Acta Universitatis Sapientiae

Communicatio
Volume 4, 2017

Contents

RESEARCH – CASE STUDIES

Linguistic and Non-Linguistic Elements in Detecting (Hungarian) Fake News

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Abstract: Fake news texts often show clear signs of the deceptive nature; still, they are shared by many users on Facebook. What could be the reason for this? The paper tries to answer the question by collecting the linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of fake news. Linguistic characteristics include among others the exaggerating, sensational title, the eye-catching, tabloid-style text, the correct or incorrect use of terms, and the fake URLs imitating real websites; non-linguistic characteristics are expressive pictures often featuring celebrities, the use of all caps, excessive punctuation, and spelling mistakes. The corpus was compiled using snowball sampling: manipulative news not originating from big news portals were collected from the social networking website Facebook. The aim of the study is to identify the characteristics of Hungarian fake news in comparison to the English ones and to elaborate a system of aspects which help identify fake news.

Keywords: post-truth society, fake news, manipulation, social media, netlinguistics

1. Introduction

"*HEADS UP! REALLY DANGEROUS TEA IS SOLD RIGHT OVER THE COUNTER! IT'S VERY POPULAR, YOU PROBABLY ALSO HAVE A PACKET IN THE KITCHEN BUT YOU SHOULD NEVER EVEN TRY IT! Throw it out or bring it back to the store immediately if you have bought one! It's the most popular tea on supermarket shelves! Here's the full heads-up message >>>>>*"

This is an article headline from a Hungarian website, an obvious example of clickbait. The exaggerations and the uppercase letters used in the text are (or should be) clear signs of the deceptive nature of the article; still, it was shared by many users on Facebook. What could be the reason for this? The paper tries to

answer the question by collecting the linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of fake news. The corpus was compiled using snowball sampling: manipulative news not originating from big news portals were collected from the social networking website Facebook. This time, political and lifestyle type news were not distinguished. This study ignored the potential fake news of otherwise trusted news portals and "alternative facts". However, concealed sites (i.e. sites containing news of better linguistic quality reached via non-suspicious links) can be problematic when selecting articles for the corpus. The aim of the study is, on the one hand, to identify the characteristics of Hungarian fake news and, on the other hand, to elaborate a system of aspects which help identify fake news.

2. Fake News and Associated Concepts

Back in 2002, well before the fake news problem reached its current level, James E. Katz and Ronald E. Rice wrote the following: "Sites […] can propagate any rumour, assertion, or babble no matter how ludicrous, irrational, stupid, or hurtful. Any lie can be presented as truth. (On the other hand, people are allowed to post any truth or helpful comment as well […])" (Katz–Rice, 2002: 311). These remarks have remained absolutely relevant even 15 years later, in 2017.

Online knowledge is not always reliable: the author, the sources, and the recency are often unknown, and the information is often uncontrolled, which means that anyone can publish anything. There can be misleading, pseudo-scientific, and sometimes outright harmful views on the Internet, which inadvertent readers can easily take for granted. The sources of knowledge have changed, and so Internet users have to develop a critical mind, a skill for the critical evaluation of information as part of their new media competence (Veszelszki, 2017a; 2017b). In fact, Andreas Schleicher, the Education Director of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) goes even further, saying that "schools should teach young people about how to identify 'fake news'" (Coughlan, 2017). According to Schleicher, this kind of soft skill should be part of the global competencies and serves to counter the echo chamber/filter bubble effects.

Fake news are generally grouped into two categories based on the intentionality of their propagation: "fake news could be false information deliberately circulated by those who have scant regard for the truth but hope to advance particular (often extreme) political causes and make money out of online traffic. Or it could be false information circulated by journalists who don't realise it's false" (W2). It should be noted here that fake news are not (only and not primarily) propagated by journalists.

Fake news have more to do with the concepts of Internet frauds (phishing, spam, hoax, urban legends, and clickbait) and news parodies. In the following, I will briefly describe the two categories.

According to Theresa Heyd (2013: 387), Internet frauds can be visual (such as neatly or badly manipulated, photoshopped images), but normally they are based on discourse, that is verbal communication. Such frauds can be analysed along two lines: whether their purpose is profit making or entertainment. Heyd (2013: 389–390) classifies spam and phishing into the first group. **Spam** is unsolicited e-mail containing false or misleading information. **Phishing**, on the other hand, is the practice of fraudulently obtaining important data (passwords, login credentials) from users by simulating a trusted identity (such as an online banking interface). Both spam and phishing can have serious security and financial consequences.

The second group in Heyd's classification does not involve any financial risk, it rather has psychosocial implications: forwarding fake news is a sign of digital illiteracy and ignorance. Hoaxes belong to this category.

Hoax (with a financially deceptive purpose: scam) is purposely fabricated authentic-looking news with false or at least problematic information, which tends to go viral and is intended to have a humorous effect or to deceive others (Fenyvesi, 2016). "Hoaxes typically exploit users' naivety to dupe them into voluntarily forwarding and reposting them to their friends" (Fenyvesi, 2016: 445). So, hoax is the virtual form of gossip (Szvetelszky, 2002) and forms part of digital folklore (Balázs, 2015; Heyd, 2013; Veszelszki, 2011). Initially, online hoaxes were disseminated in e-mails, but now they are typically shared in social media (early examples of hoax: Aczél, 2017). "Classic e-mail virus hoaxes usually warn the recipients of non-existent security threats which will arrive via email" (Fenyvesi, 2016: 449). Prize hoaxes promise to reward all participants if the message reaches a specific number of users. Charity hoaxes and empathy hoaxes use one of the two main narratives, the "sick child" or the "lost child". Further types of hoax include fake advertisements, urban legends, pseudo-hoaxes imitating the style of fake news with the intent to have a humorous effect (Heyd, 2008), and pseudoscientific hoaxes putting the scientific world to the test (cf. the famous Sokal hoax: Sokal, 2008; Boghossian, 1996; Weinberg, 1996).

Hoaxes prototypically exploit people's goodwill and readiness to help. The persuasive strategies used to trick the recipients into forwarding the message including the following: providing help to small children or lovely animals (*Three-month baby needs rare blood type*), raising awareness of viruses *(This new virus destroys your computer. Warn your friends, too!)*, reference to apparently credible sources (lawyer friend, large company), pseudo-scientific evidence, offering money (*XY pays you one dollar for each forwarded message.*), threatening with bad luck (*Send this to at least 8 people or face 8 years of bad luck in love.*).

The way social networking websites display news and how users read them also contribute to the spread of hoaxes: on Facebook, the largest social networking website,[1] information from other websites are displayed with the headline, a large

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1   Facebook has more than 2 billion users in Q3 2017 (W8).
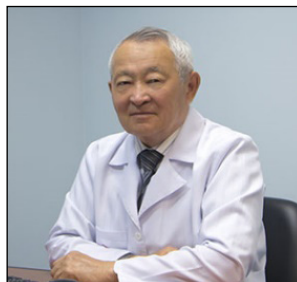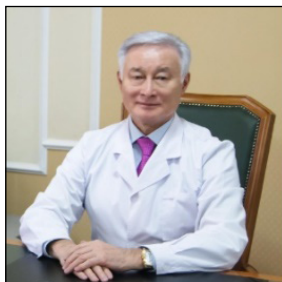
Images 1–2. The experts of the "Parasitology Institute"
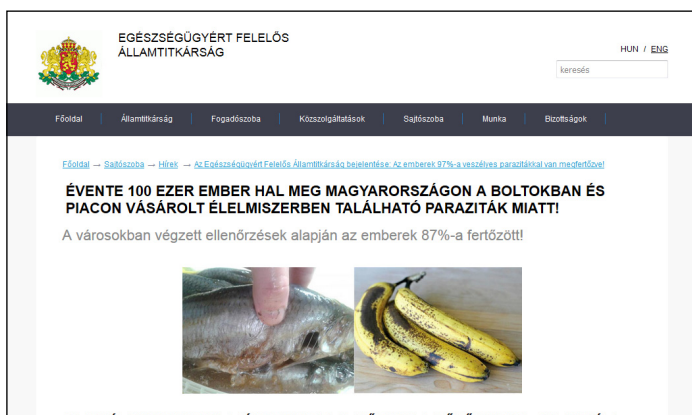

Image 3. The fake website of the State Secretariat

Image 4. Subpage content on the fake website

Image 5. The real website of the State Secretariat for Healthcare
(15 March 2017)

picture, and perhaps the lead of the article. The typical headline is stunning, the picture egregious, and the lead mysterious. Many users do not even open the link (which may as well lead to a phishing or clickbait site) but send it on without thinking, thus spreading false information of fraudulent websites.

Urban legends represent a separate sub-type of fake news: they may have some element of truth to them, but all in all they are hoax-like stories, accounts and scare-news, like folklore (Veszelszki, 2011).

Fake news websites usually request users to click or share articles before reading them in order to view them, but sometimes the articles are not even displayed after the click/share (so their only purpose was to get the click/share, what they have achieved). If the article, picture, or video is displayed, while viewing, the user inadvertently shares spams on his or her Facebook page. The true intent behind such messages is usually to boost online advertising revenue by higher click-through rates. The goal of the so-called **clickbait** sites is to produce: "titles that manipulate or coerce readers into visiting the site" (W4).

Clickbait sites often fabricate pseudoscientific or politically misleading articles and publish them as real news; other times, they present news taken from other sites without permission. This kind of news presentation qualifies as manipulation for several reasons. Manipulation is a type of influence aimed at influencing others' ideas, opinions, emotions, and behaviour (Falyuna, in Veszelszki et al., 2017). Manipulation is related to persuasion but with the huge difference that the target person is usually not aware of being manipulated (Falyuna, 2016). Manipulative strategies also include making false allegations and statements (Árvay, 2007; Falyuna, 2016). According to Sissela Bok, lie belongs to the wider

concept of deception; it is a deliberately misleading piece of information presented as a statement (Bok, 1983: 39).

By contrast, **news parody**, or satire is not necessarily deceptive or manipulative; the exaggerations used in them usually reveal their true nature (however, sometimes, Facebook users take ironic-satirical articles seriously and share them as real ones). Instead of deceit, news parodies rather intend to entertain others and caricature political or public events or figures. Their essence is to imitate the style, language, and news structure of news media. In Hungary, there is one website completely dedicated to satirical news (Hírcsárda) and even a frivolous political party, the Two-Tailed Dog Party, which uses the same mechanism (though it is increasingly concerned with real issues as well).

3. Methodology: Corpus Analysis

The corpus was compiled using snowball sampling: I collected the news shared by my friends on Facebook, checked their link against several lists of fake news websites, and if the linked site was listed, I copied the article into the corpus along with four other articles recommended on the same webpage. I always clicked on the first recommended headline without making any distinction between the texts. Using this method, 30+1 texts were collected for examination. The corpus comprised nearly 9,500 words (more than 70,000 characters).

The additional one text may be particularly instructive: one of the recommended articles – compared to which the other texts look almost innocent – directed to a scaremongering and phishing website. The article discussed in detail the various forms of occurrence of parasites in an overly descriptive and naturally (?) deceptive manner illustrated with horrifying images. The storytelling copied the "problem followed by solution" model: the long-winded introduction (an interview with "Dr Adorján Kovács, Director of the Parasitology Institute" and "Prof. Dr Kálmán Fekete, Expert of the Parasitology Institute", with photos)[2] was followed by the proposed medical treatment, more specifically, the presentation of a product called "Bactefort". The article claimed that the clinical tests supported by figures and photos were supervised by the State Secretariat for Healthcare. However, the link of the State Secretariat directed to a phishing page where all further links led to Bactefort advertisements. (The real website of the State Secretariat is inserted below for comparison.) This was the point where I stopped following and examining the links, as when I wanted to close one of the subpages, the computer told me in human voice: "Are you sure you want to close the page?" In fear of exposing my computer to viruses, I turned off my computer.

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2   Due to the untraceability of online information, the interviewed people can be real professionals, outsiders, or fake professionals with real or fake academic titles (cf. Falyuna, 2017).

4. Findings

4.1. Linguistic Elements

4.1.1. Headlines

The headline functions as an independent communication unit, but it also forms part of the text immediately following it. Thus, it has two main functions: the metatextual function, which relates to the text as a whole (it is a simple representation of the complex text and can even live a separate life), and its predictive function, which points at the content of the text (Tolcsvai Nagy, 2001: 325). As headlines play a key role in winning potential readers, they are discussed in detail below.

The headlines of the examined articles are without exception exaggerated, sensational, and eye-catching, or rather "click-catching". In each case, they had an explanatory character also marked by their length: the shortest one comprised five words and the longest one was 18 words long in Hungarian (1).

> (1) *His friends laughed at him for buying a hard drinker's apartment. But the result of the renovation left everyone speechless!*

From a textological point of view, the headline deictically points at the text and metonymically represents it (Tolcsvai Nagy, 2001: 327). The deixis pointing outside the text and coreference used in the world of texts can make headlines enigmatic (2–3). This is also a tool to attract readers' attention and persuade them to open the article identified by the headline.

> (2) *This is what your fingerprints say about you!*

> (3) *This is how young girls get robbed! Draw our children's attention to prevent tragedy!*

Part of the headlines tries to shock, horrify, or scare the readers outright to trick them into clicking (4–5).

> (4) *BRUTAL surgical mistake! She went in to give birth but came out with no legs.*

> (5) *Patient was declared dead but a few minutes later rose from the bed in Gyula Hospital.*

Headlines providing apparently important and allegedly official information (6–7) or raising awareness of health risks and food to avoid or giving advice (8–12) all aim to get the message shared and propagated.

> (6)   *CHANGES IN PHARMACIES! DON'T EXPECT THE PRESCRIPTION >>> HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL GET!*

> (7)   *Police announcement with photo! 2 migrants have escaped. They are very dangerous!; You may receive a package via registered mail. Don't even consider signing the return receipt and taking over the package!*

> (8)   *You drink it every day without suspecting that it can cause breast cancer!*

> (9)   *This is why Chinese garlic is dangerous! Better read this!*

> (10) *It's more toxic than sugar or salt, still consumed by many on a daily basis!*

> (11) *Attention! Warning! Really dangerous tea is sold right over the counter! It's very popular. If you also have a packet, you should never even try it!*

> (12) *Dr Gábor Zacher's public announcement! Please, share so that everyone knows about this!*

Headlines not only implicitly but also explicitly urge users to share the articles (13). Messages calling for help play on readers' benevolence (14).

> (13) *Tonight's full moon – share and soon your wish will come true.*

> (14) *S.O.S. Balázs needs blood for a life-saving operation as 60% of his body was burned.*

The mechanism of action behind story-starter and crime-story headlines (15), pseudoscientific news (16–19), and fake political news (20) is based on curiosity. Listicles are typical clickbaits (21–22).

> (15) *Troubling details: This was the last message of the missing Hungarian teenager.*

(16) *7,000-year-old corpse of a Hungarian girl was found by pipe workers in Szarvas.*

(17) *Neuroscientists created a song which can reduce anxiety by 65%.*

(18) *Hidden picture found behind the Mona Lisa.*

(19) *27 Latin American countries to introduce Transcendental Meditation.*

(20) *Transylvania to secede from Romania.*

(21) *These two-sentence horror stories will chill the blood in your veins.*

(22) *Common decorating mistake you should absolutely avoid!*

Naturally, it is almost impossible to provide a comprehensive list of headline types, and there can be overlaps between them too (e.g. the article appealing to charity can also request sharing, 23).

(23) *Boy who saved 15 students' lives now needs our HELP! SHARE!*

This time, the corpus contained no headlines with the expression "breaking news", which is otherwise quite typical, but the intended impact is the same in the case of words like "attention" or "warning", which did occur (24).

(24) *Attention! Warning! Really dangerous tea is sold right over the counter! It's very popular; if you also have a packet, you should never even try it!*

In certain cases, the headline is only loosely connected to the subsequent text. *His friends laughed at him for buying a hard drinker's apartment. But the result of the renovation left everyone speechless!* This headline is followed by an interior decorating "guide" with 17 random photos, which were definitely not taken of the same apartment. Not even elements of the eye-catching story in the headline (hard drinker, apartment purchase, friends' reaction) appear in the body text.

The headline usually aims to provoke emotions and thus increase the chance of tricking the (unsuspecting) users into sharing the content through social media (which generates profit for scammers). In relation to this, Brooke Binkowski, managing editor of the hoax-busting website Snopes, stated: "They are not just written to inform. I keep telling people if you read a headline and (after reading it)

you're ticked off and you're angry and you're frustrated, then double check that source because you need to know whether or not it's legitimate" (Criss, 2017).

4.1.2. Terms

"Terms carry the special knowledge possessed by professionals but not (necessarily) by outsiders" (Falyuna, 2017). This is exactly why they have a convincing effect in the pseudoscientific discourse, where terms are usually "vague and undefined" or "taken from science but used in a different meaning" (Hargitai, 2012: 8).

In the following instance of fake news (25), the expressions in bold look like real terms (mostly foreign words in the Hungarian) and try to raise confidence in the text.

> (25) 27 Latin American countries to introduce Transcendental Meditation (headline)
>
> *In the framework of an educational **rehabilitation program**, 27 Latin American countries are going to introduce the highly acclaimed knowledge-based educational programme, which includes **Transcendental Meditation**. Both students and **teachers** will practice **TM** in school time as part of the **curriculum**.* (lead)
>
> *Father Gabriel Mejia, President of the Latin American Federation of **Therapeutic** Communities called on the leaders of all Latin American countries at the most recent **congress**. The foundation Fundación Hogares Claret led by the Columbian priest operates 54 social and educational centres in eight cities in Columbia. The centres give home to nearly 10,000 disadvantaged **marginalized** Columbian children – all of whom practice the **Transcendental Meditation**. In his call, Father Mejia referred to his 30-year-long experience.*
>
> *The priest's proposal was enthusiastically welcomed, and several countries officially applied for the **programme**. Organized by Father Mejia, an independent **coordination** organization was established. Currently, they are organizing the railway transport of TM instructors.* (body text)

4.1.3. Style, Linguistic Quality

The language of the texts can be news-like, imitating printed and online press (25). They are also characterized by the informal, almost personal style of tabloids including the use of T-form words (26–27).

> (26) Kíváncsi vagy, milyen? Nem hiszed el, hogy működik? Hallgass bele!
>   [Are you curious how it works? Unsure if it works at all? Just have

a listen to it!] – where 'vagy', 'hiszed', and 'hallgass' are informal T-forms.

(27) Ha ezt iszod, fokozott a kockázat egy tanulmány szerint. [If you drink this, you are exposed to a high risk, study says.] – where 'iszod' is the T-form of the word 'inni' (to drink).

In the latter case, the lead does not follow Lasswell's traditional 5W+1H formula but elaborates on the topic introduced in the headline (28–29). This solution functions as a hook to lure the reader into the text with the headline-lead-picture-URL combination when sharing the article in the social media.

(28) headline – This is what your fingerprints say about you!
lead – Everyone has them, and they are unique (apart from identical twins); so, they are excellent for identifying your main personal characteristics.

(29) headline – This is why Chinese garlic is dangerous! Better read this!
lead – Humanity has been passionately using this small vegetable comprised of cloves and having a distinctive taste for 6,000 years now. Garlic is so popular that every year one day, 19 April, is dedicated worldwide to it as the oldest plant used for seasoning.

A call to share in itself can give rise to suspicion. On two of the examined six pages, each and every article ended with a call to share, written in bold and capital letters (30–31).

(30) Please, share this to reach as many people as possible!

(31) PLEASE, SHARE THIS WITH OTHERS! THANK YOU! YOU CAN LEAVE A COMMENT BELOW.

The political texts in the corpus display open sarcasm or irony (32).

(32) Yesterday evening, the Momentum Movement basked in the glory of its success as it managed to submit another referendum question to Hungary's National Elections Office concerning the CEU. And guess what: I learned from the morning news that its dearest ally in the fight, the sleepy Democratic Party, was quicker this time and submitted the very same question at the very same place.

The linguistic quality of the texts is well below the standard of written press, in terms of both style and spelling. There are a number of particularly remarkable typos in the texts (33).

> (33) Óriási változás köszönt be a magyar gyógr gyógyszertárakban [Huge changes are about to come in Hungarian phamr pharmacies.]

The headline often says much about the linguistic quality (34). The "a Gyula a kórházban" structure may refer to both the Gyula Hospital and to the character. The relative pronoun *aki* [who] also fails to reflect the logic: *a kórházban aki* [in the hospital who].

> (34) Halottnak nyilvánítottak egy beteget, a Gyula a kórházban aki percekkel később felkelt! [Literally: A patient was declared dead, but the Gyula in the hospital who a few minutes later rose from the bed.]

Spelling mistakes may also cause ambiguity or misunderstanding (35–36).

> (35) Szőkésben van 2 migráns! [2 migrants have escaped or 2 migrants are in the blondish] (szőkés [blondish] vs szökés [escape])

> (36) Érdekesség a közéleti hölgyek sorrendjének elején sincs, hiszen azt Lévai Anikó […] vezeti, szorosan a sarában Schmidt Máriával [There's nothing unexpected in the list of the most influential Hungarian women (…) Anikó Lévai takes the lead followed by Mária Schmidt close on her heels] (sarában [in her mud] vs sarkában [on her heels]).

The overuse of punctuation marks and the use of all caps can also be suspicious (37–39).

> (37) There's no protection from it, you can only prevent it. If you go to bars, nightclubs and parties, never leave your drink unattended and only accept unopened bottles! Unfortunately, sometimes it is slipped into seemingly intact bottles…. The festival season is on, so it is highly recommended to be very careful as you only have one life!!

> (38) now please pay attention!!! Drum roll!

> (39) DOCTORS FORGOT TO CHECK IT!!! (written in bold)

4.2. Non-Linguistic Signs

4.2.1. Content

The shared materials can be classified into three main types: 1. pseudoscientific, 2. tabloid and call to action, and 3. political (fake) news.

The descriptive and also qualifying concept of **pseudoscience** relates to statements, teachings, theories, practices, and institutions which allegedly deal with science, but in reality their activity fails to comply with the basic requirements of science (cf. falsification, intersubjective controllability, reproducibility, and openness to criticism).

According to Sokal (2006), the critical spirit is one of the most important characteristics of science: "the commitment to the incessant testing of assertions through observations and/or experiments […] and to revising or discarding those theories that fail the test" (Sokal, 2006: 288). By contrast, the advocates of pseudoscience reject every kind of criticism and "claim to be true in an objective sense" (Sokal, 2006: 289). They also consider themselves to be scientific and tie their statements to real scientific findings.

Further characteristic features of pseudoscience (illustrated with examples taken from the corpus):

1. Anachronistic thinking (making allegations that science has (long) refuted):

> (40) To facilitate the Full Moon's energetic work, perform the following cleansing ritual […] The easiest way to clean your apartment's aura and your aura is to burn sage. Walk around your home and in spirit request your environment to be cleansed energetically. Then follow the line of your body with the burner and request energetic cleansing for yourself as well. […] The practice of letting go with Archangel Michael. Light a white candle. Pray to Archangel Michael as follows:

2. Searching for secrets (e.g. UFO, Bigfoot, spontaneous combustion);

> (41) Based on health checks in urban areas, 87% of the population is infected! // Which type of food needs to be checked in the fridge? Interview with the Director of the Parasitology Institute! // Editor's note: the latest figures published by the World Health Organization (WHO) show that parasites in the human body are responsible for a large part of deadly diseases ranging from hepatitis and ulcer to cancerous tumours. Every year, 15 million people die because of

the parasites. The infection is so widespread that they can be found practically in almost every person.

3. Reference to myths (the older the tale the more convincing it becomes);

(42) Certain legends hold that Leonardo hid a reference on Mona Lista [sic orig.] to the resting place of the Holy Grail or the holy artefact itself (as nobody has ever seen it, and there is no painting or photo of it). // Other sources say that "he who can see behind Monsa [sic orig.] Lisa" will discover the secret of eternal life. Anyhow, the discovery of the hidden picture only added to the guesswork in relation to the famous and enigmatic painting.

4. Biased handling of evidence (refers to evidence supporting its statement but ignores those contradicting it);

(43) Incredible! Hidden portrait found behind Mona Lisa, Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, thanks to a special lighting method – BBC News Online reported on the stunning discovery of a French researcher. […] The Louvre Museum did not comment on the announcement as it does not form part of the official research activities.

5. Irrefutable hypotheses (e.g. Creationism);

(44) In many cases in China, garlic farms are irrigated with unpurified waste water […] // Gamma radiation is also applied to make the plants suitable for travelling several thousands of miles. These substances damage the garlic plants […]. Instead, buy garlic produced in Hungary, it is much more worth it.

6. Seeming similarities (uses elements of proven and accepted theories in different meaning and context);

(45) Kaiser Permanente's research study proved that women who consumed full-fat products after having been diagnosed with breast cancer had died in higher numbers than those who switched to low-fat dairy products after the diagnosis.

7. Explanation with scenarios instead of facts;

(46) Anxiety is one of the world's most terrible feelings. When suffering from anxiety, people are not in control of themselves and unable to fully master their body. // Many people sweat, their heart rate increases, they are short of breath, without any external cause. It has long been suspected that the solution must be in the head, in the mind. // In 1926, even Sigmund Freud discussed the phenomenon, but to date no effective solution has been found.

8. The allegation that facts are only interpretations;

(47) I personally have full trust in WHO statistics and I can say that our research at the Parasitology Institute confirms their figures. 92% of deaths are caused by parasitic infections. The presence of parasites in the human body are behind most "natural causes of death".

9. Immunity to criticism (as a basic pseudoscientific criterion) (Casti, 1990; cf. Pigliucci, 2010).

(48) The easiest way to clean your apartment's aura and your aura is to burn sage. Walk around your home and in spirit request your environment to be cleansed energetically. Then follow the line of your body with the burner and request energetic cleansing for yourself as well.

As examples (40) to (48) indicate, all these characteristics can be found in the examined allegedly scientific articles. The majority of the texts in the corpus belong to the pseudoscientific type (as categories overlap, there is no point in providing figures).

The second category of **tabloids and calls to action** includes messages with sensational elements, searching for missing people, asking for help, calling attention to dangers, and listicles.

1. Sensation:

(49) BRUTAL surgical mistake! She went in to give birth but came out with no legs!; Patient was declared dead but a few minutes later rose from the bed in Gyula Hospital.

2. Missing persons:

> (50) 15-year-old girl Marianna Dezső missing from Budapest. Last seen on 8 March! According to Together for Missing Children Foundation,[3] she went home from her friend at Örs vezér tere.[4] She last chatted with her mom on Facebook, saying she was very scared as there were many strange people on the tram. She never arrived home and is not responding to the messages any more…

3. Asking for help:

> (51) S.O.S. Balázs needs blood for a life-saving operation, as 60% of his body was burned.

> (52) Boy who saved 15 students' lives now needs our HELP! SHARE!

4. Awareness raising:

> (53) This is how teenage girls are kidnapped for prostitution nowadays. If you get into this situation, it will probably be too late. Let's prevent tragedy by calling girls' and mothers' attention to this. Unfortunately, police can do nothing in 90% of the cases.

> (54) Police announcement with photo! 2 migrants have escaped. They are really dangerous.

> (55) Attention! Warning! Really dangerous tea is sold right over the counter! It's very popular; if you also have a packet, you should never even try it!

5. Listicles:

> (56) A common decorating mistake you should absolutely avoid!

The third thematic category is **politics**. Originally, only relatively few political (fake) news were taken into the corpus. The reason for this is that the topic of the initial texts (esotericism, health, interior design, etc.) determined the topic of the recommended articles: the initial corpus of 25 texts only contained two

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3   The link actually directs to the foundation's Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/tear.kampany/?fref=ts.

4   Here the link leads to a Wikipedia page: https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%96rs_vez%C3%A9r_tere.

(remotely) political articles. One deals with the migration crisis but in the form of police announcements (57).

> (57) Police announcement with photo! 2 migrants have escaped. They are really dangerous.

The other one can only be considered political because of the political figure mentioned in its headline, but it conveys no actual political message: the political figure is Hungary's Prime Minister. The only content of the news is the following: Viktor Orbán is ill. The attached picture (machine gun soldiers guarding a building) and the headline is specifically sensationalist (58). The interrogative sentence makes the message less certain and less accountable. To make the article sound more authentic, its author put the words into the mouth of Bertalan Havasi, head of the Press Office of the Prime Minister but without providing any link or indicating any date, which greatly reduces the article's credibility.

> (58) Tatabánya hospital is guarded by machine gun soldiers! Something really weird must be going on here! Is Viktor Orbán brought here?

Since, however, political themes prototypically play a key role in fake news, the first sample of 25 items was enriched through another sampling: starting from articles whose headlines mentioned the Hungarian Prime Minister (59), five additional texts were collected.

> (59) Viktor Orbán's "hearth tax" – Friends coming for a barbecue and you want to light a fire? Pay 3,000 forints each time!

Each text is critical towards the Hungarian government (though it is not clear whether this criticism comes from the left or the right) with an expressly ironic or sarcastic tone (60).

> (60) Once you have received the green light for your national grill party, you only have to memorize the legal regulations on lighting a fire, knowing that you can be fined 60,000 forints for even the smallest mistake.

Apart from the offensive, sarcastic tone, the texts in the political thematic corpus were characterized by the overuse of commonplaces (61).

> (61) For the time being, it's still up in the air, you can't tell whether the new character will cause a great stir from the left or the right, but certainly it's only a matter of time.

4.2.2. Characters

Political articles raise awareness by referring to well-known public figures (62).
The name with the highest occurrence is Viktor Orbán, Hungary's Prime Minister,
always coming at the front of the headline (63–65).

> (62) The net is closing on Sebestyén Gorka, Trump's far-rightist Hungarian
>   adviser

> (63) Orbán's "love affair" in Forbes! Who is the most influential woman
>   in this country?

> (64) Viktor Orbán's hearth tax"…

> (65) Orbánian outsourcing – bureaucracy reduction is only bullshit.

By contrast, the characters of non-political articles in the corpus (if any) are all
unnamed everyday people (such as *the 53-year-old Gyula*, with the exception of
the famous Hungarian toxicologist Gábor Zacher). In fact, in certain cases, it is
even questionable whether the name and position indicated next to the picture
in the text are real (66).

> (66) *Dr Adorján Kovács, Director of the Parasitology Institute. Clinical experience
>   – 46 years*[5]

4.2.3. URL, Links, Traceability

Fake news sites can be detected by having a look at their URL. Completely
meaningless headlines are especially suspicious. Examples of more sophisticated
names include sites promoting content consumption (e.g. *ezt-figyeld.com*, *figyuzz.
net*, *lajkolj.info*), sites evaluating content (e.g. *best-hir.com*, *csakneked.info*, *www.
elkepeszto.net*, *erdekeshirek.info, exkluziv-videok.com*, *ezerdekes.eu*, *frenetikus.
com*), and sites whose names resemble that of real news or tabloid portals (e.g.

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5   The topic is also covered by the Facebook page "Kamu termékek és szolgáltatások" [Fake products
     and services] (W6). One of the comments says: "Dr Attila Kállai, the bigwig of the non-existent
     National Parasitology Institute, who has published so many things. How unfortunate that a Swiss
     professor looks just like him." However, the efficiency of the fake news factory is clearly shown
     by the following comment allegedly written by a nurse (!), containing interesting linguistic
     characteristics. "These parasites do really exist in the human body and surely they can be cured,
     only nobody is interested in it. We rather spend the tremendous amount of money on drugs
     with no effect; I am convinced that this is effective!!! Just remember the time when Béres Drops
     appeared on the market!!! It was soon under fire by the whole medical world. I think today there
     are very few households without it. I was only at the beginning of my nursing career!"

index.hu > index-blog.net; *origo.hu > origo.blog.hu*, *hirorigo.net*, *origo-hirek. net*, *origoblog.net*, *origo-online.net*; *femcafe.hu > fm3cafe.hu*; *24.hu > hir-24. info*, *hir27.in; hirstart.hu > hir-start.net*, *hir-start.com*; *hirado.hu > hirado-online. net*, *hirado.top*). Website names focusing on knowledge can be suspicious (e.g. *szabadonebredok.info*, *tudasfaja.com*, *ujvilagtudat.blogspot.hu*). Banned websites almost immediately reappear in a slightly mutated form (e.g. *mindenegybenblog. hu*, *mindenegyben-blog.com*, *mindenegybenblog.net*, *mindenegyben-blog.net*, *mindenegyhelyen.info*, *egyazegyben.com*).

One means of online source criticism is to trace it back, that is check its origins. To enhance the deceptive effect, fake news sometimes contain links to sources, but these usually redirect to gossip sites (Propeller), tabloid sites (Blikk), or even official sites (Hungarian News Agency, Ministry, State Secretariat). These are only remotely related to the topic (cf. the message about the missing girl where a Wikipedia page was hyperlinked to the spot of disappearance, Örs vezér tere). Sometimes, fake news portals cross-refer to each other and build a network of reference to increase credibility (e.g. the site *A világ titkai* refers to *Tudnodkell. info* or *A tudás fája* to *ketkes.com* as their source).

Besides the indication of the sources, the date and the author's name can also be informative when determining the credibility of the article (e.g. of fake announcements about missing people tend to circulate on the Internet for years). The major part of the examined texts completely failed to name the author, only the name of the site (e.g. *Mindenegyben Blog*, *24/7*) or a nickname (e.g. dr rock) appears in the author field. In the political news, the same author's name appears three times, but clicking on it only reveals the articles written by the author and no other information. The impressum of *Mindenegyben blog* eloquently says nothing: *The blog currently has two admins: a boy and a girl* (W7).

4.2.4. Pictures

Apart from the esoteric articles of *Mindenegyben blog*, all articles contain at least one (but up to 18–20) picture. The text on parasites uses particularly many pictures about horrific parasites and fake physicians.

The following types can be identified based on the use of pictures and on the relationship between text and picture.

1. pictures are only remotely related to the text (*Image 6*),
2. illustration striking the keynote (*Image 7*),
3. picture underpins or completes the content of the text (*Image 8*),
4. picture about the person mentioned in the text (*Image 9*), and
5. text written for the photo collection (*Image 10*).

Image 6. Illustration for the article on neuroscience

Image 7. Illustration for the article on horror stories

Image 8. Illustration for the article on fingerprint patterns

Image 9. Illustration for the article on drugs, Gábor Zacher toxicologist

Image 10. Illustration for the article on interior design (the article features 17 pictures with a one-sentence comment to each)

Picture, text, and lead are displayed on Facebook as follows:

Image 11. Display of news on Facebook

5. Summary

The present study aimed to present the linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of Hungarian fake news through a smaller sample and to create a comprehensive system of criteria for the recognition of fake news. Online guides provide help to spot fake news primarily for young inexperienced users who are considered particularly vulnerable in this respect. However, instead of young users who are increasingly conscious in consuming media content, the focus should be shifted to older generations, who also use the Internet, more specifically Facebook, on a daily basis[6] (Veszelszki, 2016).

In response to the mounting criticism, Facebook has given top priority to the fight against fake news. "Over the past month, Facebook has begun rolling out a […] new addition to the site: a bright red warning label that identifies fake news

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6   The news portal *Index.hu* published a very accurate article on the vulnerability of older people using Facebook alone, which might as well have been published as a sociological study involving participant observation (W5).

stories as 'disputed' and asks you to think twice before sharing them" (Romano, 2017). There are also more and more guides dealing with fake news. Summing them up and completing them with the results of this study, I compiled the following list to help detect fake news:

1. Look closely at the URL.
2. Is the source reliable?
3. Be sceptical of headlines. (Too detailed sensationalist headlines must be handled critically.)
4. Watch for unusual formatting.
5. Check the photos. (If the images are not clearly authentic, such as in the case of missing persons, Google Image Search service can be useful.)
6. Check the author.
7. Check the date.
8. Check the evidence.
9. Look at other reports.
10. Overcome your prejudice.
11. Check the linguistic quality and stylistic characteristics of the text.
12. Is it not a joke? (Joke sites can be misleading.)
13. Some stories are intentionally false.
14. Ask the experts.

It only takes basic IT skills to create a news-portal-looking (blog) site, though very amateurish attempts are easy to spot. More sophisticated, more concealed websites, however, pose a real problem as they publish articles with better linguistic quality under apparently trustworthy links, providing references, date, and author.

Nevertheless, there is further research potential in comparing Hungarian fake news with other misleading texts written in other languages, designed for different audiences. It could also be a promising research direction to explore who are interested in maintaining fake news sites apart from entrepreneurs expecting profit from like-hunting.

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W5 = Hanula, Zsolt 2015: Nem a gyerekeket kell félteni az internettől, hanem a nyugdíjasokat. Index.hu, 2015. 09. 10. http://index.hu/tech/2015/09/10/nem_a_gyerekeket_kell_felteni_az_internettol_hanem_a_nyugdijasokat/ [06. 04. 2017].

W6 = https://m.facebook.com/kamutermekek/posts/480303099025874 [06. 04. 2017].

W7 = http://www.mindenegybenblog.hu/ [06. 04. 2017].

W8 = https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2017/06/two-billion-people-coming-together-on-facebook/ [27. 06. 2017].

Annex

Annex 1: Black list (source: W1, W3)
- 2perc – 2perc.info
- Ajánlom magamat – ajanlom-magamat.com
- Aktív Blog – aktiv-blog.com
- Aktív Hírek – aktiv-hirek.net
- Bakkecske.NET – facebook.com/bakkecske.net
- Best hír – best-hir.com
- Bizony – bizony.eu
- Boroskóla – boroskola.info
- CikkElek – cikkelek.eu
- Csak neked – csakneked.info
- Csúcshatás – csucshatas.eu, szupcsi.eu
- Csumida – csumida.com
- Dinamikus – dinamikus.com
- Egészséges pont – egeszsegespont.hu
- Egy az Egyben – egyazegyben.com
- Éljünk szabadon – eljunkszabadon.co.vu
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- Extrém blog – extremblog.com
- Ez érdekes – ezerdekes.eu
- Ez nem piti – eznempiti.eu
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- Face Nemzedék – face-nemzedek.com
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- First Videó – first-video.net
- FM3 Café – fm3cafe.hu
- Fogjunk össze – fogjunkossze.com
- Frankó – franko.info
- Frenetikus – frenetikus.com
- Friss világ – frissvilag.com
- Globire – globire.info
- Gonosz majom – gonosz-majom.com
- Hétperc – www.hetperc.com
- Hír 24 blog – hir-24.info

- Hír 27 – hir27.in
- Hír Online – hir-online.com / hironline24.net
- Hír Start – hir-start.net, hir-start.com (not: hirstart.hu)
- Híradó Online – hirado-online.net
- Híradó.top – hirado.top
- Hírek online – hirek-online.com
- Hírek.TOP – hirek.top
- Hírexpressz – hirexpressz.top
- Hírjárat – hirjarat.com
- Hírkalap – hirkalap.net
- Hírkert – hirkert.info
- Hírközlő – hirkozlo.com
- Hírlexikon – hirlexikon.eu
- Hírmadár – hirmadar.com
- Hírnap – www.hirnap.info
- Hírorigo – hirorigo.net
- Hírportál – hirportal.info
- Hírszabadság – hirszabadsag.blogspot.com
- Hírtop – hirtop.in
- Hírtrafik – hirtrafik.top
- Hírvilág – hirvilag.co
- HúsosPizza – husospizza.com
- Index Blog – index-blog.net
- Képzavar – kepzavar.info
- Királyvidi – kiralyvidi.eu
- Kiskegyed(-utánzat) – kiskegyed.creatorword.com
- Kukucs – kukucs.info
- KutyaPisti – kutyapisti.eu
- Lájkolj – lajkolj.info
- Lapzárta – lapzarta.com
- Láttadmár? – lattadmar.eu
- Legfrissebb – legfrissebb.info
- Legjava – legjava.com
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- Mai Friss – mai-friss.com
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- Plusz Café – pluszcafe.hu
- Pöpec – popec.net
- Segíthetek – szupertanacsok.blog.hu
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- Szabadon Ébredők – szabadonebredok.info
- Tények 24 – tenyek24.net
- Tények Online – tenyek-online.com
- Top Hírek – tophirek.hu
- Tricikli – tricikli.com
- Tudás Fája – tudasfaja.com
- Tudnodkell – tudnodkel.blogspot.com / tudnodkell.info
- Új Világtudat – ujvilagtudat.blogspot.hu
- Vakarék – vakarek.info
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- Vidámság – vidamsag.postr.hu
- Videó Bázis – video-bazis.com
- Video Line – vidnline.com
- Videó Perc – www.video-perc.net
- VideoJohny – videojohny.eu
- VideoPista – videopista.eu
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- xCore Blog – www.xcore.in

Annex 2: Article headlines

1. Ma esti telihold – oszd meg és hamarosan teljesül a kívánságod.
2. VÁLTOZÁS A GYÓGYSZERTÁRAKBAN! NE VÁRJA A RECEPTET >>> MUTATJUK MIT FOG KAPNI HELYETTE!
3. Aggasztó részletek: Ez volt az eltűnt magyar tini utolsó üzenete.
4. Hétezer éves magyar lány sírjára bukkantak vezetékcsere közben Szarvason.
5. S.O.S Vérre van szüksége az életmentő műtéthez Balázsnak, ugyanis teste 60%-a megégett.
6. Idegkutatók létrehoztak egy olyan dalt, ami 65%-kal képes csökkenteni a szorongást!
7. Ezektől a kétmondatos rémtörténetektől még az ereidben is meghűl majd a vér.
8. Minden nap isszuk, de nem sejtjük, hogy mellrákot okozhat!
9. Ezt árulja el rólad az ujjlenyomatod!
10. Rejtett kép rejtőzik a Mona Lisa mögött.
11. Ezért veszélyes a kínai fokhagyma! Erről jobb, ha tudsz!
12. Mérgezőbb, mint a cukor vagy a só, sokan mégis naponta fogyasztják!
13. 27 latin-amerikai ország vezeti be a Transzcendentális Meditációt.
14. Gyakori lakberendezési hiba, amit semmiképp se kövess el!
15. A barátai csak nevettek rajta, hogy egy alkoholista lakását vette meg. A lakásfelújítás eredménye azonban mindenkit lenyűgözött!
16. 15 diák életét mentette meg a fiú, aki most a SEGÍTSÉGÜNKET kéri! OSSZÁTOK!
17. Dr. Zacher Gábor felhívja a lakosság figyelmét! Kérlek osszátok, hogy mindenki tudjon róla!
18. Így rabolják el a fiatal lányokat! Hívjuk fel gyermekeink figyelmét és előzzük meg a tragédiát!
19. Rendőrségi felhívás fotóval ! Szökésben van 2 migráns! Nagyon veszélyesek!
20. BRUTÁLIS orvosi műhiba! Szülni ment be a nő és láb nélkül ébredt!

21. Halottnak nyilvánítottak egy beteget, a Gyula a kórházban aki percekkel később felkelt!

22. Gépfegyveres katonákkal őrzik a Tatabányai kórházat!Nagy lehet a baj!Orbán Viktort ide hordják?

23. Névre szóló csomagot kaphat! Semmiképpen ne írja alá az átvételi elismervényt és ne vegye át a csomagot!

24. Erdély el fog szakadni Romániától.

25. Figyelem! Vigyázat! Nagyon veszélyes sót hoztak forgalomba! Nagyon népszerű, ha önnél is van belőle semmiképpen ne sózzon belőle!

26. Orbán Viktor "füstadója" – ha tüzet akar gyújtani a saját portáján, mert jönnek a barátok szalonnát sütni? Fizessen minden egyes alkalommal 3000 forintot!

27. Újabb csatamező – Semmiből jött pártkezdemények attakja, és hol van még 2018.

28. Szorul a hurok Gorka Sebestyén, Trump szélsőjobbos magyar tanácsadója nyaka körül.

29. Orbán „nő-ügye" a Forbesban! Ki a legbefolyásosabb asszony e hazában?

30. Orbáni kiszervezés – avagy a bürokráciacsökkentés csak duma.

+ 1 Évente 100 ezer ember hal meg Magyarországon a boltokban és piacon vásárolt élelmiszerben található paraziták miatt!

Strangers of Popular Culture – The Verbal and Pictorial Aesthetics of Mythological Metal Music

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Abstract: Extreme metal music is held to be a destructive genre of popular culture, treated as a pariah for many. Being a seriously misunderstood genre, I would like to highlight that metal music is a result of conscious work process that cannot only be noticed on the level of the music but on the level of verbal and pictorial expressions too. In my paper, I would like to show the working mechanisms of the so-called "(neo)pagan/mythological metal" movement, focusing on the rhetoric side of its mentioned expressions, searching for the ways these bands rewrite ancient myths and legends.

For my research, I will use three main threads: 1) history of religion (looking for the connections of the reception of ancient topics in contemporary society, e.g. New Age Cults and New Religious Movements); 2) reception theory, as the thoughts of Northrop Frye, Wolfgang Iser (1972), and John Fiske (2011) all should help to understand the general processes behind reading and producing texts; 3) subculture studies – e.g. the works of Richard Schusterman and Deena Weinstein (2002) to have a deeper insight to the genres standing on the edge of mass and high culture.

After a general introduction, I would like to demonstrate the above mentioned through some case studies. The chosen mythological cultures are going to be the world of the ancient Middle East (Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Old Testament), the classical Roman world, and the Viking Era, also showing some Hungarian and Romanian examples in the last section. In each section, the following issues should be examined: band and stage names connected to the topic, album titles, lyrics, and album covers. All these together will show us many clear patterns from romantic nostalgia to allegoric concepts, all revolving around the essence of metal music: being a Stranger in a familiar society.

Keywords: extreme metal, reception studies, mythology

1. General Introduction

Thinking of strangers in the world of contemporary society, it might be obvious to search for something that comes from the outer territories of the known or familiar culture in which one lives his/her life. But taking one step closer to or farther from popular and high culture, the world of subcultures may offer many strange phenomena. It may be enough to mention only the most widely acknowledged subcultures like the underground hip-hop and rap, Rastafarianism, hippies, hipsters, fetishists, punks, the many variations of Gothic, and last but not least heavy or extreme metal as well. The main features of a subculture amongst many other things are that the subculture requires a certain interest and taste that differs in their foundations from mainstream popular culture (Dyrendal, 2008: 68–72). This interest and taste may include music, clothing, literature, certain forms of behaviour, etc. In this paper, the main goal is to take a closer look into the world of extreme metal, revolving around the verbal and pictorial aesthetics of musical records originating from a certain corner of metal music: the so-called *mythological metal*.

According to widespread commonplaces from all over Europe, heavy and extreme metal subculture is often identified in the first place with deviant and excessive behaviour, aggression; in the second place, Satanism and political right-wing extremism are listed as well. It may become clear that the above mentioned simplification naturally hides a more complicated picture. The forthcoming paragraphs are going to follow the order hereby listed in accordance to investigate the world of extreme metal. First of all, the most important is to draw the frame for the examination: what is heavy and especially extreme metal, what are the borders of the subculture, and where to place it in time and space. It is just as important to draw up the methodology. Two pillars are going to be presented: history of religion and reception aesthetics. As we are going to work with bands re-interpreting myths and religious phenomena in their music, it is crucial to be aware of both the historical/cultural background and the possible ways of literary analysis. The second would be the main column of this paper regarding the verbal and pictorial aesthetics of mythological metal. Verbal expressions are gathered from band and stage names, album and song titles, and actual lyrics. In this particular case, pictorial aesthetics is going to be examined solely using album covers. After gathering the analysed data, we arrive at a summary to integrate the new findings.

2. Background

2.1. Outlines of Heavy and Extreme Metal

"Heavy metal, genre of rock music that includes a group of related styles that are intense, virtuosic, and powerful. Driven by the aggressive sounds of the distorted electric guitar, heavy metal is arguably the most commercially successful genre of rock music." – states Robert Walser (1999), renowned scholar of the heavy metal scene. As a great percentage of popular music all around the world, heavy metal is also originating from the Afro-American blues tradition of the 1920s and 1930s, such as Robert Johnson or James Brown. The direct prequel to the emergence of heavy metal are the beat and rock 'n' roll movements of the British Isles during the 1950s and 1960s. The two main branches of contemporary popular music, beat (represented by The Beatles) and rock 'n' roll (represented by The Rolling Stones) built a road for the beginning of the 1970s altogether for hard rock and heavy metal (Walser, 1993: 1–11): the "bad boy" image of The Rolling Stones is the prototype of the rebellious rock and metal musicians. It is also important not to forget that with the song "Sympathy for the Devil" the Stones also opened up the mainstream for mystic and occult topics. Some examples of psychedelic rock along with Coven and Black Widow showed this stress on the themes of occultism and witchcraft (with their albums *Witchcraft Destroys Mind and Reaps Souls* and *Sacrifice* respectively). During the English "Blues Boom" (Farley, 2009: 74–79), the end of the 60s called for the children of the working class to build their own subculture. Using the rebellious attributes of the counterculture and the hippie New Wave groups together with traditional patriarchal values, heavy metal was created in the now deindustrialized areas of England, first of all in Birmingham (Moore, 2009: 144–147). Blues- and rock 'n' roll-oriented bands such as Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, the Who, the Kinks, Cream, and even some songs of Queen influenced mostly the *heavy* sound of heavy metal. The harsh sound described above by Walser can be found in its most pure form in the first album of Black Sabbath (1970) called *Black Sabbath*. The classical metal line-up consisting of a guitarist, bass player, drummer, and singer originates from this era as well. Since the birth of heavy metal altogether with the music, the line-up, the audience, etc. altered adjusting to the geographical and chronological features of a certain regional scene. In the beginning, heavy metal was the music of white, male, blue-collar British youngsters; nowadays, it is a global phenomenon, with fans from all social classes and countries (Weinstein, 2002: 96–100).

The core element, namely the usage of the *power chord*, remained since the birth of the genre a representation of power and authority (Walser, 1993: 2–3). Besides heavy metal, the new movement of *extreme metal* developed during the

early 1980s. N.W.O.B.H.M.[1] correlating with punk music showed heavy metal the chance to find new directions (Farley, 2009: 81–82). The new subgenres of thrash, black, death, etc. metal arose from this new, fragmented way searching of N.W.O.B.H.M. (In)famous bands like Celtic Frost (CH), Venom (GB), King Diamond (DK), or Bathory (SE) offered a lower quality in terms of production, in many cases less talented but more raw and extreme ways for representing metal music (Kahn-Harris, 2007: 2–5). Although it can be said that the lyrics are not the main power of work in extreme metal (Weinstein, 2002: 121–126), with the advent of extreme metal, many bands came into focus with lyrics pointing towards certain ideologies and topics to be examined through music.[2] The development of subgenres is not a closed case until recent days.

Deena Weinstein in her study (2002: 31–43) divides metal lyrics into two main groups: *Dionysian* and *Chaotic*. Dionysian topics include earthly delights, e.g. drug consumption or free love. Chaotic represents everything else. It may be useful to offer a segmented categorization for Chaotic topics. The questions of political-social issues,[3] the problems of emotional life, history, or spiritual themes could be named different categories as well. For us now only spiritual themes are interesting, as mythologies and religions take the largest part in these. The term of "mythological metal"[4] refers to all the bands using mythologies as the main inspiration for their lyrics. Although it may not be a usual direction to name a subgenre after its lyrical content, as most of the metal subgenres names are derived from its musical expressions (like thrash, death or, doom metal), it does not lack examples. In the case of "ritual black metal", it can be seen that a branch of bands are gathered under a genre related to their behaviour towards lyrics and performance considering occultism (Granholm, 2013: 17–18). Both traditional black metal bands (e.g. Watain) and retro-psychedelic rock bands (e.g. The Devil's Blood) are considered to be part of the same ritual black metal scene. A two-level classification of metal music may be proposed: first of all, the musical categories are given, these have the priority but the lyrical categories form a living tradition as well. The members of the subcategory "mythological metal" are coming from black, death, gothic, symphonic, folk, and other metal genres, and just because they are mythological they do not lose their black, death, etc. label. As many lyrics may be associated with certain New Religious Movements, the terms neo-pagan metal and mythological metal are likely to be equivalent (or synonymic).

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1   New Wave of British Heavy Metal.
2   The most infamous topic, namely *Satanism*, is not a topic of this current paper. As metal music is quite frequently accused with *Satanism*, this topic already has its quality literature. For a detailed discussion of the topic, please, see: Dyrendal, 2008 and Dornbusch-Killguss, 2005.
3   Politics is not an articulated problem of metal music on the level of party politics, metal is more like (or rather) a rebellion against the current social system and injustice.
4   Inspiration was gathered from the title of a compilation CD of the US band Absu, entitled "Mythological Occult Metal" (2005).

2.2. History of Religion

As now we have a basic view of heavy and especially extreme metal music, it is now time to take a closer look at the inspiration of mythological metal music: the so-called Neo-Pagan revival. Neo-Pagan revival is originating from the many times cited counterculture of the 1960s (Hammer, 2006: 855–861). The "New Religious Movements", such as Krishna Consciousness, and the New Age phenomena, such as Wicca witchcraft, are rooted both in ancient religious practices and theories as well as in the secularization of everyday life after the Second World War. Secularization and a sort of decline in Western Christian worldview built a foundation for forgotten and exotic religions and occult traditions to land in Western thought. To understand the working method of these contemporary societies and cults, some basic introduction is needed to the history of occultism, as many forms of Neo-Pagan revival and the New Age share the concept of forgotten and secret lore (Pearson, 2006: 828–834). The word "occult" means hidden in Latin, in a wider concept: "hidden wisdom". In this regard, the first occultist[5] movements could be traced back to ancient Hellenistic times (around the start of C.E. and the 2nd and 3rd centuries), when Hermeticism and Gnosticism first appeared. Both religious and philosophical movements offered an alternative worldview compared to the existing Roman-Hellenistic-Middle Eastern syncretism of the ancient world (Goodrick-Clarke, 2006: 550–558). Nevertheless, it must be noted that both mentioned "schools" are typical products of syncretism. Hermeticism gathers around the works of Hermes Trismegistus (Three Times Great Hermes), who shares secret lore for the readers about the work of God and the cosmos (Quispel, 2010: 3507–3515). Perhaps being a merely literary school, Hermeticism is the basic element for modern occultism. Gnosticism, on the other hand, was a religious movement offering a dualistic worldview, where the Light and the Dark fights its eternal war, lurking for the souls of humanity. The followers of Gnostic religions (such as Manichaeism) are facing a spiritual war, in which if they choose the proper side their prize may be salvation.[6]

Hermetic cosmology and Gnostic dualism together were almost forgotten until the times of early Renaissance, when Neo-Platonism was once again discovered by Italian philosophers (most notably Marsilio Ficino of Florence). Combined with the Jewish Kabbalah, developed during the Middle Ages of Spain, a new form of philosophy emerged in Renaissance. This new philosophy created the alchemy

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5   In the following pages, "occult" always indicates that some kind of rite, cult, or literature contains hidden wisdom for a higher level of consciousness. In this regard, occult must not be confused with other meanings of occultism and magic.

6   Salvation is a common topic not just among Gnostics but of mystery cults as well. This motif can be found e.g. in the cult of Isis and Mithras.

and laid the foundations for secret societies under Christian influence, such as Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. The archetypical renaissance men, scholars with skills in almost all known sciences and disciplines of their age, created the highly appreciated renaissance culture and ignited the so-called "Western esoteric" tradition. Western esoteric tradition is the umbrella term for all the above mentioned occult studies, sciences, and movements that reached their first modern peak around the times of the French Revolution and rationalism at the end of the 18th century, even becoming a form of rebellion against rationalism.[7] Later, during the 19th century, as a resistance against Christianity and the Church, many occult societies emerged; the most famous one is the *Order of the Golden Dawn*, later reformed as *Ordo Templi Orientis* (OTO) by Aleister Crowley. The influence of East Asian religions and philosophy together with Neo-Paganism and ancient Middle-Eastern symbolism can be traced in the works of Crowley and the OTO, serving as one of the sources for the New Age of the 1970s (Hanegraaf, 2006: 884–889; Pasi, 2006: 898–906).

Globalization following the Second World War along with the above mentioned secularization created a religious gap in the life of the Western society. Alternative lifestyles, new philosophies, and religious forms filled these gaps (Melton, 2001: vii–xii). The most notable cults interesting for our topic may be divided into the following sub-categories:

> – Occult societies: *OTO* and its public branches: *Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica*, *Church of Satan*, *Temple of Set*, *Typhonian Order*. The most important attribute of these societies are their initiatory system and strong influences from Western esoteric tradition.
> – Neo-Pagan cults: *Wicca*, *Asatrú*, *Roman revivalism*, etc. These cults are characterized by that according to their worldview the cult is not a new invention but a revival of once forgotten ancient, pure lore of European antiquity.[8]

Both categories offer the *Truth* for their followers in theory and in practice, in many cases a higher level of consciousness together with a more pure form of human existence. Neo-Pagan groups also aim to restore the romanticized ways of life before the age of Christianity (Pearson, 2006: 828–834). This resistance against and disappointment in Christian worldview and romantic nostalgia towards the past is the key point where we may connect contemporary mythological metal music with religious and other (pop)cultural tendencies.

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7   Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that a rationalist-religious movement also existed; a notable author was Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), a Swedish mystic and theologian.
8   The present study does not aim to decide whether a cult is reviving an ancient form of religion in an authentic way or not, only the existence of these groups is cardinal.

2.3. Reception Theory

Contemporary, 20th- and 21st-century revival of ancient religions and mythologies proposes the problem of reception. Reception in this regard is the way how postmodern man and society re-interprets 2000- or 3000-year-old religious practices and especially texts. Wolfgang Iser, German scholar of reception theory, offers us a frame for understanding this re-interpretation. Iser (1972: 281–287) states that the reading process must be regarded as an active and not a passive behaviour towards a text. Both sides, the text and the reader, are active: the text always leaves behind questions (gaps) for the reader what must be answered (or filled in) to make sense of it. Thus, each reader and even each reading creates a new and original horizon of the text. Filling the gaps left by a text makes the reader build up coherence in it, imagine the world of it as of one's own understanding. Although Iser constructed his theory around high literature in the sense of the 20th century, it may be easily translated to the reading of ancient pieces of high literature: myths. The written forms of ancient myths should be considered as antique high literature. It does not mean that ancient texts were written with the standard of leaving gaps – it is not true for modern texts either –, but as literature it is coded in the very nature of it. In many cases, it may be encountered that mythological texts are taken out of their context in their moment of reception that may lead to misunderstanding. This feature does not change the original question: how does (in this case) a metal musician read a text, and in his or her reading how are the gaps filled in, what is the new horizon offered? The verbal and pictorial expressions that are due to be examined are going to show us these new horizons.

It may be quite clear that the topics of metal music that were labelled as "Chaotic" by Deena Weinstein (2002: 38–43) represent a certain kind of literature. The "demonic" in literature, as it was addressed by Northrop Frye (2000: 147–150), covers everything that is out of societies' control. These may be the powers of nature or anything embodying something threatening to society. Being the music of rebellion, metal music almost always deals with the demonic in the sense of Frye. It is also a feature of religious texts that the apocalyptic (opposite of the demonic in the strict literary sense of Frye's work) and the demonic are represented together (like Virgin Mary and the Whore of Babylon both in the New Testament, Frye, 2004: 50–57), indicating that dealing with the demonic is also a primordial attribute of literature. Many of the defining myths are gathered around the uncontrollable forces of human existence: the powers of nature, the origin of man, and the end of the world. It can be said that as metal music seeks for the demonic it defines its reading in the case of myths and the horizons offered by those.

Last but not least, it must not be forgotten that metal music is part of popular culture. Being part of it does not mean that metal music and its expressions must lack quality or interest, only certain definitive attributes must be kept in mind. Popular, or, by John Fiske (2011: 83–101), "producerly" texts have two main attributes: these texts are obvious and excessive in nature. As these texts are obvious, it makes them accessible for their audiences. Easier decoding does not make it worthless, as Richard Schusterman (1991: 613–632) examined it in the case of rap music: a very specific but wide horizon of interpretation can be offered in connection with Afro-American pop music. It is also the same in the case of heavy and extreme metal: beyond the obvious structure and choice of words of e.g. lyrics, a rich spring of information could be found. Excessiveness also serves this purpose – connected with the carnival pleasures of popular culture, it can be said that the excessive and the obvious are the main sceneries for mythological metal music. The main accessory of the following examination consists of a certain attention for the demonic behind the excessive, focusing on the new literary horizons of ancient mythological texts reinterpreted in the realm of extreme metal music.

3. The Verbal and Pictorial Aesthetics of Mythological Metal Music

The following chapter is not arranged around bands or songs but around mythologies and cultures. The compilation represented below does not offer a full-scale examination of the topic as the corpus of mythological metal music is too wide for one single study. Our aim now is to show highlights and typical examples of mythological metal lyrics and album covers to provide an introduction for a larger work, focusing on some local topics as well. The chosen mythologies and cultures are the following: Ancient Mesopotamia, Pre-Hellenic Egypt, the world of the Old Testament, Roman mythology, Viking mythology, Hungarian folk tales and history, and Romanian spirituality.

3.1. Ancient Mesopotamia

The religions and mythologies of Ancient Mesopotamia (from the 3rd millennium BCE up to the 4th century BCE) is a collective term for all the cultures' legacy of the area. The main sources are the Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, and Babylonian literary and pictorial artefacts, including all the religious, decorative, and administrative material (Oppenheim, 1982: 219–258). The first trace where one can encounter mythological presence in metal music is the bands' and musicians'

stage names. Numerous examples are available, the most inspiring being the names of gods. Thus, we can find the band Marduk (SE), Tiamat (SE), Ereshkigal (MX), Absu (US), Sarpanitum (US), and Astarte (GR) and stage names like Namtar (NL) or Nergal (PL) to list a few. Solely choosing a mythological name does not indicate that the band itself works with mythological lyrics, as it is presented by most of the listed bands (Absu is the only one working with mythology).

The so-called *Babylonian creation epic*, the *Enuma Elish*, is of importance for us now as many bands wrote their musical version of it, e.g. *Enuma Elish* by Rotting Christ (GR), *Blood of Kingu* by Vader (PL), *Rebirth of the Nemesis* by Melechesh (IL/NL), and *The Blood of Kingu* by Therion (SE). The last one is a perfect example to demonstrate mythological metal.[9] The excerpt from the song shows us a spiritual war that is fought in one's soul. The scenery for the lyrics is gathered from the epic that tells the story of a war between gods, namely Marduk and Tiamat and her army lead by Kingu (ANET: 60–72). After the defeat of Tiamat and Kingu, Marduk builds the cosmos from the body parts of Tiamat and creates humanity using the blood of Kingu. The spiritual warfare stated in the song thus shows us the dual nature of humanity: the godlike and human parts feel a disturbance that indicates the fight within the microcosm in the way it was fought according to the myth in the macrocosm.[10] Kingu is named as a demon, which at a first glance may seem like a misunderstanding as Kingu would have been a god (Radner, 2008: 178–179). On this point, we can witness the lyricist's reading: the artistic alteration of the historical account stresses the *demonic* (in a Frye-ian way) in human existence (for a comparison with other instances, see: Höpflinger, 2011: 53–57).

The two images (*Image 1* and *Image 2*) bellow are album covers of Israeli-Dutch band Melechesh. Both are full of ancient Middle-Eastern symbols and re-imagined sculptures. The pictures share the *shedu* of Mesopotamian religion (bull-man), bird-headed apotropaic figurines (Ebeling, 1928: 107–113), figures and columns from Ancient Persian art, creating the appropriate atmosphere for the recordings that fully deal with Middle-Eastern mysticism and mythology. *The Epigenesis* also presents the sephirotic tree of the Jewish Kabbalah along with the Snake of Eden on the Persian column, once again showing occult influences. The title *Enki* further strengthens the occult sense as Enki is the Mesopotamian god of magic. These eclectic symbols and motifs drawn together invite the listener to the esoteric journey that is offered by the music and lyrics together.

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9   The first three verses are: "Collect the blood of Kingu from the great old sea / And arrogate the primeval waters / Inside your veins the power of the demon flow / Have you ever searched for your descent? // Gaze into your soul, we are the children of the ancient ones / On thin façade we are the kindred of benign gods // Take up and read the tables of your destiny / They hang around the neck of Kingu / Prepare the war between gods deep inside your soul / You are the one to fight in this war!" (Therion, 2004).

10   It also presents a kind of occult approach that what happens in the macrocosm happens in the microcosm as well ("As above, so below" – as the *Tabula Smaragdina* writes).

Image 1. Melechesh: The Epigenesis (2010)

Image 2. Melechesh: Enki (2015)

3.2. Ancient Egypt

Pre-Hellenic, or classical Egyptian religion may be a greater mystery than the Mesopotamian one. Vast buildings, temples, pyramids, and mysterious zoomorphic gods live in the realm of the Nile. The many-faced polytheistic pantheon of Egypt provides us with only a few written resources: mostly hieroglyphic inscriptions and murals, reliefs or sculptures present the mythology (Kákosy, 2002: 288–309). The bands choosing an Egypt-inspired name are more likely to work in their lyrics with the Egyptian world as well, even more like in the case of Mesopotamia. Thus, Nile (US), Amarna Sky (BR), Scarab (EG), The Coffin Texts (US), and Apophis (DE) devote most of their works to the land of the Nile. Spiros Antoniou, singer/bassist of the band Septicflesh (GR), borrows his stage name from the god of Chaos: Seth. The most important topics found in lyrics are the Amarna-religion of Akhenaten, the Underworld, and the journey of the Sun Ark. The Amarna-religion, or heresy introduced by Pharaoh Akhenaten (pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty)[11] inspired the band Amarna Sky's title and topic of their first album (*Rising Heresy*, 2006) as well as two songs of the band Nile (*Cast Down the Heretic*, 2005 and *Those whom the Gods Detest*, 2009). The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and the realm of the Underworld is also quite inspiring, e.g. for the band *The Coffin Texts*, which derives its name of a certain scripture type written on the insides of coffins.

The text to be introduced is of Nile's album, *Ithyphallic.* Nile has been the most prominent "Egyptian metal" band for more than 20 years now. Their song, *Laying Fire upon Apep,*[12] deals with the journey of the Sun Ark. The Sun Ark is always under threat during its journey in the sky, while the Apep snake (Greek form: Apophis) is constantly trying to destroy it. During daytime, Ra fights the snake, while in the night Seth does the same (Assmann, 1984: 1087–1090; Pinch, 2002: 106–108). The papyrus of Herweben shows us the way (Pinch, 2002: 199) exactly like Nile is performing it. God Ra fights the snake: he destroys Apep with every instrument he has, burning its eyes and, transformed into a lynx, he cuts it to pieces. The lyrics of the song interpret a mythological event for us with an archaic language use, creating a nostalgic-ancient ritual atmosphere.

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11 A monotheistic approach in a polytheistic environment (Kákosy, 2002: 141–143).
12 The first three verses are: "Fire be upon thee Apep / Ra maketh thee burn / Thou who art hateful unto him / Ra pierceth thy head / He cutheth through thy face / Ra meltheth thine countenance / Lo your skull is crushed in his hand / Thy bones are smashed into pieces // Burn thou fiend / Before the eye of Ra / The hidden one hath overthrown thy words / The gods have turned thy face backwards / Thy skull is ripped from thy spine // The Lynx hath torn open thy breast / The scorpion hath cast fetters upon thee / Maat hath sent for thy destruction / Thou shalt burn" (Nile, 2007).

Image 3. Iron Maiden: Powerslave, 1984

Image 4. Nile: Those whom the Gods
Detest, 2009

Image 3 and *Image 4* show different approaches towards Egyptian legacy. The 1984 cover of Iron Maiden's *Powerslave* imagines a fictional pyramid with the traditional form and emerging procession road. Anubis figurines and the eye of Horus can be also traced, but the main figure of the picture is the "mascot" of the band, Eddy. He is situated as a giant pharaoh dominating his environment through the pyramid. Above the building, the shining top projects a lightning. Only a handful of their lyrics deal with Egyptian thematic, but as pharaonic Egypt is often associated with hard slave labour it can be an analogy for the contemporary metaphorical enslavement of current societies.[13] The cover of Nile uses the Amarna-style bust of Akhenaten. In accordance with the title of the record, the cover promises music to deal with the Amarna-heresy of the mentioned pharaoh – the promise is kept since many lyrics and topics revolve around the religious beliefs of Akhenaten.

3.3. The Old Testament

The Bible, both Old and the New Testament, is a rich source of inspiration for many bands around the globe. The archetypical usage of the Bible comes from Satanist metal bands (first and later, from Christian metal bands obviously). As we are not dealing with them in this paper, the focus falls to other forms. The most unique instance of reception comes from Israel. The band Orphaned Land aims to bring peace to the Middle East through their music, showing the similarities between Judaism and Islam or, as we shall see it, Christianity. The book of Genesis contains the story of the Flood (Gen. 6.7–8.22). The well-known narrative of Noah is a typical myth of the ancient world (Mesopotamian and Greek parallels could be found easily), telling the re-creation of Earth upon the wrath of God for the sins of humanity (Westerman, 1987: 51).

The frame of the 2004 album of Orphaned Land (*Mabool – The Story of Three Sons of Seven)* is constant: God is in fury of humanity's sinfulness and decides to destroy it. An Ark is built of revelations to ensure the survival of the True when the Flood comes. The main alteration of the story can be met in the first song, *Birth of the Three (The Unification).*[14] From the excerpt, it is clear, that Noah will not be mentioned throughout the whole recording. Instead, three other actors are presented: (1) a Snake with the Star of David, (2) an Eagle with the crescent

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13   The title track gives a summary of the myths of Osiris, Horus, and Seth.
14   The first verses are the following: "The seventh had seven descendants / The seventh was then divided into three / They were given their first symbols / They bore faces of animals / A Snake, an Eagle & the Lion // The first was known as magic / and he bore an enchanted heart / A Star of David upon his crest / was his eternal mark // The second was strength, / half a moon was he / A triangle he adorned, / a sword for all to see // The third was Lion wisdom / a mind unmatched / Represented by the cross / the white was his essence / A crystal his defense // The three were one, divided at rebirth / Forbidden to unite, / for fear of their strength" (Orphaned Land, 2004).

Image 5. Orphaned land in 2010

moon, and (3) a Lion with a cross. The three figures are the representatives of the three greatest Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Through the recording, these three members of a shared holy unity act together for the sake of humanity to build the Ark and save the True.

For the promo photo session of their 2010 recording, the band created the picture seen as in *Image 5*. The unity suggested by *Mabool* is manifested on the photo showing the members of the band dressed to represent the mentioned religions in a peaceful and harmonic composition.

Alone in itself an introductory proclamation for an album is not the whole picture. The 7th track of *Mabool*, namely *Building the Ark*, is almost entirely sung by a choir in Latin, citing the original Vulgate passage in the following order: Gen. 6.12, 6.14, 6.11, 6.19; using passages on the corruption of mankind (6.12); the measurements of the Ark (6.14); once again stressing corruption (6.11); and the command to gather the animals in the Ark (6.19). The following 8th track, *Norra El Norra*, in a prayer-like form, melts a Hebrew text with a traditional Yemenite tune, bringing the now fighting sides to a peaceful resolution. In the epilogue of the recording, life is saved from the Flood, achieved by the Three suggesting an actualizing approach towards the original Old Testament text, bringing a many-thousand-years-old passage into life, not just for religious people but for the audience of metal music as well.

Image 6. Ex Deo in 2012

3.4. Ancient Roman Mythology and Religion

Taking a step closer to ancient European legacy, Roman mythology and religion is the next destination. Although Mesopotamian and Egyptian instances too did not lack masculinity in their motifs, any approach towards the Roman culture can easily find its fierce nature. Roman warfare, the legions, the cults of the emperor, hedonistic aristocracy, gladiator fights, oppression of the conquered and the showing of superiority[15] make a perfect ground of inspiration. The legendary history of the City and the religious heterogeneity described in 2.2 both show interest for metal musicians. The parallel of devotion to a topic as seen in the case of ancient Egypt has at least one example in Roman culture as well. The crew of Canadian death metal band Kataklysm was transformed in 2008 into the band Ex Deo, only dealing with the history and mythology of the Eternal City.

Image 6 shows the stage outfit of the band using Roman-like armour. Their first album's title track, *Romulus*,[16] covers the conflict between the founding fathers of Rome: Romulus and Remus. The speaker takes the role of Romulus speaking of the foundation of the City. Romulus proclaims himself the king of the city,

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15   The author does not suggest that the whole of ancient Roman culture can be described by the mentioned features, but most of the time the popular associations include the cited attributes.

16   The first three verses are as follows: "Romulus, from the wolf's mouth I feed eternity / Romulus, with my brother's blood I opened wide the gates of time // Standing at the hill cliff / A flock of birds crown me / I am fathered by the god of war, I am the king of Rome // Then his jealousy blooms, the envy to lead my people / So perish everyone who shall leap over my wall!" (Ex Deo, 2009).

drawing the way to the death of his brother, using the most important elements of the original myth. The text gives us an insight into the mind of a brother who was threatened by his twin brother, justifying the fatal deed (Plutarch: *Romulus*, chapters 10–12). The song offers us a reading of the original myth that can never be restored, building an almost adventure-film-like scenery.

Maybe the most famous initiatory cult of the Hellenistic world is the cult of Mithras. Ancient Rites (BE) devoted their work to the ancient and mediaeval heritage of Europe; thus, their 2006 record called *Rubicon* includes a track entitled *Mithras*.[17] The song is dedicated to God Mithras, in a hymn-like form praising his qualities and praying for his help. The text may try to imitate an ancient formula, which has a meaning only for those who are initiated into the cult – as it was the way for original worshippers. The main elements of the cult – Mithras, god of light, who protects the believers, the levels of initiations with given names, and that Mithras is a warrior god defeating darkness, keeping the circulation of the world in order (Gordon, 2005: 6088–6093) – are listed in a lyrically accurate way, romanticizing the original religion.

3.5. Viking Mythology

Speaking about white masculinity, the era of Viking mythology is the best place to find inspiration for metal music (Heesch, 2011: 67–69). Norse mythology (common name: Viking mythology) deals with stories of the gods and mortal heroes (sagas). The main sources are the works of the Icelandic monk, Snorre Sturlason of the 11th century (Prose Edda) and the folk poetry of the Poetic Edda. Just as in the case of Mesopotamia, many bands are inspired by the names of gods and other supernatural creatures. Amongst the most important bands we can find Týr (FO), Einherjer (NO), Manegarm (SE), and King of Asgard (SE), mainly of Scandinavian origin. The first pioneer of the black and Viking metal genres, Swedish band Bathory, serves us the first lyrics in connection with the Nordic realm. The song *Valhalla*[18] comes from the 1990 CD entitled *Hammerheart.* The song has three main topics connected together. First of all, we see a detailed depiction of God Thor (Lindow, 2001: 287) on his chariot with his hammer. Then we see a funeral

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17   The first two verses are as follows: "Mithras, God of the morning, our trumpets awaken the wall! / 'Rome is above nations, but thou art over all' / Now as the names are answered, and the guards marched away / Mithras, also a soldier, give us strength of the day! // Mithras, God of the sunset, low on the western main / Thou descending immortal, immortal to rise again! / now, when the watch is ended, now when the wine is drawn / Mithras, also a soldier, keep us pure til dawn!" (Ancient Rites, 2006).

18   The first five verses are as follows: "God of Thunder / Who crack the sky / Swing your hammer / Way up high // In chariot of gold / Ride across the clouds / The black storm is unfold / Burning mist is but a shroud // Seeds and honey / Milk and blood / A sacrifice / To thunder god // Laid in ship of oak / On final sail to fate / Steel is at side / Drifting to the open gates of // Valhalla / Shields of gold / Valhalla / Great warriors hall" (Bathory, 1990).

Image 7. Bathory: Blood, Fire, Death, 1988

Image 8. Amon Amarth:
With Oden on Our Side, 2006

rite, mainly restored from ship burials and the promised heaven for warriors, called Valhalla, where only those can dwell until the end of days who died in battle (Lindow, 2001: 308). The song moulds living beliefs of the Nordic societies that could also be found in contemporary Neo-Pagan Odinism and the Asatrú.

Bathory's fascination with traditional Scandinavian culture is taken on a higher level in the cover artwork of *Image 7*, as it is based on the painting of Peder Nicolai Arbo (Norwegian Romantic painter of the 19th century) entitled *Asgardsreien*, depicting the flight of Odin and his host.

Amon Amarth, once again of Sweden – although they do not like the label of "Viking metal" (see the linked interview with Johan Hegg in the "Literature" section) –, use Viking content in all their lyrics. Their 2011 album *Surtur Rising* deals with the events of Ragnarök (Twilight of the Gods), or the Viking apocalypse and end-of-the-world myth. The song *Destroyer of the Universe*[19] is the self-introduction of the fire giant Surtur on the battlefield of Ragnarök. His self-depiction gives an authentic picture according to Prose Edda (Lindow, 2001: 282), clearly stating his allegiance against the gods and enumerating his weaponry.

Their usage of authentic archaeological material can also be traced in their artworks. In the background of the title and band name featured in *Image 8*, a horseman and a symbol can be seen. Both of them (Odin on his eight-legged horse, Sleipnir, and the Valknut) are taken from at least a thousand-year-old depictions and runic stone inscriptions (compare Tjängvide image stone).

The last Viking band to deal with in this present paper is Týr from the Faroese Islands. The programme of the band is quite similar to Amon Amarth's, but while Amon Amarth plays melodic death metal without folk influences, Týr plays progressive folk metal with only metal instruments (no folk instruments as usual for many bands of the same genre). The song *Ragnarök*[20] once again gives an insight into the minds of mythological figures. The einherjer, the souls of warriors who died in battle, march to war against the armies of darkness on the day of Ragnarök. Like in the case of *Romulus*, this insight creates a film-like scenery, showing the imagined mighty einherjer to be afraid of the coming battle. Events of the fight are not listed, only the psychological imagination is stressed.

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19   The first two verses are as follows: "I rise up from Muspelheim / My fury is sublime / The sword I bring burns violently / With wild and lethal flames // I march against the Asa gods / To bring the end of time / I am pure and endless pain / And Surtur is my name" (Amon Amarth, 2011).

20   The first two English verses are as follows: "Revenge returns to us, this returns to me / We are bound to battle for eternity / The wolf restrained in chains, dragon in the deep I see / This war will throw us corpses in a heap // With heavy hearts we head, on towards the end / I've done all I can, never will I bend / Battle clad we ride, over barren land / Nothing matters on the battlefield we stand" (Týr, 2006).

3.6. Hungarian Folk Tales and Romanian Spirituality

Before drawing the conclusions, some regional topics ought to be considered. The rich tradition of Hungarian folk tales and history has its own musical representation. Two prominent, Hungarian bands, famous throughout Europe, are going to be introduced: Sear Bliss of black metal underground and Dalriada of the folk metal movement. Shamanistic and pre-Christian Hungarian tradition often can be traced in the works of Sear Bliss, both in lyrics and artworks. Their debut album, *Phantoms* (1996), contains the track *1100 years ago,*[21] which is the first example in this paper to be openly anti-Christian. 1100 years prior to 1996 is the year 896, the date of Hungarian tribes to conquer the Carpathian Basin. From that point on, the Hungarian tribes were drawn under the increasing influence of Christianity; thus, in an anti-Christian, anti-clerical way, the golden age ended with that symbolic event. As the text indicates, the song is a saga from the 11th century, the century of the official baptizing of the Hungarian Kingdom. The violent pictures presented in the text show a resistance against Christianity crying for the times before 896. Everything is driven upside down in these images: e.g. the Apostles and the Holy Trinity are prosecuted, not the witches.

In the same warrior-like manner is the Szekler mythical hero Prince Csaba depicted in *Image 9*. According to legend, Prince Csaba saves Szeklerland from its enemies in a time of need. In the picture, the enemy below have banners with crosses, strongly suggesting that Christianity is the final enemy needed to be defeated.

The second Hungarian band, Dalriada, uses classical Hungarian poetry (like the works of János Arany) and folk tales as a base for their lyrics. Their 2008 song *A Nap és Szél Háza* (House of Sun and Wind) is a musical version of the creation tale of the star constellation known as the Pleiades. The tale comes from the Moldavian *Csángó* ethnical group, connected to Hungarian folk tradition. The verbal form of the tale is available as a record (Bakos, 2008). The song follows accurately the narrative of the tale dealing with all its major and minor details.

Last but not least, one of Romania's pioneer metal bands, Negură Bunget, is the flagship of Central European natural mysticism. The testimony of the band's homepage (http://www.negurabunget.com) draws certain parallels with the ideologies of Norwegian black metal. Norwegian black metal at its foundations is the primordial Satanist metal music, but it has also a strand of natural mysticism, including prominent bands like Satyricon or Immortal (von Helden, 2011: 114–

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21   The first two verses are as follows: "'Oh my lord, let us fire up every church / Oh my lord, let us break every bell / Oh my lord, let us kill every priest' / (11th century saga, Hungary) // Witches burn the twelve holy disciples / Christian believers frozen in blood / On the darkest infernal day / On the dawn of eternal funeral / The holy trinity burns on the stake / Faith of our heart, the only sign is immortal" (Sear Bliss, 1996).

Image 9. Sear Bliss: The Arcane Odyssey,
2007

123). Nature is a place where everything is perfect and untouched, bears a certain nostalgia and a factor of romanticism. It is the same concept behind the natural-mystical lyrics of Negură Bunget, as it is stated by the headman of the group, Negru (2015). This approach using mostly folklore for inspiration does not sink back to a past that has no direct living successor today but breathes from a live atmosphere and tradition that fuels respect for the rural and resistance against the urban, once again drawing a distinction between light and dark.

4. Conclusions

4.1. Classification

Taking a further look at the texts and arts listed above, some clear patterns may be drawn. First of all, the lyrics should be put into different categories according to their modes and literal tonalities. The myths, whether they are used in their entirety or only partially, show the reading and new horizons created by the musicians. The sub-classification of texts may be the following:

  1) romantic-nostalgic lyrics: Bathory, Ancient Rites, Dalriada, Negură Bunget;
  2) violence-driven lyrics: Nile, Amon Amarth, Sear Bliss;

3) psychological-insight-driven lyrics: Ex Deo, Týr;
4) hidden-message-driven lyrics: Therion, Orphaned Land.

Other classifications may be appropriate as well. In case of group 1), a clear, storytelling mode is presented, with an effort to reproduce the atmosphere of a certain myth. Group 2) works with explicit images of violence with a similar goal as groups 1) and 4).[22] Group 3) steps a bit away from the pace of the myths and imagines the inner world of the figures presented, whether being an *eponymous hero* or a nameless warrior in the final battle. Group 4) uses the myth to transfer a new message, actualizes the problem of the ancient world, and actualizes the problem of the present day, exchanging concept, showing that thousand-year-old texts deal with the same questions as today's people – or that many thousands of years ago humanity faced the same fears as we face now.

4.2. The Carnival of Extreme Metal – Summary

The examinations above naturally represent only a small section of the wide world of mythological metal music. Other cultures could have been listed as well, but our aim was only to give an introduction and show the most important ways of mythological lyrics writing. All the lyrics and artworks rely deeply on the phenomenon of the *demonic* described by Northrop Frye. The demonic in its nature is a stranger for civilized society. The core concept behind the usage of the demonic can be found in the carnival of heavy metal (Halnon, 2006: 33–48). Based on the carnival concept of Mikhail Bakhtin (Bahtyin, 2002: 12–21), heavy and extreme metal music serve as a place where all the frustrations and aggression of everyday life can explode in a frame of control. This carnivalesque feature gives one answer to the question: why mythology and why extreme metal? In many cases of the lyrics, we see violence- and aggression-driven myths as inspirations creating on every level the impression pointing at the commonplace that heavy and extreme metal are out of societal norms. Yet, it must be kept in mind that not only heavy and extreme metal work with the *demonic* and the *carnival* (Fiske, 2011: 56–82). Contemporary popular cinematography has its own genres for horror and thrill; in recent years, for mythology as well. It is enough if we think about the direct mythological movies e.g. *Troy* (2004) or *Clash of the Titans* (2010) using Greek mythology or *Noah* (2014) and *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (2014) inspired by the Old Testament or *Gods of Egypt* (2016) based on classical Egyptian myths. Compared to other popular arts, if we tend to take a closer look at not just the musical extremities but the artworks and texts, it will be clear that extreme music is not only an instrument of hate but of reviving ancient lore that has a meaning for the present-day man as well.

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22   In case of Sear Bliss, the message is the concept of anti-Christianity.

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Holocaust Representation and Graphical Strangeness in Art Spiegelman's Maus: A Survivor's Tale: "Funny Animals," Constellations, and Traumatic Memory

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Abstract. Art Spiegelman's MAUS, a Pulitzer-prize-winning two-volume graphic novel, zooms into wartime Poland, interweaving young Vladek's – the author's father – experiences of World War II and the present day through uncanny visual and verbal representational strategies characteristic of the comics medium. "I'm literally giving a form to my father's words and narrative", Spiegelman remarks on MAUS, "and that form for me has to do with panel size, panel rhythms, and visual structures of the page". The risky artistic strategies and the "strangeness" of its form, to use Harold Bloom's term, are essential to how the author represents the horrors of the Holocaust: by means of anthropomorphic caricatures and stereotypes depicting Germans as cats, Jewish people as mice, Poles as pigs, and so on. Readings of MAUS often focus on the cultural connotations in the context of postmodernism and in the Holocaust literature tradition, diminishing the importance of its hybrid narrative form in portraying honest, even devastating events. Using this idea as a point of departure, along with a theoretical approach to traumatic memory and the oppressed survivor's story, I will cover three main topics: the "bleeding" and re-building of history, in an excruciating obsession to save his father's – a survivor of Auschwitz – story for posterity and to mend their alienating relationship and inability to relate; the connection between past and present, the traumatic subject, and the vulnerability it assumes in drawing and writing about life during the Holocaust as well as the unusual visual and narrative structure of the text. The key element of my study, as I analyse a range of sections of the book, focuses on the profound and astonishing strangeness of the work itself, which consequently assured MAUS a canonical status in the comics' tradition.

Keywords: history, graphic representation, historical constellation, trauma graphic novel, iconic narrative style

*We tell stories because in the last analysis human lives
need and merit being narrated. This remark takes on
its full force when we refer to the necessity to save the
history of the defeated and the lost. The whole history of
suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative.*
Paul Ricoeur

*In order to represent himself completely, the son must
represent his mother, his other, without omitting a word.*
Nancy K. Miller

Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* is one of the most prominent graphic novels within the contemporary comic world, and it undoubtedly paved the way for the recognition of the medium as a legitimate art form and as a narrative iconic genre which, until then repudiated as "the exclusive domain of the infantile and the trivial" (Cory, 1995: 37), proved itself equally suitable to address more "serious" and intellectually compelling subject matters. The beginning of the 1970s established a serious documentary approach for comics, not only for the North American underground comix revolution but also globally. The collective trauma of the Vietnam war poured itself into imagistically explicit autobiographical vignettes, such as Justin Green's *Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary*, and later Robert Crumb and many others, inspiring cartoonists to reveal – through text and drawn images – deeply personal and especially touching subject matters. In this cultural context, Art Spiegelman's non-fiction work was the first autobiographical comic that moved from the intensely private first-person narrative towards something approaching documentary status, reconfiguring expectations for the genre and the aesthetic of the comics of the witness. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* has gradually generated a dedicated readership and, while it has since been recognized as a critical success by fellow cartoonists, "arbiters" of culture outside the underground comix scene, and academic scholars, it helped further crystallize a trend which it had been part of: "the cultural perception of what a comic book can be" (Witek, 1989: 96). At the same time, *Maus* introduced an unparalleled sense of iconic sophistication to the traditional Holocaust art and literature. Most importantly, *Maus* has shaped the conception and theory of the (auto)biographical comics and graphic novels, and it became an excellent illustration of the subjective "traumatic truth" and the experimental response to such a devastating event in the development of "trauma culture", within the field of Holocaust Studies and in relation to theories of traumatic memory. The two volumes of *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* have been translated into "dozens and dozens" of languages; however, the most significant to Spiegelman remain the ones in French, German, and Polish, the latter remaining perhaps the most controversial

of all (Spiegelman, 2011: 122–125). The work of Art Spiegelman has also been celebrated through exhibitions in museums and art galleries; noteworthy were those in New York: the solo at The Museum of Modern Art in 1991 as part of the museum's "Projects" series, and the "Art Spiegelman's Co-Mix: A Retrospective" at the Jewish Museum more than twenty years later. *Maus* won the Pulitzer Prize – first ever to be awarded to a graphic novel – in 1992 (Tabachnick, 2012; Smith, 2016; Romero-Jódar, 2017).

In the "Preface and Prelude" to *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, attempting to defend the idea of an apolitical literary canon and to establish aesthetic and ideological criteria involved in the act of canon formation, Harold Bloom writes: "one mark of an originality that can win canonical status for a literary work is a strangeness that we either never altogether assimilate, or that becomes such a given that we are blinded to its idiosyncrasies" (Bloom, 1994: 4; Pullman, 2003). In the study at hand, I employ, as a point of departure, Bloom's use of the term "strangeness", deeming it as an accurate description of Spiegelman's exceptional work, where the unfailing and profound "strangeness" places this Holocaust graphic novel at the forefront of contemporary comics and Shoah narratives canon. In order to analyse the "strangeness" of *Maus* as a concept evolving in time, I will focus on three main topics: the connection between past and present by creating the concept of "Maus" as a constellation, a notion developed by Walter Benjamin in *On the Concept of History* (1940); the "bleeding" of history and pushing further the limits of the comics medium in representing such a traumatic subject and the vulnerability that comes with drawing and writing about surviving the Holocaust; the infamous trope of "Funny Animals" in Holocaust iconography and the evolution of Spiegelman's artistic approaches in relation to history, testimony, and memory.

1. A Journey across Panels:
From *Maus* (1972) to *MetaMaus* (2011)

Without fully grasping all the implications and problems that would come with devoting himself to such a challenging project, Spiegelman's first attempt to defy traditional Holocaust representation and render a survivor's testimony in the form of comics was *Maus*, a three-page story published in the first issue of *Funny Animals*, cartoonist Justin Green's anthology, in 1972. One year later, *Prisoner of the Hell Planet: a Case History* appeared in *Short Order Comic* No 1, a self-conscious narrative project, much more textured and dealing with the aftermath of his mother's suicide. If the 1972 comic strip focuses on family history and the "cat and mouse" allegory of oppression, yet not entirely owning it, a fact

suggested by the visual phrasing and the narrative bracketed by a father telling his son a bedtime story, the metaphoric panels of *Prisoner of the Hell Planet* add a lot more nuance to the narrative, offering through the use of photography (of Anja Spiegelman and young Artie) and the expressionist drawing style a sense of verisimilitude and authenticity, which solidifies the comic strip as a true story, "Mom and me, in a summer between tragedies" (2011: 218).

The current version of *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* was initially published in *RAW*, the influential avant-garde "graphix" anthology launched in 1980 by Spiegelman and his French-born wife, editor and *New Yorker* art director Françoise Mouly. Consequently, chapters one to six of *Maus*, volume 1, and chapters one to four, volume 2 were originally serialized in a somewhat different form, between 1980 and 1991. Unlike "Prisoner", which was reproduced in its entirety inside the pages of the final version of the graphic novel, the early panels of *Maus* had been redrawn and retouched between their original publication and the apparition of the collected two volumes, *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: and Here My Troubles Began*, in 1986 and 1991 respectively. *The Complete Maus* was released first in CD-ROM format in 1994 and two years later in hardcopy. Finally, in 2011, *MetaMaus: a Look Inside a Modern Classic, Maus* was published, a volume containing an in-depth interview with the cartoonist, answering vital questions, such as "Why comics? Why mice? Why the Holocaust?", conducted by editor Hillary Chute, detailing the creation, technical and artistic decisions as well as the chronology and publication process; pencil sketches, studies, pages from his notebooks, and rejection letters from publishers; a reprint of the 1972 short story, *Maus*; interviews with Spiegelman's wife and children, Nadja and Dashiell; the full transcript of the recordings of the original testimony of his father; and, last but not least, interviews with women who knew Anja in the camps and after. The title of *MetaMaus* is to a certain extent ironic since the two-volume graphic memoir is in itself a *meta*-comic, which is a comic or a graphic novel which takes the comics medium and the process of creating comics as one of its subjects.

From the three-page proto-*Maus* narrative in 1972 to MetaMaus (2011) and the present time, Spiegelman's project developed into a huge archive of interconnected texts, documents, testimonies, and aesthetic choices that go beyond the panels of the graphic novel, with a non-linear perception of time reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's new thesis on the concept of history and his idea of historical constellations:

> Articulating the past historically means recognizing those elements of the past which come together in the *constellation of a single moment*. Historical knowledge is possible only within the historical moment. But knowledge within the historical moment is always knowledge of

a moment. In drawing itself together in the moment – in the *dialectical image* [author'] – the past becomes part of humanity's involuntary memory. (2006: 403) [author's emphases]

From the very beginning of *Maus*, as Andrés Romero-Jódar proposes in *The Trauma Graphic Novel* (2017), analysing the first page of *My Father Bleeds History*, Spiegelman creates a visual paragraph that acts as a summary or a "dialectical image" of the entire two-volume graphic novel. These emblematic panels are the elements that come together to create this single moment, simultaneously introducing the reader to the characters and to the elements of the story which create the "dialectical image" of the past historical events and the present conditions under which they are being remembered (Young, 1998: 678; Romero-Jódar, 2017, under *Art Spiegelman's Constellation of Holocaust Textimonies*).

Since the two-page prologue drew attention to the mouse metaphor employed in the creation of this imagetext, which originated in the *Maus* short story, the first page of Chapter One is richer in connections that go back and forth between past memories and the present moment. The black and white style in which the anthropomorphic hybrid characters are drawn is more schematic, the clothing and the gestures do not draw attention from the abstraction of their Jewishness, allowing the multiple levels of the narrative to come forth. The caption above the first panel introduces the self-referential, autobiographical element, "I went out to see my Father in Rego Park" (13), as well as the relationship between father and son, "I hadn't seen him in a long time – we weren't that close", which continues in the caption of the second panel: "He [Vladek] had aged a lot… his two heart attacks had taken their toll." There is another event condensed in the second caption – his mother's suicide –, which makes the subject of *Prisoner of the Hell Planet: a Case History* (1973), and it anticipates its inclusion in the novel. We meet Mala, Vladek's new wife, in the fourth panel, and after that we find out that "Mala knew my parents in Poland before the war". Once again, past and its recollection are condensed in two sentences: the present of his father being remarried and the past of their parents' marriage before the war started as well as them surviving the Holocaust, which is mentioned in the next caption: "She was a survivor too, like most of my parents' friends." The fact that Mala and his father do not get along might also suggest a tensioned relationship between Vladek and Anja.

Another important aspect that transpires from this opening page of the narrative is Spiegelman's concern for unmediated authenticity through linguistic realism (Romero-Jódar, 2017); from his father's first sentence – "Oi, Artie. You're late. I was worried." –, he remains faithful to his Vladek's Jewish background, transcribing his testimony verbatim in the speech bubbles as well as in the narrative frame of his past experiences, replicating the accent, the rhythm, and

intonation just right. His broken English marks him as an immigrant: "It's a shame Françoise also didn't come", "A *wire* hanger you give him. I haven't seen Artie in almost two years. We have plenty *wooden* hangers" [emphasis in the original] and, consequently, "both the drawing and the written text work together to shape these characters as simultaneously human and non-human, American and non-American" (Romero-Jódar, 2017, under *Walter Benjamin and Art Spiegelman: History and Constellations*).

Thus, the opening visual paragraph of *My Father Bleeds History* announces to the reader the major conflicts between the characters as well as Spiegelman's artistic journey from *Maus* (1972) to *The Complete Maus* (1996), at the end of which he created the historical constellation which *MetaMaus* (2011) is part of. Furthermore, the process of creating *Maus* constantly brings his father's traumatic past into the present and makes it part of its visual vocabulary: we receive Art's graphic interpretation of Vladek's Holocaust narrative. It does not, however, offer any kind of redemptory closure since the traumatic past cannot have any meaning or cathartic quality to it, which runs directly counter to the traditional format of the Holocaust literature (Smith, 2016).

Like Walter Benjamin, Art Spiegelman does not perceive time as a causal progression of events that can illuminate the present; every time it becomes anew: "the present can be fully appreciated exclusively by the actualization of the past in the now, when all events pile up together, instead of in a (chrono)logical succession. All the experiences that have ever been gathered simultaneously in the now when the angel of history blankly stares at humanity" (Romero-Jódar, 2017, under *Walter Benjamin and Art Spiegelman: History and Constellations*). The gathering of past experiences, of all that "has been", gives shape to another poignant image of a constellation, in Chapter Two: *And Here My Troubles Began* – "Auschwitz (Time Flies)". The events, past and present, are inextricably connected in another visual paragraph: Spiegelman's comics self is wearing a mouse mask while sitting at his desk smoking and working on what might be a *Maus* panel. He's gradually facing his readers as the speech bubbles gather these random traumatic past events: "Vladek started working as a tinman in Auschwitz in the spring of 1944… I started working on this page at the very end of February 1987." "In May Françoise and I are expecting a baby… Between May 16, 1944, and May 24, 1944, over 100,000 Hungarian Jews were gassed in Auschwitz." "In September 1986, after 8 years of work, the first part of MAUS was published. It was a critical and commercial success. (…) In May 1968 my mother killed herself. (She left no note)" (2003: 201). In the last panel, taking over the bottom half of the page, the present is stated: "Lately I've been feeling depressed", while standing over a pile of mice bodies, whereas outside the window we can see clearly the wired fence and a watchtower dominating the concentration camp. This is an incredibly powerful panel, which proves that the "strangeness" of the comics

medium allows through visual narrative for more evocative "constellations of a single moment."

2. A Survivor's Tale:
"Received History" and Postmemory

Maus, the title Spiegelman had chosen for the project – since the publication of the first three-page version of his survivor's story – illustrated his then search for a more visceral imagery of anti-Semitic propaganda, "the Nazis chasing Jews as they had in my childhood nightmares" (2011: 114), not fully aware that there were reverberations and precursors of this type of dehumanizing representation of the Jewish people as pests. The phonation of "Maus" does sound like the English word "mouse", but using the German equivalent, and thus the language of the cats reinforced by the epitaph quoting Hitler: "The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not human" (2003: 10), validates the interplay between the visual sign system and the aural codes that structure *Maus* as an imagetext or, to use Spiegelman's preferred term, "commix", the commixture of word and image. There are visual "rhymes" that reinforce this association: the recurring Nazi command "Juden Raus!" in the first volume and the first three letters of "Auschwitz", a trope of the Holocaust, which in the second volume – when referring to the camps – becomes "Mauschwitz" (Hirsch, 2011: 25).

Correspondingly, the subtitle "A Survivor's Tale" clearly suggests that Spiegelman did not set out to capture the genocide of six million people, and, although the singular "a survivor" alludes by omission to the numerous survivors of the Holocaust, it emphasizes not only the survival of Vladek Spiegelman but of Art himself as someone who survives the deaths of their parents. Marianne Hirsch goes further in depth with the analysis of the subtitle and the choice of the word "tail" as well as the use of the name without capitals by writing:

> …the subtitle of Volume I plays with the visual and aural dimensions of the word "tale" – when we see it we know it means "story," but when we hear it after hearing "mouse" we may think that it is spelled t-a-i-l. Furthermore, on the cover and title imprint, the author includes his own name without capitals, thereby making himself a visual construct able to bring out the tensions between aesthetic and documentary, figural and mimetic: "art," on the one hand, and "Spiegelman" or "mirror-man," on the other. (2011: 26)

As James E. Young (1998) points out, Art Spiegelman does not attempt to represent "events he never knew immediately but instead portrays his necessary hypermediated experience of the memory of events. This postwar generation, after all, cannot remember the Holocaust as it actually occurred" (p. 669). In actual fact, the three-page *Maus* story was based on "what I knew before I knew anything; one of those free-floating shards of an anecdote I'd picked up" (2011: 22). The later *Maus* is closely based on the dialogues between Spiegelman and his father, Vladek, which contain most of the story: "the essence of it was really this one set of conversations that took place in '72" and later on, for more details and facets, or simply a way to spend time with his father, "back in '77 or even a little bit before, [when] I began to make forays to see him, taping him again and again almost until he died in '82" (2011: 23, 24).

The "tale", however, is not at all a single story but two stories, past and present, told simultaneously: his father's survival story and Art's exercising his visual imagination, his father's testimony of the Holocaust and what happens in Art's mind, thus breaching the gap between "how what happened is made sense of by father and son in the telling" (Young, 1998: 676).

> Those who are born after the mass killing ceased can understand, in an academic sense, certain empirical details – chronology, numbers, place names, maps, and the industrial processes and bureaucracy that facilitated the killing – but the essential horror of genocide remains beyond understanding. (Smith, 2016: under *Selling out and Talking in Screams*)

And like any good postmodern artistic act, *Maus* feeds on itself, recalling its own production, even the choices the artist makes along the way. This is where the autobiographical history of the "survivor's tale" begins, as Young indicates: "neither the three-page 1972 version of 'Maus,' nor the later, two-volume *Maus* opens in the father's boyhood Poland; but rather, both open with the son's boyhood in Rego Park, Queens" (678). In the beginning of *Maus I*, Artie seems to be on a mission, a historical quest as well as a quest for understanding his own life dominated and shaped by memories which are not his own: "I still want to draw that book… The one I used to talk to you about… About your life in Poland, and the war", symbolizing the "received history", "a narrative hybrid that interweaves both events of the Holocaust and the ways they are passed down to us" (Young, 1998: 669) or "postmemory" (Hirsch, 2001) pertaining to the second generation survivor and biographer: "*I* want to hear it." (2003: 14). However, Artie does not ask his father to start telling him about the war, the deportation, or about their imprisonment in the concentration camps, but rather asks him to start with his mother, Anja: "Tell me how you met" (14), meaning to start with *his* origins

(Young, 1998: 678–679), proving his major role in this telling of his father's story. As Vladek's story is based on his subjective, selective, and distorted memory in terms of chronology, events, and places and since remembering the past might be a difficult task in the life of a survivor, he starts with his life before Anja and before the war. This is but one of the examples that represent the challenging task of ordering a comics narrative in frames based on a testimony.

Maus II opens with Vladek and Anja inside the concentration camp – though separated –, where "they took from us our names. And here they put me my number" (2003: 186), it ends with their reunion and jumps through time, to the final drawing, that of the tombstone of Spiegelman's parents' grave, offering:

> … a visual final full stop to the narrative. Their names, with their dates of birth and death, appear under the bigger name of the family, Spiegelman, written in capitals and under the Star of David. Their Jewishness, their family, and their own stories are all integrated in the symbolic drawing of the tombstone. Nonetheless, after these capitalized letters, the fourth and last ending of the graphic novel is added: Art Spiegelman's signature and dates for the creation of the complete text: 1978–1991. (Romero-Jódar, 2017, under *Act II: A MAUSoleum of Textimonies*)

It is not an ending in the sense of a traditional narrative structure since Spiegelman resists the possibility of fully accepting or understanding the terrible implications of the Holocaust with one single panel, just above the drawing of his parents' tombstone: his dying father addresses his son, Artie, with the name of his phantom brother, Richieu, who died in the Holocaust, asking him to put the tape recorder away, "I'm *tired* from talking, Richieu, and it's enough stories for now…" (2003: 296). There is still unresolved, "unassimilated trauma", Young contends citing Saul Friedlander's concept of "deep memory" as a tragic event which remains inarticulable, unrepresentable, the implication remaining that for a second generation such deep memory will always remain elusive, lost in a history which cannot be fully grasped: "I only found out later that I'd totally misspelled his name, but I'm glad I did. I thought of it as some kind of Frenchified version of Richards, but actually in Polish it's R-y-s-i-o, and I had never seen it written down until well into the process" (2011: 18).

3. "Funny Animals": Trauma and Visual Metaphors

Iconic narratives manage to create some kind of spell, Art Spiegelman seems to suggest, since photographs, in some cases, "tend to have too much information; it's very hard to suppress the unnecessary. The work that actually works best

deploys information visually to give you the necessary signs and not too much more" (2011: 168). In depicting the Holocaust in the form of comics, through the use of the "Funny Animals" trope, Spiegelman proposes his alternative to the representation crisis in Shoah art and literature: "I'm literally giving a form to my father's words and narrative, and that form for me has to do with panel size, panel rhythm, and visual structures of the page" (qtd in Chute, 2009: 341). Equally, the recourse to the animal allegory, in the case of *Maus*, represents the vision of an individual who spent his childhood watching American cartoons and reading American World War II comics, where Japanese soldiers were demonized as creatures with fangs. His knowledge of the animated cartoon lexicon and the kingdom of funny animals comics proved useful when deciding on the representation of French as frogs, Americans as dogs, and Poles as pigs: "In my bestiary, pigs on a farm are used for meat. (…) my metaphor was somehow able to hold that particular vantage point while still somehow acknowledging my father's dubious opinion of Poles as a group" (2011: 122).

In "Mauschwitz", Chapter One of the second volume, *And Here My Troubles Began*, Art "the artist" is shown in the present working on the details of *Maus*, specifically the autobiographical aspects of the story. In this metatextual vignette, we understand his dilemma: trying to figure out how to draw his wife, Françoise, who is French. Right under the caption setting the time and place, "Summer vacation. Françoise and I were staying with friends in Vermont…", there is a page from one of his sketchbooks depicting Françoise wearing different animal heads (moose, dog, frog, rabbit, and mouse). "What kind of *animals* should I make you?" – Artie asks. "Huh? A *mouse*, of course!" – Françoise retorts. This cannot work: "But you're *French*!" (2003: 171). This exchange suggests that drawing characters as animals was not an easy task for Spiegelman. In this particular case, he compromises, combining Françoise's French origins in her physical aspect; her style reminds the reader of the 60s French fashion, while wearing a mouse head, as she is morally Jewish: "… if you're a mouse, I ought to be a mouse too. I *converted*, didn't I?" Her anthropomorphic form is therefore not a given, and his choice to portray his French wife as a mouse is almost comically played out in this visual paragraph, and, as Smith writes in *Reading Art Spiegelman* (2016), it draws attention to "the problematic question of choosing or being forced to adopt one's animal classification represents a second knowingly problematic aspect of the metaphor". We understand the implications that go beyond this episode: how challenging for an author is to step into the world of Holocaust literature and to make all the right artistic decisions in the process of creating his own interpretation of what happened to his parents during the war.

Certainly, drawing *Maus* (1972) was less complicated since he was merely focusing on the cat-mouse visual metaphor of class and racial oppression, using his parents' history as well as his own: "The cats and mice just came as a set,

part of all the Tom and Jerry comics and cartoons that I grew up with" (2011: 118). What is most interesting about his first attempt at the "Funny Animals" trope is that "I managed to almost totally deracinate it. The references to the Jews are as *die Mausen*. The references to the Nazis are as *die Katzen*. The factory that my father works in, in the ghetto, is not presented as a shoe factory, but as a kitty litter factory" (Id.: 118). Dehumanizing the characters of this story through the animal metaphor both allows and denies the possibility to engage with a Holocaust narrative and to fully comprehend the scale of such atrocities: "the idea of Jews as toxic, as disease, as dangerous subhuman creatures, was a necessary prerequisite for killing my family" (2011: 115).

The pile of dozens of nameless dead mice under Art's comic self-wearing a mouse mask is the perfect example of de-familiarization of the "Funny Animals" trope, reminding the reader that the classification of Maus into the anthropomorphic animal genre is complicated by the fact that a Shoah testimony (Vladek's testimony and the original text of the graphic novel) is visually translated into an animal metaphor while, at the same time, being brought into question by self-referential elements and metatextual comments: when being interviewed about his project by a film crew who are also wearing dog masks, Artie starts to shrink on his desk chair to child-like proportions, screaming "I want… ABSOLUTION. No… No… I want… I want my MOMMY!" (2003: 202), he explains that "Sometimes I just don't feel like an adult" (Id.: 203), and goes on to visit his therapist, Pavel, walking on a pile of bodies that seem to be following around. Once in Pavel's office, a survivor of Terezin and Auschwitz as well, who "sees patients at night", he indicates that the "place is overrun with stray dogs and cats. Can I mention this, or does it completely louse up my metaphor?", then adds, for comic relief: "Framed photo of a pet cat. Really!" The real reason of de-familiarizing his reader with the "Funny Animals" trope, by the revealing of the mechanism of his visual metaphor and by calling attention to his artifice – as Romero-Jódar (2017) aptly remarks in "'Funny Aminals': (De)Familiarisation in *Maus*" – is Artie's sense of his own unsuitability as a spokesperson for Holocaust survivors and their traumatic experience: "Some part of me doesn't want to draw or think about Auschwitz. I can't visualize it clearly, and I can't BEGIN to imagine what it felt like" (2003: 206).

By layering the biographical and autobiographical within the visual narrative, Spiegelman delineates between Vladek's story and his artistic interpretation of his father's testimony, and, at the same time, "he prevents complete and uncomplicated empathy through his allegory's constant insistence on its own artificiality. The concord offered by the cartoon language is denied and undercut" (Romero-Jódar, 2017). He allows the reader to identify with the characters through the Icon and the allusion to Disney, Mickey Mouse and other animals with human characteristics, while simultaneously questioning the Icon as a means to represent

a Holocaust survivor's story and silently condemning Disney's contribution to a morally repugnant racial worldview. Oblivious to the connection between Disney and Nazi propaganda, Vladek unwittingly wishes his son would become "*famous*, like… what's-his-name? (…) You know… The big-shot cartoonist…" (Spiegelman, 2003: 135).

As a result, by acknowledging the artificiality of the "Funny Animals" trope, Spiegelman reinterprets and heightens the commonly low status of the comics medium into a form that is highly expressive, multi-faceted, critical, and psychologically layered (Young, 1998: 675). The allegoric imagery thus becomes secondary to the relationship between the characters and the mechanisms of memory.

4. The Strangeness of Immortalizing Traumatic Memory in Commix: a Conclusion

The use of the comics medium in immortalizing the traumatic memories of a Shoah survivor proves that "the strength of commix lies in [its] ability to approximate a 'mental language' that is closer to human thought than either word or picture alone" (Young, 1998: 672). The narrative iconic genre allowed Spiegelman to both acknowledge and challenge the dominant tropes of Holocaust representation. The originality of *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* also derives from Spiegelman not following the standard memorial narrative of the Holocaust, presuming a "paradigm for history itself, a conception of past historical events that includes the present conditions under which they are being remembered" (Young, 1998: 678). This "strange" historical constellation stems from the constant dialogue between past and present, between father and son, as first- and second-generation survivors, from the juxtaposition of Vladek's erratic manner of narrating his history, to Art's insistence in preserving the authenticity of the account, even as he created its visual metaphor and its narrative coherence. Traumatic memory plays a major role in *Maus* because it goes beyond official historical facts, which – albeit "objective" – might be misinterpreted or, worse, forgotten.

Maus: A Survivor's Tale relies heavily on hand-drawn maps, sketches, and portraits as well as notes, letters, diaries, and birthday cards produced by the inmates incarcerated at Auschwitz–Birkenau and most camps detailing daily life aspects from the prisoners' point of view; in addition to cartoony pamphlets, booklets, and other aesthetically and politically charged cultural artefacts commissioned by Jewish organizations in the immediate post-war era. There are numerous reports from second-generation survivors of their experience with seeing images of the Holocaust atrocities for the first time – for example, Susan

Sontag's famous account in the opening pages of *On Photography*: "Nothing I have ever seen – in photographs or in real life – ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously. Indeed, it seems plausible to me to divide my life into two parts, before I saw those photographs (I was twelve) and after, though it was several years before I understood fully what they were about" (2008: 20). For Spiegelman, on the other hand, the most impactful objects which he encountered were not the photographic images but the hand-drawn ones. That is why he chose to translate Margaret Bourke-White's famous survivors-at-the-wire photograph, which he framed in the *Maus* comic strip (1972), into comic format.

The creation of the *Maus* constellation meant constantly selecting, ordering, and preserving an eyewitness's testimony, making sense of the past, while – in the present, as a secondary witness – holding together this strange tension between the pictorial codes (photographic and drawn images) and the textual (the oral history, as Art tape-records Vladek's story, and the written). Moreover, the commixture of drawings, photographs, and text enables a multi-layered narrative with various levels of meaning and readings, interconnected through simultaneous movements between word, image, and the visual metaphor they create (Kohli, 2012). Nevertheless, the formal complexities of the graphic novel are without a doubt the most remarkable, and all the artistic and philosophical nuances that constitute *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* would later become the propellant for younger generations not only to produce but also to experiment with the autobiographical commix strip.

The ultimate question, however, is not how effectively *Maus* recreates a Holocaust survivor's testimony, taking into consideration the insufficiency of memory as evidence, the process of remembering, and the dangers of forgetting, but whether the graphic narrative and the deceptively simple visual metaphors diminish the catastrophic magnitude of the events depicted or, more importantly, whether below its visual surface it dehumanizes its victims, moving the focus from *what* is being represented to *how* its creator does that. I would conclude that Spiegelman was indeed after more than recounting a survivor's tale or constructing a more comprehensible (auto)biographical account of his conversations with his father, and that his persistent experimentation with the commix strip form and consequently the metanarrative aspects of his work are there to prove that the creation of *Maus* is insistently made observable. We recognize Spiegelman's creative process and how it materializes Vladek's voice, his father's personal experiences of the war atrocities reconstructed and documented by his post-Holocaust child, serialized in print, and archived into the public record.

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RESEARCH NOTES

Digital Immigrants – Strangers

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Abstract. In social context, a stranger can be identified as one who is excluded from a group. This group can sometimes have only a few members, while in other cases it can consist of a whole nation or of an entire society. From a digital perspective, there are two kinds of citizens: first, those who are members of the digital information society. They are able to take part in social and public communication on several levels. Their habits often make life easier, and the pace they live their lives at is faster than of those before them. They are the digital natives. Second, there are those who designed the digital world, but ironically they are the ones who do not really understand how it works in practice. They are the digital immigrants, the strangers. In our study, our key point is that digital immigrants, who have been in this world longer than the so-called digital natives, are perceived as strangers as they are in many ways excluded from today's digital information society. The rituals of their daily interaction, routine, and media consumption as well as information gathering differ from those who are "full members" of the information society.

Keywords: digital immigrants, strangers

1. Introduction

Ubiquitous computing and the blending of online, digital media platforms into everyday life bring up the question of who moves safely around the world. There is a digital revolution. Our culture is shifting towards digital representation, online communication, and interconnections. When, in the beginning of the 1990s, personal computers, Internet, and broadband become available for a large population, ubiquitous computing was born (Molnár & Szűts, 2016). Using Shuetz's theory, the authors find a correlation between the terms strangers and immigrants. Shuetz states the following:

> The present paper intends to study in terms of a general theory of interpretation the typical situation in which a stranger finds himself in

his attempt to interpret the cultural pattern of a social group which he approaches and to orient himself within it. For our present purposes the term "stranger" shall mean an adult individual of our times and civilization who tries to be permanently accepted or at least tolerated by the group which he approaches. The outstanding example for the social situation under scrutiny is that of the immigrant. (1944: 499)

It is the authors' statement that those born before the age of ubiquitous computing,[1] often called digital immigrants, are slowly becoming strangers. Their digital technology using habits give them away. In spite of the fact that in the USA the members of Generation Z – in the strict sense, the digital natives – still count only for ¼ of the entire population, marketers, ICT companies, and the modern educational system are already paying the most attention to them. They are the digital natives.[2] All the others are slowly becoming strangers.

Digital natives live in symbiosis with their computers and speak online language as their mother tongue. All despite the fact that most of the knowledge they have of the new technology comes from their experience, and it is intuitive. This knowledge is not systematic and it is mostly not gained through an educational process. But, ironically, the strangers are those who designed this digital world. The skills of the natives are developed in an autodidactic way. Those who do not belong to the group of natives, those who were born to an analogue world – may their digital knowledge be however up-to-date – can only be immigrants, and as immigrants, strangers. They are not familiar with the digital world; as the authors will present in their survey, strangers try to apply the old traditions and routines, have difficulties in communicating, and often feel lost.

Digital natives live at a faster pace. They prefer to dine in fast(-food) restaurants and consume instant knowledge. An alteration of knowledge acquisition habits is present in their lives, the need and the demand of acquiring information/ knowledge as fast as possible, and the pragmatic point of view of the majority of digital natives use online literature instead of a printed one and rely on the World Wide Web, mostly Wikipedia, instead of libraries. They have never waited in line in a store to buy a record or even a CD. They mostly do not even have their own digital collection. (The strangers are still used to stocking up music, even if they

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1   Mark Weiser in 1991, when the average computer screen resolution was just 800 x 600 pixels, wrote: "The most profound technologies are those that disappear. They weave themselves into the fabric of everyday life until they are indistinguishable from it. […] The technology required for ubiquitous computing comes in three parts: cheap, low-power computers that include equally convenient displays, a network that ties them all together, and software systems implementing ubiquitous applications" (Weiser, 1991).

2   Some scholars state there is an issue with terminology. "The use of the term 'digital natives' has led to a great deal of controversy. Most academics dislike it, for good and sufficient reasons. Among other problems, the term implies that digital skills are innate rather than taught and learned" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2011).

do it by downloading files to their computers and archiving them on DVD-s.) On the other hand, the natives stream the music they need, and they get what they want instantly. Their motto is: what is not online it does not exist. What cannot be accessed immediately is of no interest to them. Still, one of their virtues is the ability of using the digital culture in a value-creating way. But this value is different than the traditional ones. It is mostly temporary.

Most of the strangers move "clumsily" in this world. They are not confident. Their speed of acquiring information is slow. They possess and process less information. This is at their disadvantage. According to Prensky (2001: 1):

> [Digital natives] have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players […] and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. Today's average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games […]. Video games, emails, the Internet, cell phones and instant messaging are integral parts of their lives. The most useful designation I have found for them is Digital Natives. Our students today are all "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet.

It is the authors' intention to investigate whether or not digital immigrants feel as strangers by keeping up habits brought from the Gutenberg-galaxy to the digital world. When reviewing the body of literature regarding the digital natives'/digital immigrants' division, it appeared that studies mostly focus on teaching-learning issues.

2. Ubiquitous Computing and Information Society

Looking at the matter in a simplified form, according to Webster (2011), new technologies are the most visible indicators of new times. These technologies are computers, online information services, while future technologies include Internet of Things, virtual reality, etc. Merging of ICTs ushers us into a new sort of society: information society. According to several works by Negroponte or Gates, the advent of this society can be dated to the early 1990s, the time when the first generation of digital natives was born.

3. On the Edge of Singularity

We are on the edge of a singularity. The ubiquitous computing, the implementation of digital technologies and content in everyday life are changing the (information)

society and our culture to an extent from where there is no turning back. The ways of obtaining information have changed. The ways of producing content have gone through a radical evolution. Using social media is nowadays an integral part of our information society, especially in case of those who belong to the group of digital natives that feel free to express their opinions or to become a prosumer (producer + consumer). It is typical for this generation to be always online and share a huge amount of information immediately. Digital immigrants are wired differently. After the singularity, the immigrants will not understand the new world, and they will become strangers forever (Szűts, 2014).

4. Digital Natives and Strangers

Most of the young people are using digital media in ways that are changing how they learn and how they relate to one another, to information, and to institutions. Digital natives are not only used to acquiring information really fast, but they also prefer to parallel process and multitask. They prefer also random access (such as hypertexts).[3] They function best when networked (Prensky, 2001). They are over-connected, and they are under the influence of media convergence. They multitask across several screens: smart TVs, smartphones, tablets, and personal computers. Members of this new generation (digital natives) have an 8-second attention span, down from 12 seconds in 2000 (Bershidsky, 2014). They prefer to communicate in a fast manner, using mostly a mixture of text and emojis in chat. The real issue is that the two worldviews – those of natives and of immigrants – are so different.

Digital natives view the world horizontally, in equalitarian terms. They do not recognize hierarchies, rather see everyone as existing on an equal level. A professor and a student are on the same level when editing a Wikipedia article. In a traditional educational institution, they are not. Digital natives incorporate the benefits of sharing things and ideas with each other and, by doing so, they cross boundaries between social classes (DeGraff, 2014). Before the digital (and mobile) age, many members of upper class in Britain refused to install a phone line as they did not want to be called by members of the middle or working class.

Digital natives use technology to express their identity. They flood social media networking sites – mostly Facebook – with selfies and pictures taken in any situation. They basically document their lives online. On the other hand,

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3   "Hypertext contains links. […] It diverges from linear writing, contains detours on account of hyper-referenciality and offers the reader the opportunity to go elsewhere. […] If hypertext is non-linear, non-sequential writing, then it is not pre-determined how its constituent sections follow one another in the course of reading. The text's authors provided the sequential order, but the reader may decide between divergent readership paths" (Szűts & Yoo, 2014: 22).

many of the digital immigrants remember that a film roll had 24 or 36 frames, and every exposition had to be accounted for. Due to the nature of our society, natives and strangers interact on several levels. Natives can teach strangers how to collaborate across boundaries with a variety of people and to build solutions that are horizontal, non-hierarchical.

In our case, strangers try to adopt the native culture, they speak the digital language to a certain level, but they "always retain, to some degree, their accent, that is, their foot in the past. The digital immigrant accent can be seen in such things as reading the manual for a program rather than assuming that the program itself will teach us to use it" (Prensky, 2012).

> There are hundreds of examples of the digital immigrant accent. They include printing out your email (or having your secretary print it out for you – an even "thicker" accent); needing to print out a document written on the computer in order to edit it (rather than just editing on the screen); and bringing people physically into your office to see an interesting website (rather than just sending them the URL). I'm sure you can think of one or two examples of your own without much effort. My own favorite example is the "Did you get my email?" phone call. (Prensky, 2012: 69)

5. Findings of the Survey

The survey examines whether or not the digital natives and immigrants have different attitudes towards the use of digital materials. The research presented in this paper was conducted by an electronic survey in February 2017 and was based on simple random sampling; the target group involved full-time and part-time students from Hungary – groups of students studying at two universities were surveyed during a simple sampling. The first was Budapest University of Technology and Economics, while the second was King Sigismund University. The research focused on students' attitudes towards "traditional" and digital content in order to determine how strangers perceive the world. We got N = 97 analysable answers within the deadline. The survey consisted of 11 closed questions. The main results are as follows, which were received by simple descriptive statistical methods. The data were first evaluated with the methods of quantitative research, without examining the difference between the various age-groups.

Three major groups were represented in the survey: the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 23 and 29 (38%), followed by those who were 40 to 52 years old (31%) and the younger generation, but not typical students, aged 30–39 (16%). It can be stated that 62% of the participants were born and socialized before the digital age (see *Figure 1*).
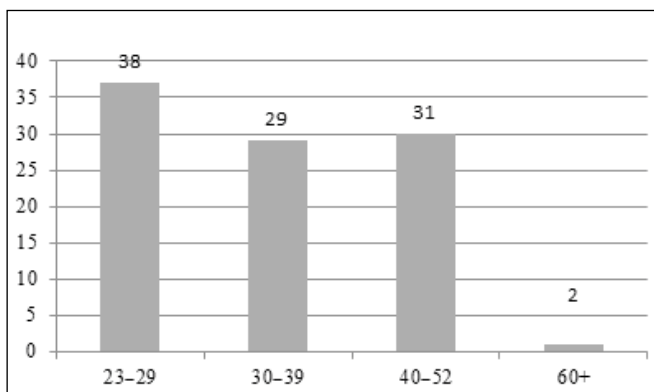
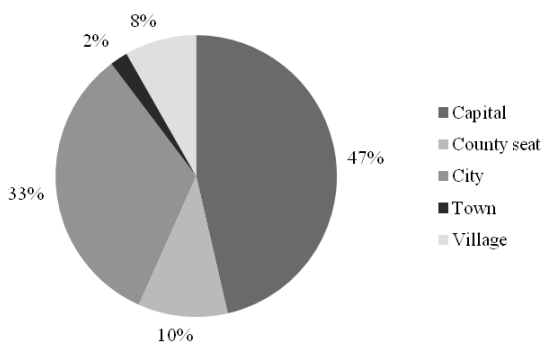**Figure 1.** Age of participants in the survey
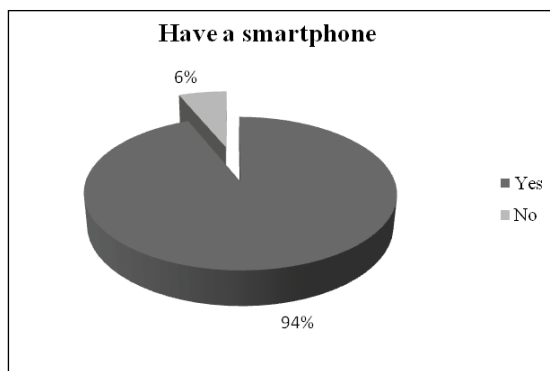

Figure 2. Ratio of the residences

Figure 3. Ratio of smartphone owners

Read news from
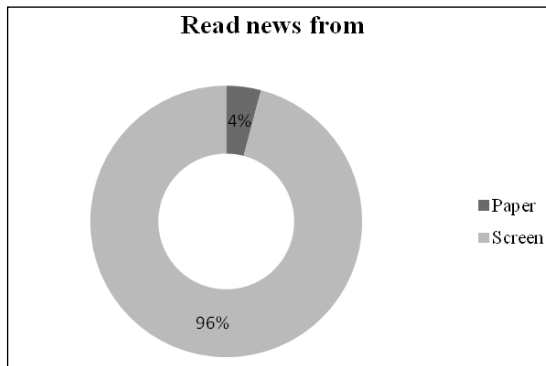
Figure 4. Ratio of news-reading sources

Study from
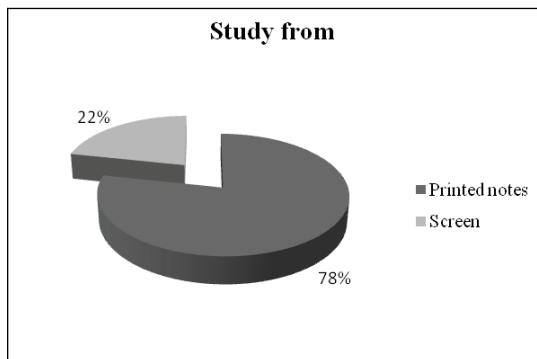
Figure 5. Ratio of study sources

The majority of the respondents are from a bigger city. 47% of them live in Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

One of the basic interests was if the responders were connected with personal devices to the network. Most of the surveyed had a smartphone, only 6% did not own one (see *Figure 3*).

Respondents were asked to point out the platform that they mostly read news from. No multiple answers were allowed. When asked, they replied that the screen (computer, tablet, smartphone) is generally the preferred choice (see *Figure 4*).

Students were also asked to point out if they rather study using the computer screen, or they print the same notes out. Even if the majority reads news from the screen, they do not study the same way. Participants download digital curriculum and then 78% (!) print it out (see *Figure 5*).
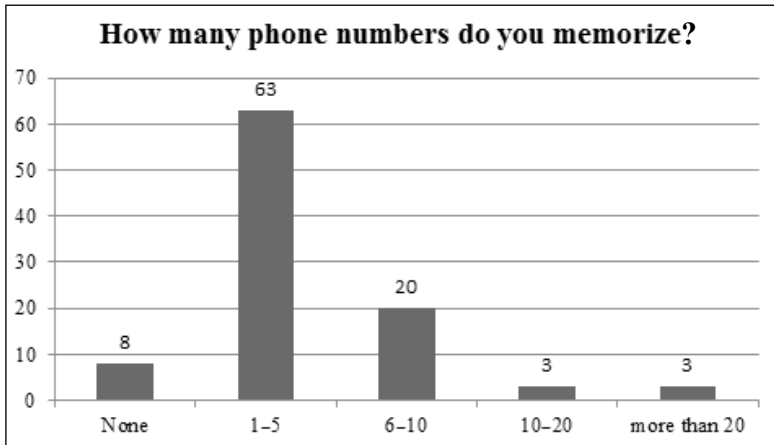
Figure 6. Number of memorized phone numbers
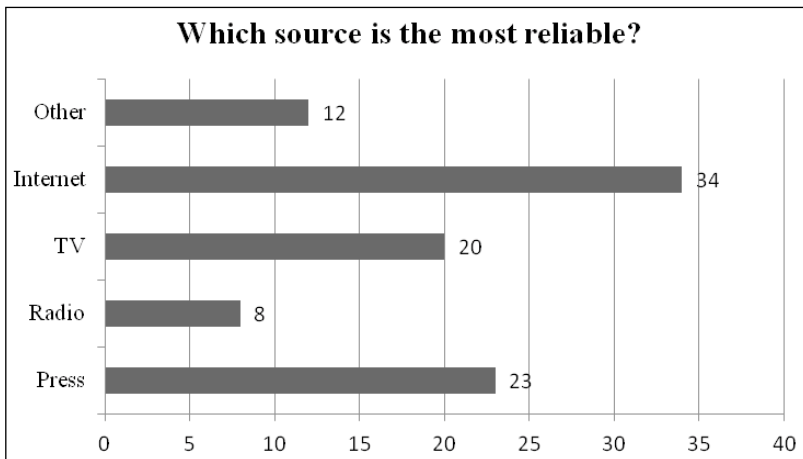
Figure 7. Opinion on reliable sources

On the issue of outsourcing the memory, participants responded the way the authors expected. 65% did not remember more than 5 phone numbers, and, surprisingly, there were 8% who did not memorize any phone number (see *Figure 6*).

Internet was usually not mentioned as the most reliable source, but most of the surveyed chose it as the platform they believed the most in (see *Figure 7*).

There was a question related to attitudes. The interest was if ICT is the most dominant form of communication among friends. The answers showed that
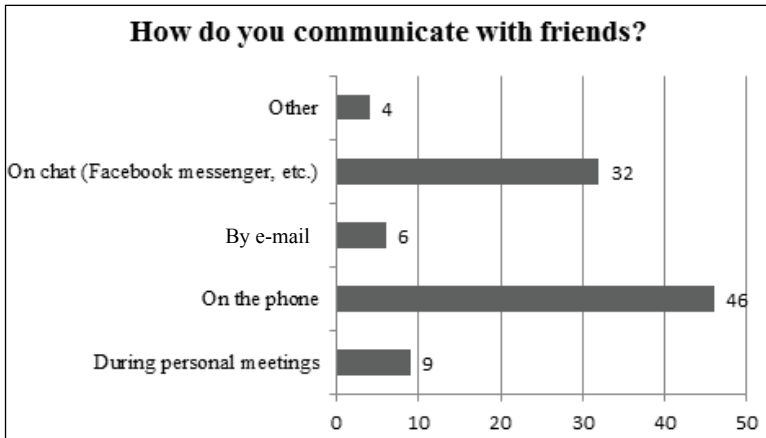
Figure 8. Opinion on communication channels
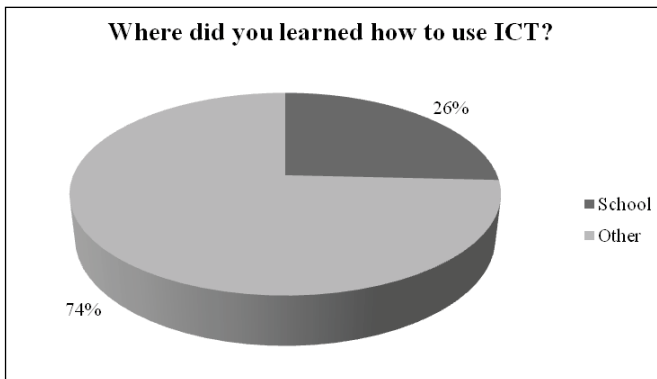
Figure 9. Ratio of ICT learning locations

talking on the phone is still the primary channel (46%), but chat and messenger apps add up to 38% (see *Figure 8*).

Most of the respondents own a smartphone and read news from the screen, but only 26% of them have learned how to use ICT during a formal educational process (see *Figure 9*).

4 out of 5 respondents do their taxes, banking through e-services, that is around 80% of the respondents prefer to use these regardless of the age-group (see *Figure 10*).

Do you use e-services for official business?

21%

79%

■ Yes
■ No
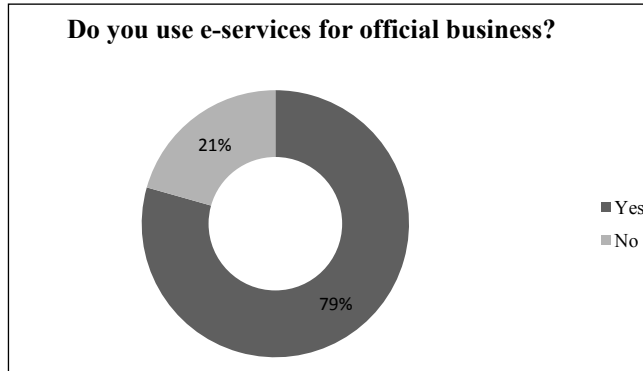
Figure 10. Ratio of e-service usage for business

			Do you learn from the book, note, or note on the display?		Total
			Display	Printed notes	
Please, enter your age!	23–29	Count	5	32	37
		Expected Count	8.1	28.9	37.0
	30–39	Count	4	24	28
		Expected Count	6.1	21.9	28.0
	40–52	Count	12	18	30
		Expected Count	6.6	23.4	30.0
	over 60	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.2	.8	1.0
Total		Count	21	75	96
		Expected Count	21.0	75.0	96.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.504[a]	3	.037
Likelihood Ratio	8.208	3	.042
N of Valid Cases	96		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

Figure 11. Cross-table analysis of learning displays

			If you have a question to a friend, how do you communicate with him?		
			Personal meeting	Phone	Total
Please, enter your age!	23–29	Count	6	7	37
		Expected Count	3.5	17.3	37.0
	30–39	Count	2	18	28
		Expected Count	2.6	13.1	28.0
	40–52	Count	1	19	30
		Expected Count	2.8	14.1	30.0
	over 60	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.1	.5	1.0

			If you have a question to a friend, how do you communicate with him?		
			usually by phone or in person	chat, just in official case email	chat, Facebook, and other messengers
Please, enter your age!	23–29	Count	0	1	22
		Expected Count	.4	.4	12.3
	30–39	Count	0	0	7
		Expected Count	.3	.3	9.3
	40–52	Count	1	0	3
		Expected Count	.3	.3	10.0
	over 60	Count	0	0	0
		Expected Count	.0	.0	.3

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.698[a]	21	.011
Likelihood Ratio	41.403	21	.005
N of Valid Cases	96		

a. 26 cells (81.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Figure 12. Cross-table analysis of communication channels

| | | | Do you like to arrange your official business on the Internet? | | Total |
			Yes	No	
Please, enter your age!	23–29	Count	23	14	37
		Expected Count	29.3	7.7	37.0
	30–39	Count	26	2	28
		Expected Count	22.2	5.8	28.0
	40–52	Count	26	4	30
		Expected Count	23.8	6.3	30.0
	over 60	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.8	.2	1.0
Total		Count	76	20	96
		Expected Count	76.0	20.0	96.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.955[a]	3	.012
Likelihood Ratio	11.202	3	.011
N of Valid Cases	96		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .21.

Figure 13. Cross-table analysis of business arrangements on the Internet

In addition to the simple descriptive statistical methods, the results were examined with multivariate analytical methods. Using SPSS (statistics software package) data analysis, the followings can be determined. The calculation is based on partial correlation in order to prevent distortions that occur due to the lack of representativeness. There were no detectable differences between the various ages in the case of other questions. Based on these main findings, there are some discrepancies in our hypothesis that digital immigrants are always strangers:

There are some unexpected correlations: those older than 40 rather study from the screen, and the younger ones study from a book! Thus, there is a significant difference in this question regarding the different generations. Those over the age of 40 are overrepresented by students that learn from the screen, and the younger people are overrepresented in the majority of learning from books, as shown in the chart below in *Figure 11*, where the results of the Pearson chi-square test are visible in the form of cross-table analysis.

There was also a significant difference between the forms of chosen communication regarding the generations. Younger people, digital natives prefer chat and personal meetings, and older, the middle-aged prefer communicating over the phone, and

digital immigrants like to make phone calls and send e-mails. This is supported by the results of *Figure 12*.

The last interesting relationship or significant difference between the generations was that those older than 29 did not like to use e-services so much, while older people were keen to do so. This can be seen in *Figure 13* showing the cross-table analysis.

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The Beautiful Stranger –
Szekler Teenagers' Role Models

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Exemplis discimus (Phaedrus)

Abstract. The social learning theory emphasizes that model giving or guiding has always been one of the most powerful means for transmitting values, for demonstrating and accentuating the expected attitudes, habits, thinking, and behaviour (Bandura, 1986; Crosswhite et. al., 2003). Studies have shown that a role model could motivate a teenager's sporting habits and performance in a positive way. They also found that the top athletes, those celebrities who appear frequently in the media, can become role models. Do Szekler teenagers have role models? Do they choose their role model from their physical environment or the international popular media stars or mediatized persons become their idolized model? We wanted to find out who those teenagers are from our region who choose as their role model a star, a famous person, a media celebrity – a well-known person but still a stranger for the teenagers of Szeklerland. If so, who are their icons and role models? Who are those people that have an exemplary behaviour in their eyes? To whom they would like to compare themselves when they grow up? And what are those characteristics which have decisive roles in choosing as role model a person they have never met before? The analysis is based on three important surveys conducted among teenagers from Romania (Covasna, Harghita, and Mureş counties). The surveys took place in the springs of 2012, 2014, and 2016. About two thousand pupils in the 7th and 11th grades were involved each time. On the basis of variables, such as age, gender, and type of residency, we will present general profiles and general types of Szekler teenagers regarding the role models of their choice.

Keywords: role model, media star, teenagers, stranger

1. Model Following

Several fields of science emphasize the importance of socialization. Thanks to this, in the last few decades, several pedagogical, psychological, and sociological studies were written about the role of socialization, which influences social

development – about the process, the mechanisms, and the potential actors. As it is well-known, the socialization process is determined by three main socialization backgrounds. The first and most important one is the family and the close community, the second one is the school and the peer groups, and in the last decades there appeared a third one: the mass media as a socialization medium (László, 1999; Berta, 2009). The media plays an increasing role, which even might de-emphasize the role and the impact of the family and school (Dubow et al., 2006: 405). Consequently, the social norms and rules, acquired through socialization, could or might replace or overwrite the messages from the media. Literature on socialization also emphasizes that in the process of socialization observational learning, model selection, and model following play a very important role. Model following enables individuals to acquire new behaviour elements, to explore new combinations of personal behavioural repertoire, and to recognize the consequences of others' actions (Kósa, 2005: 96). At the same time, observational learning is also an important time-saving method: one does not always need a personal empirical experiment. A major part of our knowledge and learning is not based on personal experiment – we still have the knowledge (Gerbner, 2000, in Berta, 2009).

Role models could have an important positive impact on children's and youth's personal development – states cognitive psychology. According to the social learning theory (social cognitive theory), model giving or model guiding has always been one of the most powerful means for transmitting values, for demonstrating and accentuating the expected attitudes, habits, thinking, and behaviour (Bandura, 1986, in Crosswhite et. al., 2003). Studies suggest that if a strong social marketing message, such as the dangers of smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs, is presented by a media or a sports celebrity, rather than by a parent, teacher, coach, or other "regular" adult, it could be much more effective (Latiff et al., 2011: 14). As studies have shown, a role model can motivate both a teenager's sporting habits and performance in a positive way. For example, top athletes, those celebrities who appear frequently in the media can become role models. But not only those athletes can become role models who have very good and high performances. The more common, "everyday people" can also become role models, especially if the pupils find commonalities, similarities with that person (Crosswhite et. al., 2003). Special performances are respected and idealized by the crowd; athletes, sports celebrities have been seen as role models since ancient times. Due to technology, sports achievements (and music performances as well) can be traced from anywhere (Jones-Schumann, 2000, in Bush et al., 2004: 108). Sports activities are "readable" and "watchable", but the athletes' personal lives are likewise. Thanks to the media, a well-known sportsman or a famous singer can become a "hero" and role model for teenagers. Previously, before the new media era, ordinary people could get only filtered

news, but nowadays we can almost constantly track others' lives (László–Danó 2015: 192). Their attitude and private lives become accessible for quasi anyone thanks to the media, the social networking sites, and famous people's Facebook posts. The more appearance has a famous person in the media, the more easily can s/he become the role model for teenagers. For female individuals in particular, role models may show and give solutions and answers as to how to reconcile the conflicting demands of work and home roles (Nauta–Kokaly, 2001, in Kennedy et al., 2003: 40).

A role model can be a person who is considered exemplary or "worthy of imitation" (Yancey, 1998: 254; Crosswhite et al., 2003). An individual who has valuable quality or qualities in that other person's eyes, who will consider it good for imitation, an outstanding achievement, which "inspire[s] and motivate[s] others to do as well" (Zain et al., 2014: 294). Role model could become any individual "whose life and activities influence another individual in specific life decisions" (Basow–Howe, 1980: 559), a person "who is worthy of imitation in some area of life" (Pleiss–Feldhusen, 1995: 163), or a person who can be perceived as being a standard for one or more roles (Kennedy et al., 2003: 40). Role models could have a relevant impact on career decision-making (Nauta–Kokaly, 2001; Kennedy et al., 2003: 40). A research was conducted among university students in the U.S.: they had to identify the single role model most influential in their academic and career decisions. According to the results, parents and peers were the most influential, after whom the teachers, coaches, media and sports figures were frequent choices. An interesting result: the influence of the same sex role models appeared in both cases: males and females as well (Nauta et al., 2001) – boys usually chose a male role model, while girls a female one.

Who can become a role model? First of all, parents and other family members, friends, teachers can be classified as possible role models. In a research, half of the surveyed high school students named a family member as their role model (HAA, 1999: 40). But it is not necessary that individuals know their idol, the role model personally. For example, a historical or famous figure as Abraham Lincoln or Albert Einstein can also become role models. Some studies show that parents' influence on teenagers' behaviour is more significant than the influence of the media or sports celebrities (Martin-Bush, 2000). Other research conclude that the influence of strangers' (entertainers, media stars, sports celebrities) personality as role models has a certain amount of influence but not greater than that of the parents. Although mothers' influence remains determinant, fathers' influence can be diminished by the entertainers, athletes, etc. (Latiff et al., 2011: 14).

In this paper, we present the data from these three surveys regarding the role model issue. The questionnaires included each time three questions about models and model following: we wanted to find out whether the pupils from our region have a role model, and if so, who their idols and role models are, who are the

ones that have an exemplary behaviour in their eyes, to whom they would like to be similar to when they grow up. We were curious to find out what kind of role models Szekler teenagers have. Who are those who can become role models for them? Do they choose from their psychical environment, from "regular" human beings, or they opt for a mediatized person, an iconic but a strange person seen in the media? What are those main attributes and characteristics which they were chosen for as role models?

2. Methodology

In the spring of 2012, an important first survey research took place among Hungarian pupils in the 7th and 11th forms, regarding media use, knowledge about the media, user skills, and so on. In our research, 2,122 pupils were involved from urban and rural areas from Covasna, Harghita, and Mureş counties. The pupils responded to the self-completed questionnaires, which contained 49 questions. In 2014 and 2016, we repeated the survey. The research was conducted by a research group formed of colleagues and students of Sapientia University, Department of Social Science (Miercurea Ciuc), and was accomplished in partnership with the International Children's Safety Service (Budapest). The surveys took place during March and April 2012, 2014, and 2016.[1]

Table 1. Presentation of the sample

		2012	**2014**	**2016**
Number of respondents		2,122	2,208	1,824
Number of schools		63	72	67
Age	13 years	1,088	1,165	896
	17 years	1,034	1,043	928
Gender	Male	920	1,052	852
	Female	1,190	1,152	958
Type of residency	Rural	630	744	580
	Urban	1,492	1,464	1,244
County	Harghita	1,240	1,269	1,086
	Covasna	725	793	738
	Mureş	157	146	—[2]

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1 The major parts of the findings – regarding the role model topic – were published in several academic papers (see: Gergely 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016).

3. Who Needs a Role Model?

In 2012, only half of the 2,122 respondents gave a relevant answer and named a person, while in 2014 and 2016 two-thirds of them did so. According to the chi-square test, there is a strong significant rapport in each year between the age and the existence or non-existence of a role model: pupils in the 7th form usually have a role model in bigger proportion than pupils in the 11th form. Gender was a significant factor 4 years earlier (p1 < 0.001) but neither in 2014 (p2 = 0.1) nor in 2016 (p3 = 0.285). So, we cannot say anymore that boys have a role model more frequently than girls. In turn, the urban–rural differences are still dominant: among those pupils who live in a rural area, the number of those who choose a role model is higher than among town kids.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of those who have a role model

Have a role model		2012	2014	2016
Form[3]	VII.	72.4	73.7	72.3
	XI.	54.1	62.3	56.2
Gender[4]	Male	68.5	70.1	65.5
	Female	59.7	66.8	63.2
Residency[5]	Urban	65.5	66.8	61.7
	Rural	58.6	71.4	69.5
	Basic	66.7	67.4	62.8
Father's educational level[6]	Middle	62.4	68	65.3
	High	72.1	75	70.5
	Basic	59.1	70.3	63.8
Mother's educational level[7]	Middle	64.5	67.7	63.3
	High	70.7	70.9	70.1

The biggest difference can be observed in 2016: among the pupils living in town, 38.3 per cent do not have a role model – this proportion was 34.5% in 2012 and 33.2% in 2014. In our first survey, we concluded that the younger, 7th-grade

2   Due to financial issues, in 2016, the survey was focused only on Harghita and Mureş counties.
3   p1 = p2 = p3 <0.001. (p1 – the level of significance in 2012, p2 in 2014, p3 in 2016).
4   p1 < 0.001, p2 = 0.1, p3 = 0.285.
5   p1 = 0.002, p2 = 0.03, p3 = 0.001.
6   p1 = 0.002, p2 = 0.021, p3 = 0.05.
7   p1 < 0.001, p2 = 0.377, p3 = 0.052.

boys who live in town have a more clear idea about who they want to be like, whose model they want to follow (Gergely, 2014: 111). But this had changed by 2014, and this tendency is still captured in 2016 as well.

Regarding the educational level of the parents, we could not identify such significant differences; there are only mild differences in the cases of pupils whose parents have a higher educational level. While among all respondents 17.21% of the pupils have fathers with a higher educational level and 20.10% of the pupils have mothers with a higher educational level, among those who have a role model these ratios are slightly higher: 18.88% in the case of fathers and 22.16% in the case of mothers have a higher educational level. The survey in 2014 brought along only partial novelties: the earlier statistical correlations became minimal by increasing the number of those who named a role model. The latest research data show that the parents' educational level is becoming less and less significant in this matter.

Based on the responses to the open question "Who is this person you would like to be similar to in adulthood?", we created 17 categories[8] in 2012. These categories were labelled according to the information provided by the respondents, what they said about the person whom they had named as a role model. Parents are on the top of the list: in 2012, more than one third of the teenagers wants to become similar to their mothers, while in the following years even more: 44.5% in 2014 and 43.9% in 2016.

Since these 17 categories are a bit hard to deal with in statistical terms, we tried to group them. We got inspiration from certain Hungarian colleagues' work: they had 5 categories: *parents*, *peer-group*, *acquainted adults*, *media-persons*, and *other famous people* (László–Danó, 2015: 202). According to their grouping method, we managed to close up our 17 earlier categories in 6 categories: 1. *Parents*, 2. *Peer-groups*, 3. *Acquainted adults*, 4. *Actors, singers, musicians*, 5. *Sportsmen*, and 7. *Other* (see *Table 3*). In the first one, of course, there are the mothers and fathers as role models: each year, at least twenty per cent, mainly girls (in 2012, 20.1%, two years later 23.2%, and in the last year 22.4%) wanted to become like their mothers. Likewise, fathers as role models were opted for in 17.9%, 21.3%, and 20.5% in each survey resp., mainly by the boys (Gergely, 2016b: 113). In the second group, there are those role models who have quasi the same age as the respondents: siblings and best friends. The third one includes the group of grandparents, great-grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives but teachers, coaches, and neighbours as well. As we can see, every year, two-thirds of the role models were chosen from the physical reality of the pupils.

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8   The categories are: 1. Mother, 2. Father, 3. Sibling, 4. Grandparent, 5. Relative, 6. Pedagogue, priest, coach, 7. Acquintance, 8. Close friend, 9. Movie actor, 10. Singer, musician, 11. Football player, 12. Sportsman, 13. Formula 1 driver, 14. Media star, 15. Movie character, superhero, 16. Writer, theatre actor, artist, 17. Other famous people.

Table 3. Idol categories

	Idol categories	2012	2014	2016
A. Acquaintances	1. Parents	38.1	44.5	42.90
	2. Peer-group	7.7	6.9	8.54
	3. Acquainted adults	20.0	18.6	17.80
B. Strangers	4. Actors, singers, musicians	16.0	11.2	12.10
	5. Sportsmen	12.6	12.8	11.80
	6. Other	5.6	6.0	6.73
		100%	100%	100%

4. "The Whole World – Theatre"

In 2012, 16 per cent of the pupils chose a movie actor, a singer, or a musician as their role model. In the following two surveys, the group of the movie and music fans is a bit smaller. We can encounter names from known TV series or top music hits. There are evergreen names and stars, but once in a while there appear younger yet not so popular names as well. In 2012, Rihanna was very popular among girls as a role model, while in 2014 nobody mentioned Rihanna, but a lot of girls named Selena Gomez as their idol.

Among movie stars, singers, and musicians, almost all the names are from the international movie and music industry. Among singers, there also appear Balázs Havasi, Zoltán Mága but mainly foreign stars.

Table 4. Actors, singers, musicians as role models (2016)

Hungarian singers/musicians		
	Male	Zoltán Mága (1)
	Female	Andi Tóth (3), Mary Nótár (2), Gabi Tóth (2), Dóra Szinetár (1), Gigi Radics (1), Reni Tollvaj (1)
Hungarian actors		
	Male	–
	Female	Izabella Varga
International singers/musicians		
	Male	Eminem, Justin Bieber (4), Snoop Dog (1)
	Female	Selena Gomez (9), Rihanna (2)
International actors		
	Male	Ryan Gosling (4), Jason Statham (3), Brad Pitt (1), Johnny Depp (1), Orlando Bloom (1)
	Female	Angelina Jolie (1), Cameron Diaz (1)

Chuck Norris, an Eternal Hero?

While traditional role models (like scientists, artists, great historical persons) are hardly ever named as role models by teenagers, there is no research on the topic of role models without Chuck Norris, Bud Spencer, Sylvester Stallone, or Arnold Schwarzenegger (László–Danó 2015: 205). Even if their "splendour" was vivid two-three-four decades earlier, in each year, these persons appear as role models for a couple of boys.

Table 5. Eternal heroes

	2012	**2014**	**2016**
Chuck Norris	20[9]	4	2
Bud Spencer	2	5	3
Arnold Schwarzenegger	5	3	3
Sylvester Stallone	5	2	1

5. "Citius, altius, fortius"

The data tables reveal that many pupils have named an athlete as their role model: one out of eight students wants to look like a sportsman, and every seventeenth of them wants to be like a football player in their adulthood. Of course, mainly the boys specified such role models. In 2012, 12.65% of the 13- and 17-year-old pupils chose an athlete as role model, while in 2014 12.87%. In 2016, two-thirds of those who chose an athlete as role model were 13 years old. With football players, this is even more accentuated: only one out of five teenagers is 17 years old. It seems that younger pupils like much more to compare themselves to a well-known sportsman.

Table 6. Choosing an athlete as role model (Gergely 2016b: 116)

	2012		**2014**		**2016**	
		%		**%**		**%**
Football player	76	48.41	93	48.95	84	60.9
Formula 1 driver	18	11.46	5	2.63	5	3.6
Other sportsman	63	40.13	92	48.42	49	35.5
Total	157	100	190	100	138	100

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9   See also: László–Danó 2015: 205.

As we can see, the popularity of football players is stable, but the popularity of the Formula 1 drivers has decreased: only 5 pupils named a race car driver as their role model. Michael Schumacher is still on the top of the list, while Sebastian Vettel appears in every year among the role models.

Table 7. Formula 1 drivers as role models

2012		2014		2016	
Michael Schumacher	5	Kimi Raikkönen	2	Michael Schumacher	2
Fernando Alonso	4	Fernando Alonso		Ayrton Senna	
Travis Pastrana	3	Adrian Newey	1	Sebastian Vettel	1
Ken Block	2	Sebastian Vettel		Jenson Button	
Jenson Button Petter Solberg Sebastian Vettel[10]	1				
Total	18		5		5

And what kind of other sports filter into the teenagers' minds thanks to role models? Basketball, body-building, hockey, cycling, and handball are the most popular ones.

Table 8. Sports and sportsmen as role models[11]

	2012	2014	2016
1. Athletics[12]	–	4	3
2. Basketball[13]	13	15	8
3. Body-building, fitness[14]	6	13	7
4. Biathlon[15]	2	–	1
5. Combat sports[16]	5	9	6
6. Cycling[17]	6	7	1

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10 Among the pupils whose role model was a Formula 1 driver, there was only one girl whose favourite was Vettel and who also wanted to become a race car driver in her adulthood.

11 Some examples who appeared as role models in each category (see also Gergely, 2016b: 117–118).

12 Krisztián Berki (HU), Usein Bolt.

13 LeBron James, Michael Jordan, Mátyás Lokodi (RO), Candace Parker, Kobe Bryant, Derrick Rose, Samantha Prahalis, Ildikó Vass (RO), Stephen Curry, Botond Héjjas (RO).

14 John Cena, Frank Zane, Dexter Jackson, Jay Cutler, Lazar Angelov, Alexandra Béres (HU), Réka Rubint, Alexandra Kocsis, Randi Orton, Michelle Lewin.

15 Éva Tófalvi (RO)

16 Badr Hari, Fedor Emalienko, Yuri Boyka, Róbert Flórián Pap (RO), Éva Csernovcki, Andrei Stoica, Daniel Ghiță (RO), Rafael Aghayev, Jigoro Kano.

17 Martin Soderstorm, Matt Macduff, Dakota Roche, Steve Peat, Peter Sagan, Kris Holm.

	2012	2014	2016
7. Equestrian sports[18]	2	3	1
8. Fishing[19]	3	1	–
9. Handball[20]	4	15	5
11. Hockey[21]	8	9	7
12. Swimming[22]	–	4	1
13. Table tennis[23]	1	2	2
14. Tennis[24]	2	–	–
15. Others[25]	13	10	9
Total	63	92	55

Anyway, football is the most popular sport among Szekler teenagers, and football players are the most popular role models in the sportsman category. Football players as role models appear rather among the thirteen-year-old (seventh-grade) boys – younger boys and especially those who live in rural area. In 2012 and 2014, pupils living in villages chose more often a football player as role model than those living in town. But in 2016 more boys living in urban areas chose a football player as role model. The most popular football players among Szekler teenagers are the world's best players: six of the players below are among the top ten football players in the world.[26] Each year, two dozen of 13- and 17-year-old pupils (boys) named them as role models. In 2012 and in 2014, neither a Hungarian nor a Romanian professional football player's name did appear on this list. But in 2016 there were already three Hungarian players: Balázs Dzsudzsák, Béla Fejér, and Róbert Ilyés, each of them receiving one "vote".[27] We can also observe that

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18   Lajos Kassai, Katalin Ferencz (RO), Ingrid Klimke, Reed Kesler, and Katalin Ferencz appear as role models each year.

19   Gábor Döme.

20   Anita Görbicz, Edit Józsa, Katalin Pálinger, Gabriela R. Nagy, Luc Abalo, Nicke Groot, Botond Ferenczi, Nicola Carabati, Luc Abalo, Mikkel Hansen, László Nagy, Eduarda Amorim, Roland Mikler, Gábor Császár.

21   Sidney Crosby, Patrick Roy, Ilya Covalchuk, Árpád Mihály (RO), Alexander Ovechin, Patrick Polc, Stephen Curry.

22   Dani Gyurta, Katinka Hosszú.

23   Timo Boll.

24   Maria Sharapova, Roger Federer.

25   Shaun White (snowboard), Nils Jansons (roller skate), Paul Moldovan (dance, RO), Dominik Guehrs (skate board), Sofia Boutella (street dance), Michaela Schifrin (ski), Cameron Hanes (hunter).

26   Messi, Ronaldo, Neymar, Neuer, Iniesta, Bale. See: http://www.ranker.com/list/best-current-soccer-players/ranker-sports.

27   We have to highlight that the survey took place in March–April 2016, a few months before the UEFA 2016 games. We think that if the survey had taken place after the summer, a lot of Hungarian names would have appeared on the list of football role models since they did

all these footballers who appeared as role models are European players, or, if not, they usually play at a well-known European football club.

Table 9. Football players as role models

	2012	2014	2016		2012	2014	2016
Lionel Messi	23	33	23	Marcelo Viera	1	0	0
Cristiano Ronaldo	22	28	23	Zinedine Zidane	1	0	1
David Beckham	5	1	1	Xavi Hernandez	0	4	0
David Villa	4	0	0	Ronaldinho	0	2	0
Iker Casillas	4	6	1	Steven Gerrard	0	2	0
Fernando Torres	3	6	1	Angel di Maria	0	1	0
Ricardo Santos	3	0	0	Andres Iniesta	0	1	0
Victor Valdes	2	1	0	Philip Lahm	0	1	0
Didier Drogba	1	0	0	Robin van Persie	0	1	0
Ryan Giggs	1	0	0	Manuel Neuer	0	0	2
Miroslav Kose	1	0	0	Douglas Costa	0	0	1
Frank Lampard	1	3	0	Balázs Dzsuzsák	0	0	1
Sergio Ramos	1	1	2	Béla Fejér	0	0	1
Wayne Rooney	1	0	0	Gareth Bale	0	0	1
Neymar da Silva	1	2	18	Robert Ilyés	0	0	1

6. Because He/She Is Talented, Funny, or Good Looking?

Why is this person your role model? The justification of the choice also varied. However, if we compare the answers of those pupils whose role models are their parents, their relatives, their friends with the teenagers whose role model is a football player, we will find some differences. For those who chose a footballer as a role model, physical structure, outlook, sportiness, outstanding performance, and achievement are more important. And they rarely or never articulate a behavioural value or quality such as helpfulness, patience, honesty, or modesty. Compared with those who would like to become like their parents, their relatives, or their close friends, these pupils emphasize rather the look of the football players, actors, or singers.

What are those internal or external characteristics for which you have chosen this person as your role model? We received plenty of answers to this question,

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very well at the championship. The next survey will take place in 2018, which will perhaps demonstrate this.

which are very hard to analyse and group. Each year, we obtained much more characteristics than respondents: almost every pupil enumerated a few characteristics. We tried to group this, and based on our Hungarian colleagues' practice we classified the most frequent answers into 6 groups (László–Danó 2015: 207). In 2012, every sixth-seventh pupil characterized his/her role model as a sympathetic person (our label – chosen from the characteristics). 16.4 per cent of the pupils of 7th or 11th grades say one of the following about their role models: kind-hearted, helper, fostering, attentive, or sympathetic. In 2014, this was the most frequent group of characteristics, but in 2016 this was only in the 3rd place. For the pupils who responded in 2016, it was a bit more important their role model to be *friendly,* sweet, cute, funny, and have a good humour. As we can see, being smart is not the most important thing, but in 2012 9.3% of the pupils emphasized this characteristic as being the most important one in choosing their role models.

Table 10. The motivation of the role model choice

	2012	**2014**	**2016**
1. SYMPATHETIC (kind-hearted, helper, caring, fostering, attentive)	16.4	18.6	13.7
2. DETERMINED (perseverant, resolute, purposeful, confident, optimistic, hard-working, strong, brave)	15.1	11.6	14.2
3. FRIENDLY (sweet, cute, charismatic, good-humoured, funny)	15.0	15.1	17.0
4. SMART (intelligent, wise, educated)	9.3	8.6	6.3
5. THE BEST (talented, successful, clever, the best in his/her profession, handyman, resourceful, famous)	7.7	4.9	4.7
6. GOOD-LOOKING (beautiful, handsome, rich, athletic, muscular, shapely, pretty)	6.4	9.7	5.2

Being the best seems to be very motivating – mainly in case of the "stranger" role models but even in the case of parents and other adults. A group of pupils would like to become like a football player because, for example, "he is the best footballer in the world", "the best goalkeeper in the world", he has "the best leg", "there has been no better than him since I was born" etc. or to become like a good movie actor. A very strong message: some teenagers would like to become the best at something.

7. Conclusions

Every second 13- and 17-year-old respondent named a role model in 2012, in our first survey, while in 2014 and 2016 already two-thirds of them said they had a person who they would like to become similar to in their adulthood. The others did not have any or did not want to have a role model, mostly because they did not want to influence their "uniqueness" (Gergely, 2014: 117). The majority of those who named a role model have chosen a role model from their immediate environment: they named their parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives, or close friends. In every third teenager's role model choice, the influence of the media is present: they have not met their role model in person, they have not talked to him/her, and they only know a little about their role model. A lot of boys named athletes as role models, and the most popular are the football players: Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo are the most popular football idols. Apart from football, a few other big names appeared as well, and also some Hungarian sportsmen entered the idols' category. We may also find here – in a very small number – local sportsmen every year: Éva Tófalvi, Katalin Ferenc, and Mátyás Lokodi are representing the local idols, who have become role models for a few teenagers. In 2016, there appeared new names as well: a few boys would like to become like Balázs Dzsudzsák, Béla Fejér, or Róbert Ilyés.

Limits of the Analysis

The role model question is only a small part of the survey, and because of this there is missing contextual information which could help us to give a more detailed picture. If we had data concerning the teenagers' lifestyle, their values, their consumption habits, the analysis could become more elaborate regarding the media impact of the role model choice. Furthermore, a survey cannot draw a detailed picture about a teenager's role model only by having a name: a more qualitative method is needed to get a closer look at the teenagers' level of role model engagement as to whether pupils give only a name or this model following is very accentuated. Similarly, even the nature of the role model's achievement should be analysed in order for us to understand their popularity. But with such immense data sets this is almost impossible. Even this could be fulfilled within a smaller-scale qualitative research such as case studies and focus groups that would be carried out to complete the analysis and to have a more complex view of the issue.

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Strangers in Digiland

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Abstract. With the growing importance of digital practices in young children's everyday routines, parents and educators often face frustration and confusion. They find it difficult to guide children when it comes to playing and learning online. This research note proposes an insight into parents' and educators' concerns related to children's and their own digital literacy, based on two exploratory qualitative inquiries carried out from March 2015 to August 2017 among 30 children aged 4 to 8 from Romania, their parents and educators. The research project *Digital and Multimodal Practices of Young Children from Romania* (2015–2016) and its continuation *The Role of Digital Competence in the Everyday Lives of Children Aged 4–8* (2017–2018, ongoing) are part of a broader effort within the Europe-wide COST network IS1410 – *The Digital and Multimodal Practices of Young Children* (2014–2018). Parents and educators are disconnected from young children's universe, our research has found. The factors enabling adults' access to "Digiland" and ways of coping with the steep learning curve of digital literacy are explored through parents' and teachers' narratives, guided observation of children's digital practices, and expert testimonies.

Keywords: parents, teachers, digital literacy, Romania

1. Introduction

With the Internet embedded in individual and community life (Wellman et al., 2003), digital literacy becomes a critical factor in children and youth empowerment (Kahne–Middaugh, 2012). When it comes to digital empowerment, interactivity enables the shift from a mechanic to an organic approach towards research and policy making: from paternalistic to participatory methods, from resource-driven to needs-driven development strategies (Mäkinen, 2006: 385). As digital citizenship is increasingly the new educational focus, it is critical to develop both respectful online behaviour and to practice online civic engagement (Jones–Mitchell, 2016: 2064). Are children and youth prepared for the opportunities and

challenges of a participatory culture? Are parents and educators ready to keep up with digital natives? Is the digital world, or "Digiland" an important part of their lives?

2. Digital Literacy and Social Inclusion

The ubiquitous presence of information and communication technologies in general and of smart devices in particular has reshaped the way we interact. Children become more and more part of this new "online interaction order" (Marsh, 2011: 101). Meanwhile, many parents and educators encounter difficulties when it comes to understanding the connected generations' world, in particular the adults left behind. The "digital underclass" of vulnerable groups (Helsper–Reisdorf, 2016: 2) is marked by age (the elderly), education (high school and below), and disability. While digital empowerment and social inclusion are usually approached separately, recent inquiries suggest the need for exploring good practices of treating them together. For example, educators may catalyse families' digital literacy by strengthening ties between school and family (Arrow–Finch, 2013; Blau–Hameiri, 2016).

The urge to digitally empower Romanian young children in order to prepare them to take advantage of digital technologies for a lifetime cannot be underestimated. Digital empowerment assumes both the transfer of knowledge, competence, and understanding of the digital environments and the supporting change of the socio-cultural context where children establish digital practices. The use of digital technologies by Romanian children at home and in educational settings, the level of their digital competence was studied through guided observations, informal discussions with children, and visual methods: a content analysis of their thematic drawings (Bakó, 2014; Tőkés, 2016). The most used digital device of children aged 4 to 8 years old was the tablet, accessible to most families, although in various levels of technical quality. However, the most popular media channel of young children was still television, used primarily for watching cartoons. A guided observation of 18 kindergarten and 7 school children's use of high-end tablets[1] resulted in clear differences when it comes to digital competences, as shown in the table below. Age is an important factor, along with family background (Bakó, 2016).

The empowering role of the family and education in the formation of efficient digital practices and development of digital competence of Romanian children is an important conclusion of the *Digital and Multimodal Practices of Young Children from Romania* research project (2015–2016) funded by the Institute for Scientific Research of Sapientia University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. We found

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1　　Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1', 2014 edition, provided by the researchers.

that the use of digital technologies among Romanian children was interrelated with the digital practices of the family and especially the mother, or rather their digital practices responded to needs of entertainment and spending spare time. Their favourite games and applications were Minecraft, Angry Birds, Grand Theft Auto, Crossy Road, Temple Run, Zig Zag, and Minion Rush. We also observed that preschool education misses the conscious use of digital technologies. An active intervention is necessary on the level of children, families, and educators in order to digitally empower Romanian children.

Table 1. Digital competences of children aged 4 to 6 (N = 18) and 6 to 8 (N = 7)

Digital competences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Children aged 4–6	18	16	14	13	11	16	6	2
Children aged 6–8	7	7	7	7	7	6	5	4

Note: 1 – start a YouTube video; 2 – take a photo and watch it; 3 – make a video and watch it; 4 – open a game and play; 5 – download a game and play; 6 – draw using the S-Note application; 7 – set the sound; 8 – check the Wi-Fi signal

3. Parents in "Digiland"

Family is the key socialization environment of young children. Daily routines, parents' skills and attitudes towards digital technology play a major role in developing their children's knowledge, skills, and attitudes when it comes to information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Marsh et al., 2017). Parents' access to "Digiland" ranges from moral panic and strict control to a more relaxed stance and a laissez-faire digital parenting style. However, the typical parent in Central Romania would be somewhere in-between, with a touch of scepticism and nostalgia. "We did not grow up like this… we played outdoors, we played a lot. In the evening, when the stars came up, we went home. Now the playgrounds are empty… for them, everything is about the Internet, computers, and smartphones. They do not read a book. I miss so many things from their life" (37-year-old mother).

The term "family literacy" (Compton-Lilly–Rogers–Lewin, 2012: 33) describes the integrated character of the digital lifestyle embedded in home environments. Due to the newly introduced digital manuals in Romania, school children's parents are confronted with difficulties in assisting their learning. A focus-group discussion carried out with parents revealed their frustration and concern related to their own digital incompetence and the children's increased screen time.

Technology consumption in domestic spaces is a common practice and under research scrutiny from the nineties onwards (Silverstone–Hirsch, 1992;

Plowman–McPake–Stephen, 2008; Fleer, 2014; Nikken–Jansz, 2014). Parents' reports of their children's digital practices and daily routines show that small children use tablets, watch TV in the morning and late in the afternoon, before and after kindergarten/school, more often when the weather is cold or rainy. Parents control their screen time and are more concerned with health issues than with cybersecurity or their children's access to inappropriate online content. There is also a strong belief among Romanian parents that their children are born digitally, savvy, and they do not to teach them: the little ones know it better. Not only that parents' concerns are rather unilateral and restricted mostly to health issues and screen time, but they are not really immersed in their kids' world of online playing. Their access to "Digiland" is on a rather narrow path despite their efforts to be part of their children's virtual playgrounds.

4. Teachers in "Digiland"

We interviewed a total of 17 teachers from four towns, a large city, and a village from Central Romania. Our research focused on the role played by digital technology in educators' personal and professional lives, the level of their digital literacy, and their development needs. We found striking differences not so much along age but rather along residence (urban versus rural) and the level of technological endowment of schools. We will compare and contrast two teachers' account of digital life, focusing on socio-demographic factors, and their attitudes towards developing their own digital competences.

Table 2. Two teachers in "Digiland"

Criteria	Emma, 34	Lidia, 46
School size and location	Rural school in a village of 1,900 inhabitants, Central Euroregion of Romania, 175 students	Elite Catholic school in a small town of 34,200 inhabitants, Central Euroregion of Romania, 1,000 students.
Teaching experience	15 years	27 years
Support from parents	Limited	Full
Support from school	Limited	Full
A day at school: how do you use digital technologies for teaching?	I use technology for conveying information, such as showing pictures from the Internet or sounds like bird tweets or downloading songs. Sometimes, we listen to fairy tales.	I arrive at school at 7:30, I switch the interactive whiteboard on, and I check if the Wi-Fi works because if it does not, a paper-based day will follow.

Criteria	Emma, 34	Lidia, 46
A day at school: how do you use digital technologies for teaching?	Or when I teach Romanian language: there are audio materials for developing comprehension skills, and I also bring materials already downloaded, such as tests. Unfortunately, I do not use enough technology in my classes because the school has a poor infrastructure: we only have a laptop, a projector, and amplification devices. I use technology mainly for audio materials or when I have group activities.	If the Wi-Fi and everything else works, I check the children's tablets if they can connect to the educational cloud. I integrate all these devices. If we have a language class, we listen to the audio material, then read the text sent on tablets. For feedback purposes, there is a .pdf application built in the tablets so that children can fill in the blanks. Thus, communication is bidirectional. I can capture the evaluation moment and send it instantly to the parent.

Both teachers are motivated to integrate digital technology in class, but the differences in institutional support and available resources are striking. This showcase epitomizes the gap between the rural and the urban Romania, between privileged and underprivileged children.

5. Concluding Remarks

Parents and educators are disconnected from young children's universe. Factors enabling adults' access to "Digiland" are multifold: infrastructural, psychological, social, and educational. Coping with the steep learning curve of digital literacy is a multiplayer game; our small-scale research has shown: domestic technological environment, institutional support of schools, and personal motivation are factors promoting or hindering ICT-related knowledge and skills. An upcoming larger-scale quantitative research will bring more clarity to this issue.

Both parents and educators are striving to keep up with the Internet generation: a bumpy road marked by concerns and frustrations. Adults tend to overestimate young children's digital literacy and are rather sceptical when it comes to the revolutionary role technology plays in kids' lives. They are more concerned with health issues related to screen time than deeper and more complex threats such as cybersecurity or cyberbullying.

Schools might be enablers of digital literacy for both children and adults. More resources should be directed towards poor and disconnected regions, especially rural areas. Developing the digital literacy levels of educators might also help to create safer spaces for learning and playing for the benefit of young children.

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BOOK REVIEW

Ryan Holiday: Trust Me, I'm Lying: Confessions of a Media Manipulator[1]

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The "dark handbook" of media manipulation published by Portfolio Hardcover was authored by "digital native" public relations specialist, marketer, and media strategist Ryan Holiday. Born on 16 June 1987, in Sacramento, California, Holiday – the inspiring symbol of living life on your own terms and making a living out of it – began his professional career at the age of 19, after dropping out of high school. *Trust Me, I'm Lying* (2012) is the first of his four practical books published so far: *The Obstacle Is the Way* (2014), *Ego Is the Enemy* (2016), and *The Daily Stoic* (2016). The first edition was published on 19 July 2012 in New York and soon became a bestseller mentioned by the Wall Street Journal, The Huffington Post, AdAge, The Columbia Journalism Review, Forbes, The New York Times, TechCrunch, The Times-Picayune, Fast Company, The Next Web, and Boing Boing. The second edition[2] that is being reviewed here was released in 2015 and provides case studies to support the authors' arguments outlined in the book.

This contemporary genius and thought-provoking book about the dawn of online publishing is a "must read" for all media and public relations students and practising professionals. "When intelligent people read, they ask themselves a simple question: What do I plan to do with this information? Most readers have abandoned even pretending to consider this" (2015: 234). Due to its simple language and explicit vocabulary, basically anyone can understand its content that is split into bite-sized portions that can be read "on the go": "Influence is ultimately the goal of most blogs and blog publishers, because that influence can be sold to a larger media company" (2015: 38).

While working for *American Apparel* and *Tucker Max*, the young hustler and later "whistleblower" observed the working of the mass-media system affected

by the new medium, the Internet, and developed various techniques to abuse it for gaining profit.

The first step in solving a problem is recognizing that there is actually a problem. *Trust Me, I'm Lying* is not just a confession but the honest voice of a professional media insider, confirming there is a problem with our new media system – referred to as "the monster" –, and it is in everyone's interest to recognize this:

> You cannot have your news instantly and have it done well. You cannot have your news reduced to 140 characters or less without losing large parts of it. You cannot manipulate the news but not expect it to be manipulated against you. You cannot have your news for free; you can only obscure the costs. If as a culture we can learn this lesson, and if we can learn to love the hard work, we will save ourselves much trouble and collateral damage. We must remember: There is no easy way. (2015: 68)

The work is divided into two main themes: a detailed explanation of how the media system works in practice, while the second topic highlights the consequences of such practices. In the chase for profit, average citizens are misguided, given a sensational display rather than a critical viewpoint through which personal and corporate reputations are irreversibly damaged, and history is shaped by enthusiastic opportunists and spin doctors. "In an age of images and entertainment, in an age of instant emotional gratification, we neither seek nor want honesty or reality. Reality is complicated. Reality is boring. We are incapable or unwilling to handle its confusion" (2015: 201).

The first chapter serves as a manual full of tactics on how to "feed the monster" and abuse this system, but do not stop reading just yet! Journalism today is based on ten principles as follows: verification, objectivity, originality, completeness, transparency, fairness, restraint, humanity, accountability, and empowerment. Blogs make the news but ignore these principles, products of several years' experience, and tradition. According to the author, the Internet and its paths are still new, and it takes a bit of time to catch up with such technical development. Anyone can turn something artificial into something seemingly real through the "trading it up the chain" technique, which is highlighted in this chapter. Bloggers are attracted to scoops, stories that generate traffic, which generates profit. By acknowledging this, it is easy to figure out how to create appealing pitches that generate publicity for your subject of choice; do not worry if you do not have any supporting evidence to reference, names are just as good for backing up a story.

We get a fairly accurate picture on how online journalism works, a new sector that provides a job for most journalists in the United States. Besides informing, news are also a source of entertainment and have a high impact on our everyday lives:

In 1948, long before the louder, faster, and busier world of Twitter and social media, Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton wrote: The interested and informed citizen can congratulate himself on his lofty state of interest and information and neglect to see that he has abstained from decision and action. In short, he takes his secondary contact with the world of political reality, his reading and listening and thinking, as a vicarious performance…. He is concerned. He is informed. And he has all sorts of ideas as to what should be done. But, after he has gotten through his dinner and after he has listened to his favored radio programs and after he has read his second newspaper of the day, it is really time for bed. This is the exact reaction that web content is designed to produce. To keep you so caught up and consumed with the bubble that you don't even realize you're in one. (2015: 87)

Bloggers are citizen journalists who make a living out of page views. They work in a fast-paced environment, writing about hot topics that will generate high traffic. Due to the lack of time, these blogs often publish unverified information from all kinds of sources. Most newspapers have online versions, and the journalists have had to adapt to the fast-paced news environment, so they often take on trending stories from blogs without checking their credibility.

The second part of the book reveals that these techniques were only being shared with the purpose of educating the outsider. We also get guidelines on how to spot fake news. Crowd sourcing is a new tool used in journalism, which came along with the widespread of social media, and we get a detailed overview of its risks in this work. After the conclusions that can be put to use on a daily basis for those who follow the news, we get an interesting collection of case studies which were mentioned in earlier chapters. In the realm of blogs, there is nothing wrong with being wrong! Due to the fast nature of the medium, stories are supposed to be incomplete and are completed over time. Corrections, if any, usually show up at the bottom of the page hours or days after most people have read through it, and it has already been picked up by several other mediums, which is why it is so damaging to the reputation. It does not really matter if the person or organization communicated with the media at this point; in fact, it is better if they do not react at all!

Media manipulators are well-trained and highly-skilled professionals; they do not mind being caught red-handed because this helps their work. The public gets a massive dose of entertainment; so, blinded by their emotions, they forget to ask questions. In this realm, facts are optional and often biased. Blogs offer an online arena, where public humiliation and degradation takes place for entertainment, and anyone can become the next victim. Ryan Holiday's *Trust Me, I'm Lying* is a highly educative and useful read not just because it highlights

the danger of our trading "citizen-journalism"-based media culture but because it also offers ideas on how to oversee manipulation and find meaning in our lives, which is every intellectual person's responsibility.

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