewish community – can freely celebrate their spiritual traditions and openly, without any restrictions, declare their religious belonging. It is worth noting that the English subtitles accidentally or deliberately skip the information about the presence of the Jewish tradition in the town. This type of documenting already raises ethical questions and pushes the film even closer to the category of propaganda rather than a real documentary.

The discussion of the problem of the immigration and its solution illustrates the ideological bias of the documentary when, in the following scene, the Catholic priest speaks about providing "political and economic help of the countries of origin" of immigrants in order to help people find job in their home countries. This standpoint is paralleled with the demand of the former African colonies – voiced by Mr Ali – that the "advanced colonial countries of Europe have to return back some of the wealth they appropriated from the colonised African countries. Europe should also put in place programs for employment and progress". Though these views seem to be pointing in the same direction the argumentation that the establishment and maintenance of these economic programs is the sole *responsibility* of the European countries is at least questionable.

The following scene shows original footage of the journey of members of a volunteer group – the Solidaridad Directa – from Cadiz, Spain to Hemsala, Morocco whose goal is to



implement the ideas of *giving back* to Africa by building a small clinic and a school in the village. Unfortunately, the filmmakers fail to underline the complete message of Rafael Quiros, the leader of the volunteers when he says that:

The frontiers are something artificial. And it, at the end, is not going to stop the people. It is not going to stop illegal immigration. It *can* control illegal immigration, but it is not going to stop it. In order to change illegal immigration, we have to change our mentality. But the mentality has to change in Africa, too. Because they, in Africa, have to understand that they have to work protecting their own interests, developing their own economies.

The second part of Quiros' message remains unheard by the narrator who is re-emphasizing only the part of the interview, which underlines that "walls don't work". Mr Quiros' final message that "the main fence is placed in our hearts" however is greatly emphasized. The film's closing scene is a series of photos about a corpse lying on the seashore covered by space blankets, exhausted immigrants praying and crawling on the sandy beaches, dead bodies of immigrants who got drowned in the sea and other pictures that depict further horrors of illegal immigration. Original CCTV camera footage is shown about immigrants trying to break through the wire fences in masses, or swimming around the sea border facilities to get to Ceuta. The commentator underlines that the Spanish border guards shoot rubber bullets and smoke canisters towards the *survivors* as they swim across the border and they are immediately deported back to Morocco. One of the final scenes of the film depicts similar pictures of illegal immigrants crossing the Hungarian border control facilities, and the commentator speaks about the intensifying of immigration due to the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. As a final political standpoint Federica Mogherini – the EU Foreign Policy Chief – speaks about the idea of Europe without borders and the necessity of finding a political solution for the question.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

Political activism has rarely become so intense and widespread as in the last decade and the number of different interest groups working and lobbying for diverse goals have multiplied in the world. The phenomenon of intensifying migratory movements has greatly contributed to the politically heated debate about the topic and the re-emphasis of political standpoints in every media platform. Documentary film cannot be an exception and has frequently been used and abused for propagandistic goals. The film, *Walls of Shame – The Spanish Moroccan Border* (2007) is an excellent example of degrading the documentary genre to the level of political propaganda. Depicting the phenomenon of illegal immigration, the officials struggle with this phenomenon in the Spanish town Ceuta and combining it with the radical pro-immigration vocabulary adopted by the European Left-wing political parties, the film is more a political manifesto than a real documentary. Though subjective reality in the form of re-enacting, animation, or any other technically possible way is generally adopted and accepted in the documentary genre, purposeful manipulation of facts, misinterpreting symbols and telling only the *suitable* elements of the story that can underpin the ideological framework on which the film is built is more than is needed to enrich the artistic value of this movie.

## Notes:

- 1 Available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/borders-and-walls-do-barriers-deter-unauthorized-migration>
- 2 Available at <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/spain-ceuta.php?cityid=51001>
- 3 Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/989770/muslims-in-ceuta-by-nationality/>

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# Corporate Identity Representation in Media Texts of Belarusian and Polish IT-Companies in the English Language

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## *Abstract*

*Corporate identity is a complex interdisciplinary concept that attracts both scholars and practitioners. It is believed to be a strong competitive tool for modern companies that helps them gain trust and recognition of their customers. Entering the global market, companies choose specific ways of representing their corporate identity. The aim of this paper is to analyse how Belarusian IT-companies use English to build their corporate identity in media texts, created for global business community. The same procedure is done with the texts of Polish IT-companies in order to spot social and cultural differences in the means of corporate identity representation.*

*Keywords: corporate identity, media texts, intercultural communication*

## **Introduction: The Concept of Corporate Identity**

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the concept of *corporate identity*, thus attracting the attention of both scholars and business practitioners. They look upon it as a strategic business instrument that helps companies achieve competitive advantage, improve reputation and increase return on investment (Melewar 2008). According to John M.T. Balmer, corporate identity is critical for a company, if it faces increased competition, expands its markets, lacks high calibre personnel, or does not meet public expectations for corporate social responsiveness (Balmer 2000: 256-257). As Bertrand Moingeon and Guillaume Soenen claim, *corporate identity* provides companies with meaning, stability and distinctiveness (Moingeon, Soenen 2003: 1). Clearly defined and effectively presented corporate identities help companies become more recognizable by customers, gain their trust and loyalty (Balmer, 2000). By effectively managing their corporate identities, companies can also build understanding of their stakeholders, achieve strategic alliances, gain the support of financial markets and generate a sense of direction and purpose.

Despite popularity of this concept, it lacks a commonly-accepted definition. Diversity in meanings stems from diversity in views on what corporate identity is. Professor John M.T. Balmer points out that definitions of corporate identity fall into three dominant categories (Balmer 2006). The first category unites definitions that reveal views on corporate identity as a visual image, which is created by means of graphic design: “A desired image acquired and communicated by the company to the public through consistent visual communications” (Balmer 2006: 5). This approach to the understanding of corporate identity appeared as a result of influence of graphic design practitioners (Walter Margulies, Veronica Napoles, David Carter, etc.) on corporate communication. One of the main goals of this approach was to increase companies’ visibility.

The second category embraces views on *corporate identity* as *corporate identification* (Balmer 2006), which refers to “individual’s self-definition and the inclusion of an organization in that definition” (Balmer 2006: 6). In terms of this approach, the identification

of employees, stakeholders and customers with an organization, its values, norms and rules of behaviour is viewed as a vitally important aspect of companies' success.

The third category contains definitions that reflect a broader approach to the notion of corporate identity. It is viewed as all distinctive and defining characteristics of an organization that reveal company's identity through its activities, communication and symbolism. In other words, corporate identity is "a set of interdependent characteristics of an organization which give the organization specificity, distinctiveness and coherence over time" (Moingeon 1999: 353).

The same approach to corporate identity is used in this research paper. Corporate identity is understood as the profile and values communicated by the company. According to this definition, corporate identity is heterogeneous and complex, consisting of many elements, which make a company distinctive and unique. Corporate identity is inseparable from corporate communication, which helps company to become visible and recognizable.

## **Research Aim, Methods and Results**

### *Research Aim and Methods*

The main aim of this research is to find out how corporate identity is created and presented in corporate media communication. To achieve this aim, a particular type of company, their specific target audiences and channels of corporate communication have been chosen. The method of content-analysis has been applied to the texts placed on the official sites of 50 Belarusian companies. The texts placed on the main pages of the websites and pages about the companies were analysed. Seven main topics have been distinguished. These topics come up in the texts with different frequency. To define the frequency of each topic, a quantitative analysis was applied to key-words (words that indicate the topics). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1. In order to spot socio-cultural differences or similarities in creating and presenting corporate identity, content-analysis was applied to the texts placed on the official websites of 50 Polish companies. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

### *The Results of Research*

Belarusian IT-companies have been chosen for the analysis of their corporate identities, presented in corporate English-language texts placed on their official websites. The sphere of IT is one of the fastest developing areas of the Belarusian economy. Together with Poland, Ukraine, Romania and Russia, Belarus tops the list of Eastern European countries that export IT services worldwide.

Belarusian IT-companies started entering the global market, providing their services to North-American and Western European countries, approximately 20 years ago. Having no local experience, they had to rely on Western-European business practices, adopting new rules of conducting business and communication. Being new and unknown to a global business community, they also faced the necessity to show their trustworthiness, business value and uniqueness.

One of the main tools of corporate communication that these companies used and are still using is an official site. It has many important functions. First of all, a corporate site ensures a company's official representation on the Internet: it often serves as the first and

most credible source of information about a company for new and potential customers. Secondly, an official website serves as an effective PR instrument that helps to create and maintain a positive corporate image. Companies highlight the stories of their success and achievements, so that people can get the right picture of companies' development and progress. Thirdly, corporate sites are used to provide informational support to their existing customers. These sites contain contact information and dialogue boxes for immediate contact with managers.

Belarusian IT-companies take into account and exploit all of the options that corporate websites have as a communication tool. The companies establish their corporate identity through the texts of corporate media sites to build positive corporate image and gain their audience's trust and recognition. Texts on the main pages of sites and on the pages about the company are usually used to present a company in the most favourable way and build positive corporate image. There are seven dominant topics that are often referred to in these texts. They are: expertise, progress and change, partnership, success, quality, company localization, attitude to work. These topics appeal to cultural and business values and help companies make favourable impression.

The topic *expertise* includes mentioning and description of professional skills and knowledge of companies' employees. Belarusian IT-companies strive to present them as experts in their professional domain by mentioning their professional achievements, certificates and other proof of their qualification. Their successful projects are also described in these texts: "*our expertise encompasses the creation of*", "*has an exclusive expertise in building complete eCommerce solutions based on the Oracle Commerce Platform*".

The topic *progress and change* highlights the importance of constant development, which serves as prerequisite for success and growth for different types of businesses. IT-companies demonstrate their constant development and progress. They show that they keep up with modern technologies and innovations. Therefore, they improve qualification and professional skills of their employees and can offer modern and high-quality services: "*Reaching new horizons* is our motto and a part of our company values", "*continues evolving* in many ways to make our services more beneficial and useful for you", "*We are growing* software company in numbers, quality and expertise".

The IT-companies also mention the fact that their services help various businesses to integrate new technologies, which makes these businesses more profitable and viable: "*Our ingenious solutions provide new* communication and marketing channels, *facilitate* business processes and *enhance* connection between all key enterprise elements from sales point to the back office and anywhere in between", "*We have been collaborating with businesses to build clever web services since 2014 to improve their workflow*".

The topic *partnership* reveals IT-companies' attitude to work with their customers, which is viewed as partnership and collaboration of equals aimed at achieving mutual success and progress. IT-companies use texts on their websites to convince their potential customers that the initial goal of IT-specialists is to help other businesses, establish good relations with them and become partners: "*Our ultimate goal is to be a reliable outsourcing partner* where our software experts are an integral part of the client team", "*We help our partners* by providing expertise and resources to develop solutions that stand out and build teams that would be seamlessly integrated into their organization and infrastructure".

The topic *success* is dedicated to IT-companies' achievements that show their leading position on the local and global markets. The products of Belarusian IT-companies are described as leaders or pioneers in their categories: "*As the category leader*", "*the world's*

*first free RPA product*”. The success is also demonstrated through partnership with world-famous companies:

Our *expertise* encompasses the creation of Digital Commerce & Marketing business solutions, Mobile Applications and various customized B2B and B2C web projects. *Being an official Oracle partner*, [...] has an exclusive expertise in building complete eCommerce solutions based on the Oracle Commerce Platform. *We are also proud to be a partner of Adobe Systems*, the marketing software solutions *leader*. As such, we offer a full range of development and consulting services for Adobe Marketing Cloud business users.

(About Axamit)

Another important topic that is covered in media texts of Belarusian IT-companies is the *quality* of their services and products. They are advertised as being of high quality:

[...] is a custom software development company based in Minsk, Belarus. We offer software development services and have over 17 years of experience in this field. Our firm’s primary aim and objectives are to completely execute our projects to meet our clients’ satisfaction and requirement. We focus more of our attention on the quality and reliability of our software development services.

(Aristek Systems)

The topic *company localization* is dedicated to the advertising of Belarus, as a country where reliable and trustworthy IT-companies reside. The pluses of working with companies from this country include: high standards of IT-specialists’ education in Belarus, advantageous geographical position and competitive prices:

[...] The wages in the IT sector in Belarus are one of the lowest in post-soviet countries. The state education system produces many high-quality engineers. These factors enable us to significantly reduce our own costs and offer better rates for our customers while still providing an outstanding quality of service.

(Why \*Instinctools)

[...] is one of the Europe based software companies located in Belarus, in the city of Minsk. The country is situated in the very center of Europe and borders on Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Belarus proclaimed its independence in 1991 and since then, has managed to preserve its most prominent production and technological infrastructure, educational establishments, and qualified specialists. Nowadays, Belarus is known as an Eastern European software outsourcing region with primary focus on the IT sector and comfortable economical and legal environment for businesses. That's why Belarus is an ideal place for software development companies in Europe, where local businesses successfully compete with international research and development centers.

(Scand)

One more topic that is often mentioned in these texts is *attitude to work*. This topic highlights the way IT-specialists treat their work. They are described as being passionate and creative specialists, who are not afraid of hard projects and are eager to share their experience and knowledge with customers, partners and colleagues: “*We are a team of specialists passionate about anything tech-related and working hard to build truly great products*”,

“help your business grow with a team that is truly passionate about front-end development and design” (Blakit IT Solutions), “Meet our amazing team of industry professionals, who are happy to work together to create a digital future in the high-tech era” (Axamit).

According to the results of quantitative analysis, all these topics come up in the media texts with different frequency. Belarusian IT-companies give priority to describing themselves as *top-notch specialists* and *experts*. The topic *expertise* is mentioned in the texts most often. A lot of attention is also given to the topic of *progress and change*. It occupies the second place. Companies describe themselves as *innovative, progressive, developing and bringing about changes to the society*. Being *friendly* and *cooperative* is also important for Belarusian IT-companies. It is demonstrated in the topic *partnership*. Showing their *success* and status is more vital than pointing out the *quality* of their products and services. The results of quantitative analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Main Topics in the Media Texts of Belarusian IT-companies and Their Frequency.

Topics	Key-words	Number of words
1. Expertise	expert, expertise, experience, highly-experienced, qualification, knowledge, trained, certificate, tech-savvy, certified, professional, proficient, talent	383
2. Progress and Change	1.Verbs of growth (Berth Levin): grow, evolve, foster, cultivate; 2.Verbs of creation and transformation: transform, change, revolutionize, innovate, improve, enhance, optimize, upgrade, update, gain, implement, adjust, streamline, progress; 3. Verbs of motion: speed-up, accelerate. 4.Verbs of change of state: expand, boost, extend, increase; 5. Adverbs and adjectives: quickly, fast, instant, slow, quick. 6. Adjectives: innovative, cutting-edge, latest, state-of-the-art, modern.	373
3. Partnership	Cooperation, coordination, interaction, community, partners, partnership, relationship, family, join, open, openness, transparent, transparency, feedback, participate, share, assist, help, assistance, gather, together, discuss, talk, exchange	343
4. Success	Success, succeed, successful, leading, leader, global, international, trusted, reliable, reputation, recognized, recognition, respected, world-class, worldwide, giant, largest, biggest, fastest, renowned, award-winning, large-scale, reliable, trust, well-established.	220
5. Quality	Quality, high-quality, high-grade, top-grade, excellence, best-in-class, top-quality, top-notch products, reliable products	103
6. Company Localization	Location in Minsk, Belarus, Belarusian + universities, brilliant specialists, superior IT companies, competitive prices, IT talents	80
7. Attitude to	passion, fun, happy, passionate, excited, worried, satisfied, satisfaction, enthusiastic, enthusiasts, great, excited,	66



Work	awesome,	
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Poland borders Belarus. Despite social and economic differences, both countries bear cultural similarities that appeared as a result of close interaction within the period of medieval and modern history. Polish IT-companies top the list of leading outsourcing companies from Central Europe. The analysis of the texts from the main pages and pages about the company on the websites of 50 Polish IT-companies revealed the presence of the same topics as in the texts of Belarusian IT-Companies: *expertise, progress and change, partnership, success, quality, company localization, attitude to work*.

A quantitative analysis, applied to these texts, showed that these topics appear in the texts of Polish companies with a different frequency than in the texts of Belarusian IT-companies. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Polish companies are mainly oriented on cooperation and collaboration. The topic of *partnership* is mentioned most often. The topic of *progress and change* is given a lot of attention too. It occupies the second place. *Expertise* occupies the third place on the list. The topics of *success, quality, attitude to work and company localization* are given much less attention, which is demonstrated by the numbers.

Table 2. The Main Topics in the Media Texts of Polish IT-companies and Their Frequency.

Topics	Key Words	Number of Key Words
1. Partnership	Cooperation, coordination, interaction, community, partners, partnership, relationship, family, join, open, openness, transparent, transparency, feedback, participate, share, assist, help, assistance, gather, together, discuss, talk, exchange	355
2. Progress and Change	1.Verbs of growth (Berth Levin): grow, evolve, foster, cultivate; 2.Verbs of creation and transformation: transform, change, revolutionize, innovate, improve, enhance, optimize, upgrade, update, gain, implement, adjust, streamline, progress; 3.Verbs of motion: speed-up, accelerate. 4.Verbs of change of state: expand, boost, extend, increase; 5. Adverbs and adjectives: quickly, fast, instant, slow, quick. 6. Adjectives: innovative, cutting-edge, latest, state-of-the-art, modern.	338
3. Expertise	geeks, geeky, connoisseurs, aficionados, practitioners, intelligence forces, forward-thinkers, expert, expertise, experience, highly-experienced, qualification, knowledge, trained, certificate, tech-savvy, certified, professional, proficient, talent.	328
4. Success	Success, succeed, successful, leading, leader, global, international, trusted, reliable, reputation, recognized,	147

	recognition, respected, world-class, worldwide, giant, largest, biggest, fastest, renowned, award-winning, large-scale, reliable, trust, well-established.	
5. Quality	Quality, high-quality, high-grade, top-grade, excellence, best-in-class, top-quality, top-notch products, services, reliable products	100
6. Attitude	Amazed, brilliant, wonderful, awesome, hearts, fondly, vibes, love, joy, passion, fun, happy, passionate, excited, worried, satisfied, satisfaction, enthusiastic, enthusiasts great, excited, awesome.	98
7. Company Localization	Poland, Polish, experts from Poland, Warsaw, etc.	85

Having compared the texts of Polish and Belarusian IT-companies, it has been found out that the texts of Polish IT-companies tend to be more informal. They contain colloquial words (*geeks, geeky*). The number of emotionally coloured words (*aficionados, amazed, brilliant, wonderful, awesome, hearts, fondly, vibes, love, joy*) is much bigger than in the texts of Belarusian companies. Whereas the texts of Belarusian IT-companies exhibit more formality. They abound in clichés that sound neutral and business-like: *years of expertise, qualified staff experienced in working worldwide, technical challenges, find recognition, help businesses*, etc.

### Concluding Remarks

Media texts of Belarusian and Polish IT-companies have some evident similarities: the content of the texts is mainly made up of seven common topics: *expertise, progress and change, partnership, success, quality, company localization, attitude to work*. Though these results need to be approved by further research of larger number of media texts, some implications can be made. First of all, the texts might have similarities because they belong to the same format of media communication: they are placed on the main pages of official websites and are aimed at advertising IT-companies, creating their favourable image. These texts are created by representatives of a professional subculture of IT-specialists. This could explain their similarities too.

Socio-cultural differences between Polish and Belarusian IT-companies are big enough to become visible in corporate media texts. Belarusian IT-companies strive to create more business-like, official image of IT-specialists, progressive and successful. When Polish IT-companies exhibit more relaxed and informal style of communication, using colloquial and emotionally-coloured words, appealing to values of cooperation and partnership.

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