

# Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	6
MONICA BOTTEZ.....	6
‘ENLIGHTENED’ TOLERANCE IN SIR WALTER SCOTT’S NOVELS .....	8
VÎJEA CRISTIAN ȘTEFAN .....	8
‘ENLIGHTENED’ TOLERANCE IN SIR WALTER SCOTT’S NOVELS – <i>Abstract</i> .....	8
LES REPRÉSENTATIONS DE LA CATHÉDRALE/DE L’ÉGLISE DANS <i>LE RHIN ET ALPES ET PYRÉNÉES</i> CHEZ VICTOR HUGO .....	9
ILONA CRISTINA DINCĂ .....	9
<i>REPRESENTATIONS OF CATHEDRALS/CHURCHES IN VICTOR HUGO’         S LE RHIN AND ALPES ET PYRÉNÉES – Abstract</i> .....	9
THE CONCEPT OF FACE IN CHINESE AND JAPANESE CONFUCIAN SOCIETIES.....	10
DOVLEAC MARIA-SIMONA.....	10
<i>THE CONCEPT OF FACE IN CHINESE AND JAPANESE CONFUCIAN         SOCIETIES – Abstract</i> .....	10
THE BATTLEFIELD AT HOME: EDITH WHARTON AND THE GHOST STORY.....	11
RALUCA OPROIU .....	11
<i>THE BATTLEFIELD AT HOME: EDITH WHARTON AND THE GHOST         STORY – Abstract</i> .....	11
LITERARY METAMORPHOSES IN FRANZ KAFKA’S <i>THE METAMORPHOSIS</i> AND IN SALMAN RUSHDIE’S <i>THE SATANIC VERSES</i> AS REVELATIONS OF IDENTITARY TRANSFORMATIONS FROM MODERNITY TO POSTMODERNITY .....	13
LAURA BALOMIRI .....	13
<i>LITERARY METAMORPHOSES IN FRANZ KAFKA’S THE         METAMORPHOSIS AND IN SALMAN RUSHDIE’S THE SATANIC VERSES         AS REVELATIONS OF IDENTITARY TRANSFORMATIONS FROM         MODERNITY TO POSTMODERNITY – Abstract</i> .....	13
AUTOUR <i>DU DEUXIÈME SEXE</i> DE SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR.....	14

SIMONA-MIHAELA NECULA .....	14
<i>ABOUT SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S THE SECOND SEX – Abstract</i> .....	14
THE PILGRIMAGE IN THE POSTMODERN ERA UNDER THE FORM OF DAVID LODGE'S THERAPY: UNDERMINING RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE ..	15
ELENA-IULIANA BINDILEU .....	15
<i>THE PILGRIMAGE IN THE POSTMODERN ERA UNDER THE FORM OF         DAVID LODGE'S THERAPY: UNDERMINING RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE         – Abstract</i> .....	15
JEU ET RÉALITÉ EN <i>PERDRE</i> PAR PIERRE MERTENS .....	16
CRISTINA PETRACHE .....	16
<i>GAME AND REALITY IN PIERRE MERTENS' PERDRE – Abstract</i> .....	16
HYBRID VIEWS ON COUPLES' LIVES IN UMA PARAMESWARAN'S SHORT STORIES.....	17
LUCIA-MIHAELA GROSU .....	17
<i>HYBRID VIEWS ON COUPLES' LIVES IN UMA PARAMESWARAN'S         SHORT STORIES – Abstract</i> .....	17
LIVING IN A LIQUID SOCIETY: LIQUID WOMEN .....	18
CATRINELA ANDREEA LAZAR .....	18
<i>LIVING IN A LIQUID SOCIETY: LIQUID WOMEN- Abstract</i> .....	18
MALE IDENTITY: REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTERS IN THE WORKS OF CAROL SHIELDS AND ALICE MUNRO .....	19
CRISTINA NICOLAESCU .....	19
<i>MALE IDENTITY: REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTERS IN THE WORKS OF         CAROL SHIELDS AND ALICE MUNRO – Abstract</i> .....	19
REPRÉSENTATIONS DES MOBILITÉS CHEZ VINTILĂ HORIA DANS <i>UNE FEMME POUR L'APOCALYPSE</i> .....	20
MANUELA ALEXE.....	20
<i>REPRESENTATIONS OF MOBILITIES IN VINTILĂ HORIA'S UNE         FEMME POUR L'APOCALYPSE –Abstract</i> .....	20
ROMANIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN CRISTIAN NEMESCU'S <i>CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'</i> .....	21
IRINA DAVID .....	21
<i>ROMANIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN CRISTIAN         NEMESCU'S CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' – Abstract</i> .....	21

PEDAGOGY AND RITUAL IN ANDREI CODRESCU'S <i>THE POETRY</i> <i>LESSON</i> .....	22
DANIELA MIHAELA CĂLINESCU .....	22
<i>PEDAGOGY AND RITUAL IN ANDREI CODRESCU'S THE POETRY</i> <i>LESSON – Abstract</i> .....	22
A LA RECHERCHE DU “JOLI CADAVRE” DANS LA PIÈCE “ <i>LE MOT</i> <i>PROGRÈS DANS LA BOUCHE DE MA MÈRE SONNAIT TERRIBLEMENT</i> <i>FAUX</i> ” PAR MATEI VIȘNIEC.....	24
MARIANA-SIMONA TOMESCU .....	24
<i>LOOKING FOR “THE FANCY DEAD BODY” IN MATEI VIȘNIEC'S PLAY</i> <i>THE WORD PROGRESS IN MY MOTHER'S MOUTH SOUNDED</i> <i>TERRIBLY WRONG – Abstract</i> .....	24

# INTRODUCTION

## Monica Bottez

The articles included in this volume are based on the papers presented by the students of the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest, at their annual International Conference in 2010. They reflect the various preoccupations of these students in the fields of British literature, American literature, Canadian literature, French literature, Romanian literature and film, Comparative literature and Chinese and Japanese Confucian culture.

Romantic literature has attracted the interest of Cristian Vîjea who discusses tolerance to religious difference in Walter Scott's novels and that of Ilona Dincă who analyses the relationship between human nature and sacred nature, as well as that between sacred elements, Divinity and Human nature in Victor Hugo's travel writings.

Simona Dovleac dwells on the cultural concept of face in Chinese and Japanese societies where it represents the symbol of human interactions as Confucian ritual formalism requires an internalization of the moral values and an externalization of the appropriate conduct to each situation.

The study of the fantastic foregrounds its various uses : if Raluca Oproiu demonstrates how in her ghost stories Edith Wharton incorporates the fantastic and the supernatural in order to offer critiques of male power and sexuality by expressing women's fears about being trapped in a patriarchal society, Laura Balomiri dwells on the literary motif of the fantastic human-animal metamorphosis in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* as a metaphor of identity transformation in the transition from modernity to postmodernity.

Quite a number of the essays centre round gender studies, either from a feminist angle (Simona Necula, Catrinela Andreea Lazăr), the angle of multicultural hybridity (Lucia Grosu) or the angle of gender stereotypes (Cristina Nicolaescu, Cristina Petrache).

Postmodernist texts are investigated for their plurality of interpretations and their playful intertextuality (Daniela Călinescu), the subversion of religious discourse (Elena Bindileu), their use of multiple identities and the relationship between space and identity (Manuela Alexe), the commodification of cultural practices (Mariana Tomescu).

The analysis of cinematic text enriches the scope of the research embraced in this volume: Irina David explores Romanian-American interactions in Cristian Nemescu's movie *California Dreamin'* from an imagological perspective.

The Editor

# **‘Enlightened’ Tolerance in Sir Walter Scott’s Novels**

**Vijea Cristian Ștefan**

Supervisor: prof. dr. Mihaela Irimia

## **‘ENLIGHTENED’ TOLERANCE IN SIR WALTER SCOTT’S NOVELS – Abstract**

In this paper I will emphasize a few salient points regarding Scott’s attitude to cultural difference and Otherness. I argue that Scott is a constant promoter of tolerance, advocating an emphasis on the common, shared human nature and I will look also into different techniques used by Scott, in *Ivanhoe*, *The Abbot*, *Old Mortality*, and *The Talisman*, in order to promote his plea for tolerance and cultural dialogue.

In each of the above-mentioned works, Scott uses a different mode of subversion in order to undermine and caricature religious discourse which appears too radical, superstitious or frozen in set meaningless formulae.

Scott’s criterion for assessing religious beliefs and persuasions is based on commonsense and the “principles of humanity”, therefore everything falling outside this pale is put to the test of subversion. Laughter and irony are his barometers for gauging tolerance and openness towards the Other. But is at any point Scott’s notion of tolerance verging on hospitality?

Keywords: tolerance, religious difference, irony, subversion, radical discourse, humanity, commonsense, hospitality.

## **Les représentations de la cathédrale/de l'église dans *Le Rhin et Alpes et Pyrénées* chez Victor Hugo**

**Ilona Cristina Dincă**

Directeur de thèse: Prof. dr. Radu Toma

### **REPRESENTATIONS OF CATHEDRALS/CHURCHES IN VICTOR HUGO' S *LE RHIN AND ALPES ET PYRÉNÉES* – Abstract**

The representations of the cathedral/church in *The Rhin* and *The Alps and the Pyrénées* acquire a special aesthetic and ethic value. For Hugo, the images of the cathedral exercise a special fascination and appear almost obsessively in *The Rhin* and *The Alps and the Pyrénées*.

One can see that in almost every town or village Hugo passes through, there is at least a cathedral or a church which catches his attention. Hugo stops in front of it, visits it, contemplates it. We ask ourselves why? Which are the religious meanings, the symbols of these sacred spaces? Which are the elements that catch the writer's

attention most? The elements concerning the religious sacred matters or those relevant to the architectural?

Noticing a smooth fusion between the image of nature, the sacred space and the anthropic space it becomes interesting to analyse the relationship which appears and develops between human nature and sacred nature and sacred elements, Divinity and Human nature.

Keywords: cathedral, sacred space, anthropic space.

## **The Concept of Face in Chinese and Japanese Confucian Societies**

**Dovleac Maria-Simona**

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Florentina Visan

### **THE CONCEPT OF FACE IN CHINESE AND JAPANESE CONFUCIAN SOCIETIES – Abstract**

In the East Asian Confucian societies the face is a concept bearing a great cultural meaning, as it represents the symbol of human interactions. The Confucian ritual formalism requires an internalization of the moral values and an externalization of the appropriate conduct to each situation. The individual is evaluated in his relations according to the way he manages to fulfil his obligations and subordinate his individual interests. The goal of this article is to discuss the concept of face as a constant factor of assessment in the



Confucian relational model. This paper attempts a translation, an interpretation of the concept of face, as well as of related concepts such as shame, duty, politeness, respect, ambiguity, empathy. Two types of face belonging to the Chinese and Japanese Confucian societies are compared (the □ *mian face* and the □ *lian face*) and the respective similarities and differences between them are highlighted.

Key words: face, relationship, shame, duty, propriety, politeness.

## **The Battlefield at Home: Edith Wharton and the Ghost Story**

**Raluca Oproiu**

Supervisor: prof dr. Rodica Mihăilă

### **THE BATTLEFIELD AT HOME: EDITH WHARTON AND THE GHOST STORY – Abstract**

Throughout history, women have been trapped between contradictory pressures and impulses, having to deal with the cultural problems of gender distinctions in the context of Western structures of power and with how the borders between genders might be questioned in order to undermine these established structures. In time, ghost stories have allowed women authors special freedoms: not only the power to incorporate the fantastic and the supernatural in their writings, but also the liberty to offer critiques of male power

and sexuality by expressing their own fears and anxieties about being trapped in a patriarchal society. This paper explores the way in which the American writer Edith Wharton employed, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tropes of the ghost, haunted houses and strange-looking interiors to reflect the matrimonial condition of women during her era. Through the use of spectral appearances she hints at the status of submission associated with women under patriarchal rule, at their domestic imprisonment and life of solitude within the walls of their very homes. In the three stories analyzed in the article, the haunting images of the past point to the battle between the old, patriarchal rule and women's attempt to gain a new status and identity.

**Keywords:** master-servant relationship, ghosts, patriarchal domination, female intruder, meta-Gothic.

# **Literary Metamorphoses in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* as Revelations of Identitary Transformations from Modernity to Postmodernity**

**Laura Balomiri**

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Radu Surdulescu

## **LITERARY METAMORPHOSES IN FRANZ KAFKA'S *THE METAMORPHOSIS* AND IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *THE SATANIC VERSES* AS REVELATIONS OF IDENTITARY TRANSFORMATIONS FROM MODERNITY TO POSTMODERNITY – Abstract**

The literary motif of human-animal metamorphosis is the ground on which Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1912) and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) can be brought together for comparison, with Rushdie modulating upon Kafka's emblematic text. The topoi of metamorphosis and identity have always been closely intertwined. Ever since Ovid, literary treatments of metamorphosis have put identitary interrogations at their semantic forefront. The radical modernist de-mythification of metamorphosis as performed in Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* and the postmodernist magic-realist re-mythification of the motif, for which Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* stands witness, can thus be singled out to represent essential shifts in the conceptualization of metamorphosis as a metaphor of identitary transformation in the transition from modernity to postmodernity.

Keywords: metamorphosis, intertextuality, identity, modernism, postmodernism, semantic subversion, Doppelgänger, anxiety, plurality, radicalism.

## ***Autour du Deuxième sexe de Simone de Beauvoir***

**Simona-Mihaela Necula**

Directeur de thèse: Prof. dr. Radu Toma

### **ABOUT SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S *THE SECOND SEX* – Abstract**

This study sets out to analyze the investigation proposed by François Mauriac in the cultural supplement of the magazine *Le Figaro littéraire* (June – August 1949) in connection with the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Also, it aims to unveil the protagonists that participated in the ensuing controversy, be they opponents disputing their intellectual legitimacy or their detractors and supporters.

The conclusion that the article arrives at is that the whole conflict is nothing more than an attempt at rearranging the positions of authority between two generations, between two types of literature, between two opponents, one of which has lost supremacy.

Keywords: Controversy, investigation, existentialism, communism, Christianity, feminism, opponent, specialized public.

# **The Pilgrimage in the Postmodern Era Under the Form of David Lodge's *Therapy*: Undermining Religious Discourse**

**Elena-Iuliana Bindileu**

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Lidia Vianu

## **THE PILGRIMAGE IN THE POSTMODERN ERA UNDER THE FORM OF DAVID LODGE'S THERAPY: UNDERMINING RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE – Abstract**

Given “the postmodern condition” which has lost faith in the “grand narratives”, each individual strives to regain his/her lost identity by means of “small narratives” under the guise of confessional writing, mainly the diary-like form. In *Therapy*, fifty-eight-year-old Laurence Passmore, the script-writer of a successful TV sitcom, is dissected at a time in his life when everything seems to fall apart in a typical postmodern picture. He is uselessly trying all sorts of therapy and surgical interventions, only to eventually resort to an ancient form of self-discovery: the pilgrimage. But what we are going to emphasize in this paper is the fact that the religious discourse attached to the pilgrimage, and not only, is a typical postmodern one, infused with parody and intertextual hints, undermining all the religious paraphernalia. The purpose is to prove that, in spite of the apparently traditionally realistic background, Lodge's novel is characteristic of its era, belonging to our postmodern culture.

**Keywords:** postmodernism, parody, metafiction, subversion

# **Jeu et réalité en *Perdre* par Pierre Mertens**

**Cristina Petrache**

Directeur de thèse: prof. Dr. Radu Toma

## **GAME AND REALITY IN PIERRE MERTENS' *PERDRE* – Abstract**

Our article studies Mertens's vision of the masculinity crisis. His novel *Perdre* explores the way in which a man tries to save his wife's love. The hypothesis of this paper is that the main character is not reconciled with his real identity and this is why he convinces the woman that he is in love with to accept a game. So, far away from the world, in a city where nobody knows them, both live a strange experience, which will change their lives.

We attempt to understand how Pierre Mertens succeeds in conceiving a great story – the story of a man who loses himself in order to find himself.

**Keywords:** identity, reality, game.

# **Hybrid Views on Couples' Lives in Uma Parameswaran's Short Stories**

**Lucia-Mihaela Grosu**

Supervisor: prof. dr. Monica Bottez

## **HYBRID VIEWS ON COUPLES' LIVES IN UMA PARAMESWARAN'S SHORT STORIES – Abstract**

Winner of the New Muse Award in 1999, Uma Parameswaran's literary works, whether prose, drama or poetry, have easily found their place in Canadian literature. A professor, critic and writer, Uma Parameswaran has dedicated her creative efforts to depicting the life of Indian immigrants in Canada with a focus on women's perspectives. In the present article I shall attempt to analyze some of her short stories concentrating on the dynamics of private lives and what lies beneath them. I posit that Parameswaran's characters display a hybridized attitude towards eroticism and couple practices, caught as they are between the Eastern and the Western customs. I will try to prove that at the micro-level of the erotic scenarios described in the stories one can identify some of the macro-themes specific to diasporic writers (such as in-betweenness, hyphenation, hybridization). In my analysis I will make use of an eclectic method gathering theoretical tools from several critical approaches: diasporic criticism, social psychology, diverse feminist theories.

**Keywords:** hybridity, diaspora, feminism.

# Living in a Liquid Society: Liquid Women

**Catrinela Andreea Lazar**

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Monica Bottez

## **LIVING IN A LIQUID SOCIETY: LIQUID WOMEN- Abstract**

Talking about the (post)modern society, one of Bauman's favourite metaphors is that of liquidity in an attempt to render the current state of modern society, its changes and position in the history of modernity (Bauman, Z. *Liquid love- on the frailty of human bonds*, Cambridge Polity Press, 2003). It reflects the diminishing role of the spatial dimensions of social life and highlights the central importance of the flow of time and social change. As a result, individuals need to re-engage in this context of liquid society by rethinking their pattern of living under all its aspects: relationships (family/ friends/ strangers), love and sexuality. There is a permanent fear of commitment and breaking off relationships could take place without excessive drama and emotional investment.

From this point of view, my intention is to analyse the pattern of behaviour of female characters in Doris Lessing's and Margaret Atwood's novels, *The Golden Notebook* and *The Edible Woman*, respectively.

**Keywords:** liquidity, post-modern identity, liquid women.



# **Male Identity: Representative Characters in the Works of Carol Shields and Alice Munro**

**Cristina Nicolaescu**

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Monica Bottez

## **MALE IDENTITY: REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTERS IN THE WORKS OF CAROL SHIELDS AND ALICE MUNRO – Abstract**

This paper seeks to investigate the understanding of masculinity and male identity development in connection with wider constructions of maleness with particular reference to the lifestyle men have chosen, the socialization they have experienced and interpersonal relationships they may establish through their lives. I am particularly interested in demonstrating that there are both constant and variable traits of male identity that have never been considered as such, but roughly associated either with stereotypes or effemination.

Since recent gender studies and methodology undertaken by projects in Romania are chiefly focused on female identity, femininity and feminism (Directions and research themes in the Gender Studies from Romania – workshop – New Europe College, Bucharest, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2002), I have planned my research as a new approach of differences and similarities between men and women. I would like to analyze further and more deeply into all the male identity issues that seem to have been dropped in 2002 in this country, moving on by making reference to Canadian literature.

In order to support my assertions and make my point, I will give examples of how male identity expressed at various levels is mirrored in

*Lives of Girls and Women* by Alice Munro and *The Stone Diaries* by Carol Shields.

Keywords: gender role, masculinity, male identity, difference, similarity, sexuality, socialization, relationships

## **Représentations des mobilités chez Vintilă Horia dans *Une femme pour l'apocalypse***

**Manuela Alexe**

Directeur de thèse: prof. dr. Dolores Toma

### **REPRESENTATIONS OF MOBILITIES IN VINTILĂ HORIA'S *UNE FEMME POUR L'APOCALYPSE* –Abstract**

This paper will analyze the relationship between characters and space in the novel *A Woman for Apocalypse* by Vintilă Horia. Therefore, taking into consideration the writer's intentions, I attempt to establish a typology of space. As this one is an important topic to Horia, the identity of characters can only be built in a direct relationship with it. The characters from this novel are forced to move from one place to another, always looking for something and in the end it is a search for identity. Using a typology of displacement, I try to identify the essential features of Horia's characters that are ultimately looking for the original identity, a heavenly one. Another characteristic and constant aspect of Horia's

writing is that an important element of the personal progress is represented by salvation, consistent with his theoretical writings and the desire to enter eternity.

**Keywords:** exile, identity, initiation, mobility, native, quest, sacred, space, typology, way.

## **Romanian-American Cultural Encounters in Cristian Nemescu's *California Dreamin'***

**Irina David**

Supervisor: Prof.dr. Rodica Mihaila

### **ROMANIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN CRISTIAN NEMESCU'S *CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'* – Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to analyse the way in which Romanian-American interactions are depicted in Cristian Nemescu's movie *California Dreamin'*<sup>1</sup>. The analysis is considered to be

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<sup>1</sup> The full title of the movie is "*California Dreamin' (nesfârșit)*", translated in English as "*California Dreamin' (Endless)*". The second part of the title was chosen as a result of the fact that Cristian Nemescu died shortly after the movie was filmed, before editing was completed. Due to this, one will never know which would have been the final version the director might have chosen for his movie, as what can be seen on the screens is the untouched version of the materials selected before his death.

relevant due to the fact that the encounter between the two cultures is used by the director as a pretext for revealing the Romanians' stereotypes regarding their own culture and the American one, as well as for illustrating how the Romanians' imaginary construction of the American reality can influence their expectations and behaviour.

The methodological approach relies mainly on the theory of stereotyping, first formulated in its modern psychological and social form by the American journalist Walter Lippman. Part of the analysis will also be supported by making use of Lucian Boia's comments about the Romanians' representation of themselves in their relation with the foreigner/ the Other.

Keywords: national stereotypes, foreigner/ Other.

## **Pedagogy and Ritual in Andrei Codrescu's *The Poetry Lesson***

**Daniela Mihaela Călinescu**

Supervisor: prof. dr. Lidia Vianu

### **PEDAGOGY AND RITUAL IN ANDREI CODRESCU'S *THE POETRY LESSON* – Abstract**

Andrei Codrescu's *The Poetry Lesson* comes as an epitaph written for himself, for his former students and for his future readers, in which he pedagogically and ritualistically instructs on poetry writing,

poetry experiencing and poetically living. *The Poetry Lesson* is a book that exhibits Codrescu's preference for performance, transcendence, mystic, ritual, only that this time he assumes the identity of a teacher that aims at preserving mainly the avant-gardist most important writers by assigning them as Ghost-Companions to his students attending his "Intro to Poetry Class". Codrescu's pedagogy does hint at Harold Bloom's theory on the *influence* that precursors have on the new generations of poetry writers, only that the former finds poetry writing a craft that any of his students could learn, while the latter finds that this craft is the appanage of the giants.

Keywords: pedagogy, influence, ritual, performance.

# **A la recherche du “joli cadavre” dans la pièce “*Le mot progrès dans la bouche de ma mère sonnait terriblement faux*” par Matei Vişniec**

**Mariana-Simona Tomescu**

Directeur de thèse: Prof. dr. Radu Toma

## **LOOKING FOR “THE FANCY DEAD BODY” IN MATEI VIŞNIEC’S PLAY *THE WORD PROGRESS IN MY MOTHER’S MOUTH SOUNDED TERRIBLY WRONG* – Abstract**

This paper aims to determine the importance of the corpse in the performance of funeral rituals. Thus, I will analyze Matei Vişniec’s play, *The word progress in my mother’s mouth sounded terribly wrong*. This is the drama of a refugee family, somewhere in the Balkans after the last war of the twentieth century. The physical boundaries of a new country close the couple's wanderings in search of the corpse of their son, a victim of the war. We will deal with past versus present oppositions: on one hand, traditions, family and community value, the right to commemorate one’s dead, and on the other hand, the new society of capitalism and commercialism. One now sells skulls, bones, shabby clothes belonging to a dead person in order to “compose a pretty corpse” for families who have not found the corpse of their lost relative. My analysis is focused on the importance of maintaining the memory of the dead in the affirmation of a sense of identity, family and country. This is achieved by burying the corpse of the deceased and by the existence of a grave to visit. Yet, what happens if the corpse is missing?

Keywords: dead body, mortuary anomy, bereavement, grave, funeral ritual.