

FOREIGNNESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY ROMANIAN NOVEL (1845-1900): FROM SEMANTIC VALENCES TO SPECIFIC MARKERS OF NOVELISTIC SUBGENRES

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Abstract: : This paper operates with the archive of digitized texts (about 150 novels published between 1845 and 1900) offered by the project ASTRA Data Mining: The Digital Museum of the 19th Century Romanian Novel. By identifying the occurrences for the term “străin” (“foreign/er”; “strange/r”) and its entire lexical family, the study intends to prove that there is a strong correlation between linguistic signs and literary concepts. More precisely, my survey finds its starting point in the methodology developed by Ryan Heuser and Long Le-Khac. The two researchers use the pair of notions “signal/concept,” where “signal” means “any number of things that are readily tracked computationally” and “concept” represents “the phenomenon that we take a signal to stand for, or the phenomenon we take the signal to reveal,” in order to explain their working method. This precisely is the main reason why I have chosen to classify the occurrences of my key-word based on their semantic valence and to discuss semantic variation as an important indicator in trying to delineate different types of literary discourse and the novelistic subgenres. Lastly, my paper intends to provide a complete ad litteram image of “foreignness” as it occurs in the nineteenth-century Romanian novel. This image will be formed based on the meanings (“implicit” and “explicit” meaning, according to Teun A. van Dijk’s delineation) of the terms that comprise the lexical family for my key-word and on the context (the “micro-” and “macro-context”) in which these words occur as well.

Keywords: ad litteram image of “foreignness,” lexical family, nineteenth-century Romanian novel, semantic valence, semantic variation, subgenres of novel.

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When discussing the emergence of the novel in nineteenth-century Romanian culture, but also its evolution in a transnational framework, Ioana Drăgan¹ polarizes her analysis around the dichotomy revealed by the pair-syntagms of “inraliterary context” and “extraliterary context.” Specifically, Drăgan sees these syntagms as two of the phenomenological directions that provide evidence from a double perspective of the role of this narrative formula. Moreover, the author focuses on the role of propagation tool that the nineteenth-century Romanian novel has fulfilled *ex aequo* at the extraliterary

level. In short, this literary genre has rendered “the problems and currents of ideas of the time,” regardless of the literary paradigm or doctrine it has traversed².

However, the Romanian case launches some interesting directions of analysis, concerning the way in which the novel has encompassed the whole network of discussions belonging to a wider cultural context. One is the well-known debate on the (lack of) originality and on the imperative of managing the import of foreign literary formulas and the phenomenon of imitation, vehemently signaled in a whole series of critical discourses.



Without dwelling to an undue extent on the indigenous debates on the evolution of the novel, the foray into these details of literary theory is the starting point of my analysis.

First of all, the relationship between the concepts of *intra-* and *extraliterary* brings to the fore an interesting working hypothesis: the nineteenth-century Romanian novel succeeds in rendering at a micro level, through the constructed plots and even the dynamics of subgenres, all the debates from the wider cultural context. In other words, in addition to the effort to enhance their own literary production and original content, there is a series of aspects concerning the social and political context of the Principalities and some historical events relevant to the nineteenth century. This is also the main reason why the attempt to give Romanian literature the autochthonous foundation implies revealing how certain literary topics manage to attach and validate aspects related to the identity imperatives of the Romanian culture, not very well configured at the time. The fame gained by subgenres such as the outlaw novel or the historical novel has its roots not only in the way they succeeded in exploiting the romantic aesthetics, i.e., the folkloric elements, the exaltation of the national history and the glorification of its heroes, but also in the way these subgenres manage to fill identity gaps.³

Secondly, it is worth noting the simultaneous evolution of literature *per se* and of the Romanian literary language. Given that the nineteenth century can be schematically described from a linguistic point of view by resorting to several reforms that played a major role in the process of modernization of the Romanian language, the contribution of the literary discourse in the context of this modernization should be highlighted. One relevant example⁴ is the way literature describes the main changes, such as the transition from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet, proposing valuable study material on the transitional stage of this linguistic evolution.

In fact, among the directions of analysis presented in my study, I am mostly interested in rendering the novel as an instrument for recording cultural debates and the development of the Romanian literary language. I propose a similar approach to the one Paul Cornea uses in *Regula jocului* [The Rule of the Game]⁵, when he analyses the term “popor” [people/s] in the Pasoptist period. Moreover, the working hypotheses that I try to validate rely on the way changes at the level of semantic valences represent operative “signals”⁶ for the dynamics and delimitation of conceptual boundaries within the novel subgenres and for the transposition at the text level of the literary and cultural currents in the nineteenth-century society. This article can thus be included in the series of studies based on the specific methodology of the “history of mentalities,” an interesting perspective in historiographical discourse. In short, I am trying to validate one of the hypotheses also put forward by Cornea (following the theories of Georges Duby and Régine Robin), i.e., that language is a “privileged instrument of a semiology of the collective mind”⁷.

This approach also justifies the title, since I intend to illustrate foreignness *ad litteram*⁸ in the nineteenth-century

Romanian novel and to analyze the occurrences from an exclusively lexical-semantic perspective, by centralizing them according to their lexical-grammatical category and meaning⁹. For this I used the corpus of the *Digital Museum of the Romanian Novel: the 19th Century*, more precisely, 157 novels published between 1845 and 1900, that make up about 90% of the Romanian novel production in the nineteenth century, and I have extracted the occurrences for the key-word “străin” (foreign/er”; “strange/r”) and its lexical family, both the nominal and the verbal occurrences. From a methodological point of view, my study proposes both the method of quantitative analysis and a close reading exercise, because I am interested specifically in identifying the meaning of my terms according to the context in which they appear.

The Context and its Role in Analyzing the Semantic Valences

The conclusions drawn by some of the theorists who have detailed the role of “context” in revealing the object of study of *semantics* reveal a series of taxonomic labels based on the relationship between the meaning of a word and its semantic dynamics. Adam Schaff¹⁰, for instance, revisits the theoretical perspectives of Michel Bréal, Witold Doroszewski, Jerzy Kuryłowicz and Joseph Vendryès, bringing to the fore the phenomenon of “word-meaning variation” as part of study of *linguistic semantics*, and the factors that influence these dynamics of meaning. In other words, Schaff uses one of Doroszewski’s definitions, built upon a doubling approach from the point of view of analysis, in the sense that the study of meanings is doubled by the dimension of the “history of meanings”; thus, he emphasizes the role of interpreting the “actual meaning” of a word in close connection with the “history” of the word itself and its meanings¹¹. Moreover, starting from these distinctions, the Polish linguist takes up the discussion of the semantic processes of “broadening,” “narrowing,” and “transfer” of meaning. Schaff (re)nuances, in order to draw attention to the “problem of polysemy,” the difference between “fundamental,” “general,” or “main” meaning, and “secondary” or “particular” meaning¹². If the former is not influenced by context, the latter cannot exist in its absence, since it results from an interdependent relationship. Tullio de Mauro¹³ proposes a similar approach by stressing the importance of context in obtaining and identifying what the Italian linguist calls the “individuality” of a word. More precisely, he places semantics at the interference between the “objective historical complexity of reality” and the “historical complexity of the culture that reflects on this reality.”¹⁴ This relationship between meaning and context or, in other words, the acquisition of new meaning depending on the circumstances is also explained by Boris Tomaşevski,¹⁵ who uses a practical example to illustrate it. Specifically, he highlights the relationship of “interdetermination”¹⁶ by evoking the situation where removing words from a given sentence is possible without loss of overall or contextual meaning, and by underlining the impossibility to identify the meaning of a word in the absence of context.

This review of the definitions and roles of context reveals some basic principles about the relationship between discourse (as text), its meaning and the context in which it takes place. Teun A. van Dijk explains, based on the characteristic of “implication,” the difference between “explicitly expressed” and “semantically implied” meaning.¹⁷ In fact, the theorist points out the “explicit meaning”/ “implicit meaning” syntagms, but he also discusses them in terms of what he calls “mental models.” In other words, when the meaning is not explicit, not being stated in the text, it exists indeed in the structure of these “mental models,” which provide the implicit valence of meaning.¹⁸ These “parameters” radically change how the concept of “context” is perceived. It is made up of the totality of “mental models” and is the result of a process whose main characteristic is subjectivity. Moreover, van Dijk points out¹⁹ that context proposes both a “macro” dimension, the “macro context” containing social and political aspects, and a “micro” dimension, with a constructive role in relation to the “macrostructure.” This correlation between the two structures also renders the main idea of this analysis, i.e., that the particularities at the level of the occurrences for the key-word (“foreign/er”) shape the overall picture of the macrostructure, because this “extralinguistic” context or “context of reference”/ “real-world context”²⁰ renders the specific variations of the microstructure.

The overview that emerged from this operation of identifying meanings according to context reveals the semantic variety that the nineteenth-century Romanian novel proposes. From phrases such as “that stranger,” to “the foreign accent,” to saving the homeland from “the foreign yoke,” “the taste for everything foreign,” to feeling like “a stranger in this big world,” it is certain that the novelists explore all the semantic valences of the terms “stranger” and “foreign/er” and also make excellent use of their connotative or metaphorical potential, whose expressiveness is noticeable from the first reading. It is obvious that occurrences placed in contexts that bring to the fore that feeling of estrangement from the other and from the world, or nostalgia caused by estrangement from one’s own country, cannot be included in the same category of situations in which “foreign” determines the noun “yoke.” Therefore, given this semantic variety, I consider that the attempt to classify these valences and to quantify them represents a promising exercise both from the point of view of outlining an image of foreignness rendered in the form of “statistical” data, and from the point of view of researching the stage of evolution of the literary Romanian language.

The Semantic Valences of the Keyword “străin” (foreign/er; strange/r) in the Nineteenth-Century Romanian Novel

In order to classify occurrences by semantic valence, I began by cataloging the meanings of “străin” (foreign/er), “străinătate” (abroad/foreignness), “străinism” (foreignness) and “a înstrăina” (to estrange),²¹ all of which have been recorded in *Dicționarul limbii române (DLR)* [The Romanian Dictionary].²² In what follows, I will present these meanings, in order to

justify, throughout my analysis, both my choices regarding the classification of occurrences and the hypotheses revealed by this taxonomic process. When it comes to the term “străin” (foreign/er), the *DLR* registers the following meanings²³: 1. “(A person) who belongs to the population of another country than the one where they are or live, or who has a different origin, citizenship etc. than that of the country they live in”; 2. “(About countries, places etc.) one that is different from somebody’s homeland or birthplace” or “which belongs or is specific to another people or territory than those of the speaker; which comes from another country, from another people or another territory than those of the speaker”; 3. “(A person) who is neither close kin, nor a close friend to somebody” or “(a person) who does not belong or is not considered to belong to a family or a closed group”; 4. “That which has no connection to somebody or something (...); one who is distant (through convictions, interests, or a lack of knowledge, ignorance) from something”; 5. “That which is not somebody’s property; which belongs to somebody else”; 6. “That which is different from the norm, stands out, has distinctive characteristics”; and, finally, 7. “(About objects, matter, substances etc.) which has a different nature than that of a certain object or a certain type of matter etc. it is combined with.”

Considering these meanings, I have noticed that—seeing as I am interested in interpreting the data through the methods of statistical analysis—such an exercise requires that, in the case of each meaning, an operational taxonomic label be attributed for the quantification process. More precisely, I reviewed the seven meanings and I proposed, as an abstract equivalent, a series of labels based on the dichotomy “animate/inanimate,” represented as “+ Animate” and “- Animate”²⁴, as well as “abstract/concrete”²⁵ (“+ Abstract”; “+ Concrete”). With the first two meanings, it is obvious that they point to the conceptual sphere of “ethnicity.” I think of this notion through the perspective of Thomas Hylland Eriksen from *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*²⁶, where the author discusses in depth the various understandings of the term and the relationship between ethnicity and concepts like “race,” “nation” and “class.” More precisely, Eriksen’s definitions for the concept of “ethnicity” address both the sociopolitical dimension of the notion and the symbolic or metaphorical dimension. Therefore, besides the idea of relationships being formed between groups that belong to different communities, on a symbolic level Eriksen also associates ethnicity with “the creation of identity” through the perception of alterity.²⁷ Also, by employing the determiner “metaphoric” in order to distinguish between the symbolic meanings and the one strictly bound to the political or social context, I aim to address this “metaphoric” semantic valence, using a specific understanding of the term, already coined by cognitive linguistics. In other words, as explained by Joseph E. Grady in his dedicated study, *Metaphor*²⁸, the definition of the concept cannot be limited to its characteristics as a “linguistic phenomenon,” but also refers to the totality of “the patterns of conceptual association”²⁹ and even the ways in which these patterns can be discussed, even from the perspective of



culturally specific characteristics. The relationship between “ethnicity” and “identity,” whose nuances are presented by Eriksen, is also interesting due to the similarities between this approach (which highlights the constitutive role of ethnicity in the identity of the community) and one of the “imagological domains” subsumed under the issue of identity by Daniel-Henri Pageaux. In fact, the French theorist discusses the fact that, during the process of self-configuration, building an image of the “Other” is a universal strategy.³⁰

Back to the first two meanings and the concept of “ethnicity,” I consider “Ethnic (+ Animate),” belonging to the first meaning, i.e., all those occurrences naming foreign peoples and their representatives, and “Ethnic (- Animate),” corresponding to the second meaning, which, according to the *DLR*, is a determiner for nouns such as “countries” or “places” to be suitable labels for the two meanings.

As for the other five meanings, I have grouped them as follows: the third meaning, a person with no connection to and who does not belong to a certain group, and the sixth meaning, a bizarre, unfamiliar element, have been replaced by the labels “unknown (+ Animate)” and “unknown (- Animate).” The fourth meaning, easily identifiable in a text by the structure “străin + the preposition *de* + noun” (translatable as “a stranger + to + noun”) and the fifth meaning belong to the same category of connotative meanings—“connotative (+ Animate)” and “connotative (- Animate),” respectively. The seventh meaning, the odd one out, was not included, since I only discovered one context where the adjective “străin” (foreign) refers to “matter” or a “substance.” It can be found in one of the first science-fiction novels³¹ in Romanian literature, namely Victor Anestin’s 1899 *În anul 4000 sau O călătorie la Venus* [The Year 4000 or a Journey to Venus], which tells the story of a group of scholars, making the novel’s scientific ambitions quite clear; the context per se, which makes use of the term under discussion, is the description of certain astronomical phenomena leading to the birth of the planet Venus: “Little by little, the gaseous matter cooled down, because of the excessively cold temperature surrounding it, and it began to liquify. The dense atmosphere which exists at the moment began its formation then, combined at first with various foreign gases that have since been cleansed. Land started to emerge in the shape of small islands.”³²

The same stages apply to the nouns “străinățate” (abroad/foreignness) and “străinism” (foreignness), as well as the verb “a înstrăina” (to estrange). The *DLR* registers the following meanings for “străinățate”: 1. “Any country outside the borders of someone’s homeland; another country than the homeland; what lies beyond the borders of homeland territory”; 2. “(Old-fashioned and traditional, used in a collective sense) a group of people who are originally from another country than the one they are in; a group of foreigners”; 3. “a foreign, unfamiliar environment, where somebody is far from family and kin.” For these three meanings, I propose labels according to, on the one hand, “+ Animate” and “- Animate,” in order to distinguish between the latter two, since the first of the two refers to “people,” while the second deals with a “foreign environment.”

On the other hand, I also took into consideration the “concrete/abstract” dichotomy, in order to differentiate between the first meaning and the other two. In other words, the resulting categories are: “străinățate (abroad) + Concrete,” which includes those occurrences where even the grammatical markers (the verbs and the prepositions that are being used) prove the equivalence between “străinățate” (abroad) and a particular place (for instance, the most frequent phrases which include spatial parameters are based on the verb “to leave” and the prepositions “to/for” and “from”). The second category, “străinățate (abroad/foreignness) (+ Abstract; + Animate),” is a label employed for situations where the allusion to a community is obvious. The last one, then, “străinățate (abroad/foreignness) (+ Abstract, - Animate),” corresponds to those contexts where geographical nuance is easily noticeable, but the term is being used figuratively. Recchia and Jones’s conclusions³³ prove to some extent the soundness of my decision to divide semantic valences by characteristics like “+ Concrete” and “+ Abstract,” since—by analyzing “semantic richness” through three different variables (“the number of characteristics,” “contextual dispersion” and “semantic neighbors”)—the authors have shown the connection between “rich linguistic contexts” and abstract concepts, as well as concrete concepts and “rich physical contexts”; for the latter, they point out the existence of characteristics pertaining to “objects” and “places.”

The purpose of this distinction, however, is to emphasize the differences between the three categories, especially those between the first category and the third. Differentiating between “concrete” and “abstract” is by no means an easy operation, since the discursive ambiguity³⁴ lent by the employment of the term “străinățate” (abroad) as a spatial reference constitutes a universal strategy in the nineteenth-century Romanian novel. I mentioned this aspect during the process of classifying occurrences, and I will be giving some examples in this sense. More precisely, one of the conclusions drawn by articles mapping certain elements of literary geography to be found in the two MDRR archives is a tendency towards bovarism. In other words, the Romanian novel, especially during its first stage of development, includes in its plot elements of “geographic bovarism”³⁵. This strategy can also become apparent when analyzing a more specific case, such as the fictional image of Paris in the nineteenth-century Romanian novel, which I have addressed in a methodologically similar study³⁶, where I began by identifying the occurrences of the proper noun “Paris.” The main conclusion of the analysis was that Paris appears as a rather abstract presence in the internal geography of the novel. One of the arguments which I consider relevant for the justification of this abstract image derives from a rudimentary knowledge and experience of foreign cities. This explains the cliché, superficial descriptions, taken from Western literature. This strategy would only be abandoned starting in the first decades of the twentieth century, when the tendency towards “perspectivism”³⁷, which replaces these “neutral” descriptions, and subjectivism—as a method for the representation of foreign geographies—cease

being exceptions and become the norm.

As for the verb “a (în)străina” (to estrange), the *DLR* registers its meanings as a transitive and intransitive verb: 1. “Reflexive and transitive (...) To estrange (oneself) from somebody or something”; 2. “Reflexive (...) to become estranged (from one’s birthplace, country)”; 3. “Transitive (...) To sell or give away (somebody’s property).” Starting from these meanings, the labels I propose for the purpose of this analysis involve the same grammatical distinction (transitive vs. reflexive), to which I have added, for the sake of taxonomic uniformity, the trait “± Animate.” Therefore, “a înstrăina (to estrange) (+ Animate)” contains the first two meanings (the reflexive forms of the verb), while “a înstrăina (to give away/sell) (- Animate)” is the label for the third meaning, where “a înstrăina” is a transitive verb, and the action concerns only nouns with the trait (- Animate), which refer to somebody’s property (“that which belongs to someone”).

For the last term of the lexical family—“străinism (foreignness)” —no classification is needed in terms of its occurrences, because its only meaning is “that which belongs to foreign lands or is specific to foreigners,” which I labeled “Ethnic (- Animate).” Despite the fact that this word

is rarely used in the novels, its role is extremely important. I will discuss it separately, because “străinism” appears as an umbrella-concept (note, in this context, the suffix *-ism*) which also incorporates all the other words from this lexical family.

Before presenting the results of this classification of occurrences, it must be mentioned that, out of a total of 2100 (more exactly, 2095) occurrences, I went through and classified 2037. Thus, there is a margin of error of 2.77%, caused by a lack of precision and attention during the selection of the occurrences. Moreover, error and, more exactly, subjectivity can also be considered relevant when it comes to classification per se, since I differentiated between occurrences, in terms of meaning, based on a single reading of the texts. However, such a process is essential in order to ensure what Heuser and Le-Khac⁸ have termed a “dialogic” or mixed approach, which allows, in this case, the interpretation of quantitative data and the proposal of certain hypotheses regarding the semantic valences that have been discovered and their statistical presence in the total number of occurrences. The following tables show the numerical values pertaining to each category of semantic valences enunciated and explained above:

Term	Străin (Foreign/er)					
	Ethnic (+ A.)	Ethnic (- A.)	Unknown (+ A.)	Unknown (- A.)	Connotative (+ A.)	Connotative (- A.)
Numerical Value	779	221	544	128	83	10

Table 1. Semantic Valences for the term “străin” (foreign/er)

Term	Străinătate (Abroad/Foreignness)			A înstrăina (to estrange)		Străinism (foreignness)
	(+ C.)	(+ A.; + A.)	(+ A.; - A.)	(+ A.)	(- A.)	
Numerical Value	175	9	12	58	9	8

Table 2. Semantic valences for the terms “străinătate” (abroad/foreignness), “a înstrăina” (to estrange) and “străinism” (foreignness)

Even at first sight, it is noticeable that the numerical values associated with the taxonomic labels “Ethnic (+ Animate)” and “Unknown (+ Animate),” 779 and 544 occurrences, are substantially greater than the average value of all the other labels. At the bottom of the hierarchy, we find the values for “Străinătate (Abroad/Foreignness) (+ Abstract, + Animate),” “A înstrăina [to estrange] (- Animate)” and the noun “Străinism

(foreignness) (- Animate).” An interpretation of these values according to lexical-grammatical categories, leaving aside those categories based on the valences that make up the lexical family of the word “străin” (foreign/er), reveals the following hierarchy. In the nineteenth-century Romanian novel, the adjective and, depending on the context, the noun “străin” are the most frequent, more precisely, they are used

in 86,64% of the cases (out of a total of 1765 occurrences). The noun “străinătațe” (abroad/foreignness) reaches a percentage of 9,62, while the verb “a înstrăina” (to estrange)—a percentage of approximately 3. The least employed is the noun “străinism” (foreignness), with only 8 occurrences. Therefore, the higher frequency of nominal forms compared to verbal forms is apparent.

In the first stage of interpreting the values from the previous table, I propose a series of graphic representations in order to prepare another stage, in which the interpretation of the quantitative analysis will be associated with the discovery of trends and similarities between occurrences, semantic valences, novelistic subgenres and the relationship between the time of the narrative and the year the novel was published. The following figure (Fig. 1) shows the relation between the number of occurrences and the number of recurrences, that is, the number of novels containing these terms, so that they can be included in the occurrence/recurrence category.

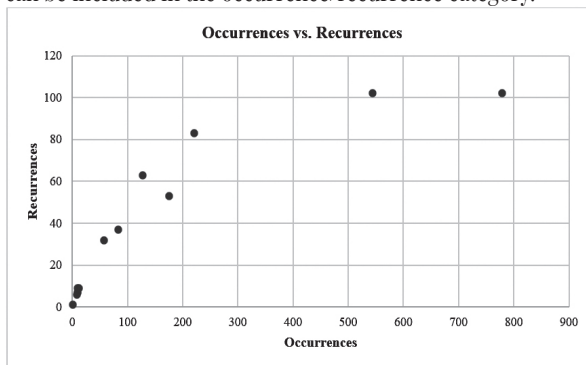


Fig. 1. Occurrences vs. recurrences of semantic valences

The graphic representation of the occurrence/recurrence relationship reveals, first of all, an interesting situation: an equal number of recurrences when it comes to the semantic valences with the greatest number of occurrences. Thus, the 779 and 544 instances, respectively, when the word “străin” (foreign/er) is used, meaning a person who belongs to another ethnic community and, conversely, an unknown person, each correspond to 102 recurrences, which means that the average frequency—a relatively low frequency—is approximately 8 and 5 occurrences per novel. In fact, there are 13 novels in which the number of occurrences for “străin” (foreign/er) meaning the first label—Ethnic (+ Animate)—is greater than or equal to 20 (13 novels, out of which 6 have more than 30 occurrences). At the same time, 5 out of those 102 novels contain 20 or more occurrences belonging to the category “Unknown (- Animate),” with only one of them going over 30 occurrences (with 44 instances). These values are not insignificant, even though we are dealing with a total of only 18 novels crossing the 20-instance-threshold, considering that 89 (and here I mean the sum of all semantic valences) is the highest number of occurrences present in one novel.

As for the 102 novels, it is extremely interesting to analyze the semantic field which could be constructed using the nouns determined by the adjective “străin” (foreign) or the terms

which polarize their context. From references to invasions and occupation by foreign peoples, through phrases like “jugul străin” (the foreign yoke), “urgia străină” (the foreign wrath), “torentul străin” (the foreign flood), “robia străinului” (slavery under foreign rule) to the characterizations of different ethnic groups by using terms like “lifte (străine)” (foreign hordes)”, “molime” (pestilence), “șerpi” (snakes), “liote” (mobs), “spurcate lipitori” (damned leeches), “lighioane” (brutes), “barbari” (barbarians), “fiare” (beasts), “lacomii” (greedy), “tirani” (tyrants), “împilatori” (oppressors), “fără căpătâi” (good for nothing), “infami” (villains), “uzurpatori” (usurpers) (and the list goes on), the semantic field thus uncovered is uniform in terms of autochthonous attitudes and the representation of foreigners in nineteenth-century novels. All these generalizations have to do with the figure of the exploitative foreigner. In most cases, the attitude of repulsion is not directed towards a specific ethnic community, but rather “străini” (foreigners) or “străinătațe” (abroad/foreignness) as a collective presence in the society or the spatio-temporal context of the novel. Disdain and disgust for other peoples create a whole series of ethnic stereotypes which provide much research material. For instance, there are some very interesting fragments in which the foreigners are easily identified by the Romanian characters based on their uniformly described physical traits. For example, one particular scene from the novel *Miul haiducul. Nuvelă originală* [Miul the Outlaw. An Original novel], published in 1881 and written by N. D. Popescu, one of the most well-known outlaw novel authors of the time, contains a very suggestive description in terms of how the negative image of the foreigner is constructed through their detailed physical portrait. The scene is also an exception to the previously-mentioned rule of a homogenous perception of foreigners, no matter their ethnic group, since this fragment discusses—in great detail and subjectively—physical traits specific to certain peoples, highlighted through the portrayal of Ștefan Vodă and that of the “native boyar”:

“male physiognomies, increasingly ugly, increasingly repulsive, increasingly different from the Romanian type surrounded this abundant table. Here, at the head of the table, a paunchy, big-bellied man, with a large and flat nose, with small, half-closed eyes, with thick and pale lips and a thick jaw; through his features, he was telling the story of his Asian origins—a Mongol or a Hun; God knows which Turk caused him to be born in the sordid dead ends of Fanar. Closer yet, next to him, I could see a creature with thinned, red hair, with a pointy head and a pointy nose, with a similar chin and a constant sarcastic smile on his lips, who was the living image of Mephistopheles, in which one could recognize the full Phanariot; next to him, another creature, decked with all the nuances of the Bulgarian type; further away, others, no less ugly and different from the Romanian type and, finally, at the head of the table, Ștefan Vodă, the way he is depicted on the walls of the churches built by his kin. That beautiful and noble Romanian face was nowhere to

be found, nor was that martial and imposing countenance of the native boyar”⁴⁰.

N. D. Popescu writes a similar scene in *Maria Putoianca. Roman istoric. Extras din cea mai glorioasă epocă a vieții lui Mihai Viteazu* [Maria Putoianca. A Historical Novel. Taken from the most glorious time in Michael the Brave’s life] (1892). When an unknown character turns up at the Court and asks to speak with the prince, the first impression he makes on the prince’s servants is apparent in the following sentence:

“Your Highness’, said one of them, humbly saluting, ‘an ugly and poorly dressed man, who looks like a foreigner by his clothes and his speech, is arduously asking to meet Your Highness, in secret’⁴¹.

The instances belonging to the category “Ethnic (- Animate),” which represent 11% of all occurrences, were easy to identify, since most of them determine nouns like “language,” “accent,” “country.” It must be said that the instances in this category are subsumed under the same ambiguation strategy (which I will also discuss in terms of the semantic valences of the noun “străinătate” (abroad/foreignness)) that, being based on generalization, proposes a schematic, negative and shallow image of foreign spaces and cultural values. Hence the similarities between the contexts of such occurrences. The pattern is that of inadaptability to a foreign country or environment, with characters who choose to cross autochthonous borders being generally bound to fail or to remain unaccomplished; this negative outcome is always represented through cliché images, which are suffocated by sentimentalism and homesickness:

“That someone can be happier in a foreign country than in their homeland—this is possible, but only temporarily so. Because, what kind of person does not dream of the mountains, the rivers and the meadows where they were born and where they grew up? What is the nature of their soul, if they don’t feel uneasy among strangers, among faces built differently, speaking another language, moving in different ways?”⁴²

The employment of the term “străin” (foreigner), meaning an unknown person—Unknown (+ Animate)—reveals an interesting aspect regarding one of the plot strategies of the outlaw novel. A relevant example is *Tunsul haiducul. Nuvelă originală* [Tunsul the Outlaw. An Original Novel] (1881) written by N. D. Popescu. More exactly, the protagonist, who plays the part of the vigilante freeing the people from a “foreign yoke” has various depictions. While in disguise and unbeknownst to the characters he interacts with and who actually label him the “stranger,” he manages to take vengeance on his enemies, revealing his true identity only after his mission is complete: “the following day, the Greek’s stable boys and servants found the gates and the doors wide open; the stranger was nowhere to be found and their master was frozen dead, with a piece of

paper on his chest, reading—“This is the punishment inflicted by Tunsu on his enemies”⁴³.

The contexts where the term appears with its connotative meaning are also easily identifiable, based on the already mentioned structure (străin + the preposition “de,” translatable as “a stranger + to”). I am referring to the category that contains the trait (+ Animate), seeing as the other one is quantitatively underrepresented. The most frequent example is that of “străin de țară” (a stranger to this country/his own country), which shows the same indignant attitude towards foreign rule, on the one hand, and the consequences of (self) estrangement, on the other. One relevant case is N. Rădulescu-Niger’s novel, actually entitled *Străin în țara lui...* [A Stranger in His Own Country...] (1900).

The same connotative nuance can be noticed, to some extent, with the noun “străinătate” (foreignness), in contexts where the word does not constitute a spatial reference. I labeled as “Străinătate (+ Abstract; + Animate)” and “Străinătate (+ Abstract; - Animate)” those instances which bring to the foreground the characteristic of the foreign, as a “group of people” or a community, or descriptions of the atmosphere typical of destinations abroad. The aforementioned novel by Rădulescu-Niger and the novels *Dimu Miliian* (1887) and *Viața la țară* [Life in the Countryside] (1898) by Const. Mille and Duiliu Zamfirescu all provide fitting examples, which can justify the decision to differentiate between “străinătate” as a place, “străinătate” as a group of people and “străinătate” as an environment or a reality to be grappled with. In *Dimu Miliian*, the semantic variation is excellently acted out through a dialogue about a piece of music, in which the noun “străinătate” is initially used as a spatial marker and then in reference to a community. This semantic change is apparent in the text, as well, through the definite article placed at the end of the word: “‘I learnt it (...) while abroad’, she answered, a moment later (...) ‘Ah! Foreign people!’ Ropniță said. ‘Such an abundance of great artists!’⁴⁴. As for the other two novels, the former introduces the phrase “neagra străinătate” (black foreignness)⁴⁵ by adding a determiner whose metaphoric meaning requires no explanation; the phrase is uttered by the first-person narrator himself, a character with poetic ambitions. Then, the example from the last novel also relies on the poetic function of language⁴⁶, since one of Matei Damian’s lines reads: “you know this well: estrangement (‘străinătatea’) and distance are the enemies of love sworn”⁴⁷.

The noun “străinism” (foreignness), the last one in the table—with its only semantic valence, “Ethnic (- Animate)” — is, undoubtedly, a stamp of the outlaw novelistic subgenre. Four out of five novels containing this term are outlaw novels: the already-discussed *Tunsul haiducul* [Tunsul the Outlaw], alongside *Grozea, mare haiduc național* [Grozea, the Great National Outlaw] (1882), *Bujor haiducul. Nuvelă originală* [Bujor the Outlaw. An Original Novel] (1892) and *Haiducul Țandură. Scriere originală cu adaose și modificări* [Țandură the Outlaw. Original writing with insertions and addenda] (1894), by N. D. Popescu, D. D. P. and Panait Macri. In the case of the fifth novel, *De vânzare. Moravuri sociale* [For Sale. Social Manners]



(1897) by Const. I. A. Nottara, listed as “an observational novel”⁴⁸ by the *DCRR-1*, the word “străinism” (foreignness) appears in the context of a discussion about Napoleon, Ludovic XVI and, most importantly, Turkish domination and foreign rule. This is why I consider these occurrences to belong to the category “Ethnic (+ Animate),” as they express the same attitude of protest against other peoples. More precisely, the semantic field remains unchanged, given that it highlights “pecinginea străinismului” [the pestilence of foreignness]⁴⁹, “lăcomia străinismului” [the greed of foreignness]⁵⁰, “apăsarea zdruncinătoare a străinismului” [the troubling oppression caused by foreignness]⁵¹. Moreover, disdain for “străinism” (foreignness) seems to be a basic trait in the outlaw’s profile, which is obvious in N. D. Popescu’s description of Tunsu. Although he lives in a time when this “title” no longer applies, ordinary people see him as an outlaw, because, among other things, he managed to “inspire powerful men to love justice and hate foreignness.” A certain trend also becomes apparent when it comes to the meaning of the noun “străinătate” (abroad/foreignness). I am referring to the meaning I have labeled “+ Concrete,” that is, “străinătate” as a space, a spatial reference. When it comes to novels with 10 or more occurrences of the term, the *DCRR-1* mentions a few aspects regarding the social origin of the characters and their aristocratic ambitions. More exactly, one characteristic⁵², which I have also pointed out in the previously mentioned study about the occurrences of the noun “Paris,” is that characters with a permissive social status (the sons of boyars and aristocrats) make an effort to study abroad and to gain through this the professional prestige they might need upon returning to the homeland. However, in countless cases I have reached the conclusion that life abroad represents a trap for young people choosing to study beyond the borders of their country, because of their fascination with the depravity and the immorality typical of Western urban environments. In short, going back to the hypothesis of a connection between the term “străinătate” and a favorable social status, in the case of both *Străin în țara lui...*, with 21 occurrences, and the descriptions for the novels *De vânzare. Moravuri sociale, Suflete obosite* [Tired Souls] (1898) and *Viața la țară*, the *DCRR-1* points out the following aspects concerning the characters: the protagonist of *De vânzare. Moravuri sociale* is “haunted by aristocratic arrogance”⁵³, the protagonist of *Suflete obosite* leads the life of a “refined aristocrat,” “hopeless and extravagant”⁵⁴, while the intellectual profile is a shared trait of the teacher Victor Cosmin (from *Străin în țara lui...*) and Matei Damian (from *Viața la țară*).

The only impediment to a discussion about the occurrences of “străinism” (foreignness) and “străinătate” (abroad/foreignness) as typical of the outlaw novel or the characters’ social origin is quantitative underrepresentation, so that the results are not significant for the entire corpus. In order to reach such universally valid conclusions in my research, I will resort to the interpretation of those categories from the table which have the most occurrences: “Ethnic (+ Animate)” and “Unknown (+ Animate).”

From Linguistic Signals to Generic Concepts: The Semantic Valences of the Term “străin” (foreign/er; strange/r) as Specific Markers of Novelistic Subgenres

Starting from the already established association between the number of occurrences and novelistic subgenres, I checked, using the taxonomy proposed by the *DCRR-1*, the specific subgenres where the number of occurrences was greater than or equal to 20. The only difficulty that came up was the absence of taxonomical labels applicable to all of the novels. More exactly, there is an entire series of phrases and characteristics that replace such labels pertaining to novelistic subgenres, which would have contributed substantially to a first classification of the novels by protagonist, plot and theme. For example, regarding the category “Ethnic (+ Animate),” some of the 13 novels which contain 20 occurrences or more are described and classified rather hesitantly by the authors of the *Dictionary*. For instance, in the case of *Elena. Roman original de datine politic-filosofic* [Elena. Original Novel about Political-Philosophical Customs] (1862) by Dimitrie Bolintineanu, the *DCRR-1* points out the existence of “certain traces of Balzac’s *Le Lys dans la vallée*”⁵⁵. The observation is also valid for novels by Al. Pelimon and N. Rădulescu-Niger, such as *Un funcționar sinucis. Fratele și sora* [A Clerk’s Suicide. Brother and Sister] (1873) and *Străin în țara lui...* [A Stranger in his Own Country...] (1900), described as belonging to “the social line of the mystery novel”⁵⁶ and as outlining “a utopian social perspective.”⁵⁷ As for the other 10 novels, the descriptions proposed by the *DCRR-1* are much more concise in terms of generic classification only when it comes to outlaw novels (which make up 4 out of the 10 novels). The other 6 are seen as “period novels,” “historical,” “fantastic reenactments” of historical events, sensationalist or chronicle-novels. This is the main reason why I decided to put forward my own taxonomical labels, which I have delineated—employing once again the techniques of “distant reading” analysis (paratextual elements or a few key-words from the *DCRR-1* descriptions)—as follows: despite the discussion about the (pseudo)existence⁵⁸ of the social novel in nineteenth-century Romanian literature, the 3 novels I have already listed are seen as social novels (due to their theme and the construction of the plot, which does not ignore the social background), while the 6 novels presenting obvious similarities through their focus on historical events and the reenactment of key-moments from national history have all been included in the category of the historical novel. Thus, leaving the social novel aside, as compared to the total number in this corpus—i.e., all the novels placed in the category of these subgenres by the *DCRR-1* (10 novels are considered to be historical, while 11 are labeled as “outlaw” novels), the result is satisfactory, in that the occurrences belonging to the semantic valence “Ethnic (+ Animate)” seem to be dominant when it comes to historical and outlaw novels. In fact, the conclusion appears to be pertinent, as well, considering that these two novelistic subgenres were, at the time of their publication, not only extremely favored by the public—since, as Ioana Drăgan⁵⁹ argues, they satisfied the reader’s expectations by fostering a

spirit of vigilantism, as well as the return to and revalorization of significant moments from national history and elements of Romanian folklore—but also two discursive types that managed to meet the nineteenth-century demand for originality through their themes and carefully-built Romantic characters. This is precisely why, taking into account these aspects related to readerly preferences and cultural imperatives, I believe that the main consequence of these extraliterary factors was the exclusively negative and defining portrayal of characters from other ethnic communities; thus, the relationship with foreignness is reproduced based on a few ethnic stereotypes, generated and amplified by historical events, the status of the Romanian people throughout its existence and that of the Romanian Principalities being faced with enemy attacks from outside their borders.

As for the category “Unknown (+ Animate),” considering the 5 novels with more than 20 occurrences of “străin” (strange/r), they belong to the following subgenres: the mystery novel “resembling the policier”⁶⁰, the detective, historical or outlaw novel (valorizing both paratextual elements and the taxonomical labels proposed by the *DCRR-1*). Three of these—*Dramele veneției sau Pumnalele răzbunătoare* [Dramatic Happenings in Venice or the Vengeful Daggers] (1889), *Clotilda sau Crimele unei femei* [Clotilda or a Woman’s Crimes] (1891), by Alexandru I. Alexandrescu, and *Unul scapă, altul piere. Narațiune romantică* [The one who got away and the one who perished. Romantic Narrative] (1892), written by Alexi Theochar contain, in total, no fewer than 93 occurrences of the word “străin” (strange/r) (meaning “an unknown person”). In this case, there is also a seemingly valid hypothesis involved in our attempt to transform these linguistic signals—just like with the occurrences from the first category, which individualize historical and outlaw novels—into concepts of generic delineation, as the higher number of occurrences seems to serve the objective of creating an atmosphere typical of mystery and detective novels. In short, since the novel written by Alexi Theochar, to give but an example, includes more than 200 occurrences of the word “bandit,” and the story of *Clotilda sau Crimele unei femei* focuses on portraits of “strangers”—visible proof can be found in one of the chapters, entitled precisely “The Stranger”⁶¹—the role of these terms is easily discernible, as the main strategy appears to be the occultation of the criminals’ true identity, using the appellation “străini” (strangers), thus maintaining an enigmatic, tense atmosphere:

“after making sure that the Sabatùs brothers were alone and that no unknown witness could hear them, the stranger drew closer to their table and, without a word, sat on the third chair, which seemed to be awaiting his presence. A moment of silence ensued, when the stranger ceased his examination; then, thoroughly convinced: - I am here, he said in a changed voice, to tell you that the day is coming...”⁶²

These insights also apply to a larger corpus, when classifying all novels with 10 or fewer occurrences. In other words, we add 12 more novels to the category “Ethnic (+ Animate),”

while “Unknown (+ Animate)” gets 14 more. It is extremely interesting to note that, using the same metadata from the *DCRR-1*, the first category now receives 7 novels considered to be historical (including references to historical events and the label “heroic novel,” proposed by the *DCRR-1*), 3 outlaw novels, one social novel and one observational novel (which I place in the same category as the social one). 5 more social novels appear in the second category, as well as 2 novels of manners, one psychological, one considered to be both a psychological novel and a novel of manners and, finally, 5 novels that I would include in the subgenre of the sensationalist and mystery novel (considering their paratextual elements: *Misterele unui nabab* [A Nabob’s Mysteries] (1889), *Misterul din Turnul Eiffel sau Reshizarea unei princese ruse* [A Mystery in the Eiffel Tower or the Revenge of a Russian Princess] (1889), *Crima misterioasă din strada Mogoșoaiei* [The Mysterious Murder in Mogoșoaiei Street] (1893) and their descriptions in the *DCRR-1*, such as “abounding in implausible events (suicides, assassinations, kidnappings”⁶³). Therefore, to conclude this section of corpus analysis, a generic delineation is possible, based on the meanings of the term “străin” (foreign/er or unknown): historical and outlaw novels, corresponding to the first semantic valence, stand opposite the broader category of the social novel, the novel of manners, the psychological novel and, importantly, the mystery novel. When discussing this opposition, what is truly interesting is that there appears to be a paradox between, on the one hand, the significant number of occurrences for the category “Ethnic (+ Animate)” in historical and outlaw novels—the subgenres that were also defined by the cultural responsibility to develop an original novelistic morphology—and, on the other hand, the small number of occurrences belonging to this category in social novels or the novel of manners—two subgenres in which cosmopolitanism would have been entirely justifiable, given their “planetary geography”⁶⁴, visible in the fictional representation of foreign spaces. However, I argue that this is but an apparent paradox, because the small number of occurrences in the social novel and the novel of manners simply confirms, from another perspective—namely, the configuration of foreignness from a semantic point of view—that “bovarism” was the main strategy defining the nineteenth-century Romanian novel, in an attempt to connect with the world and, in fact, with foreign spaces and cultures.

From this connection between the number of occurrences and the subgenre, we can also derive a classification based on the novels’ internal time. In other words, we can shift the focus of the analysis from the correlation between the theme or the plot and the subgenre to the relationship between the temporal setting of the plot and certain semantic valences, leading to increasingly satisfactory results. More exactly, by using the concept of “distance” as proposed by Radu Vancu et al.⁶⁵, meaning the interval between publication and the novel’s internal time, and by employing the metadata describing the temporal setting of the story, I have reinterpreted the novels with 10 or more occurrences of “străin” (foreign/er or strange/r)—that is, “Ethnic (+ Animate)” and “Unknown



(+ Animate).” 25 novels correspond to the first label, 19 novels—to the second. With the former, it is very interesting to note that the average distance (obtained by measuring the interval between the year when the book was published and the year when the story takes place, subsequently dividing the sum total by the total number of novels) is substantially greater than the distance characterizing the other 19 novels. Before drawing my conclusions, I must also point out that the metadata concerning internal temporality refer either to the year when the story happens or the years and the historical events mentioned in the narrative. Moreover, there is an entire category of less clear metadata. When dealing with phrases like “the first half of the nineteenth century” or “the beginning/the end of the nineteenth century,” I decided, in order to obtain an average value as accurate as possible, to select the year 1825 in the first situation and, in the second, the year 1800 (“the beginning of the century”) or the year when the novel was published (“the end of the nineteenth century”). Additionally, I also used the average value when the period was clearly mentioned in the novel (for instance, 1785 for the interval between 1783 and 1787), while excluding from the final calculations those novels in which the temporal setting remains unspecified. The result of this mathematical operation is approximately 110, and it is rather predictable, given that novels like *Meșterul Manole sau Fundarea monastirei Curții de Argeș* [Master Manole or the Foundation of Curtea de Argeș Monastery] (1882), *Fata de la Cozia* [The Girl from Cozia] (1887), *Ștefan cel Mare. Nuvelă originală* [Stephen the Great. Original Novel] (1892) or *Bătălia de la Călugăreni. Roman istoric extras din cea mai glorioasă epocă a vieții lui Mihai Viteazul* [The Battle of Călugăreni. Historical Novel Taken from the Most Glorious Time in Michael the Brave’s Life] (1894)—the first two and the last novel in this list were written by N. D. Popescu, the third by T. M. Stoenescu—are set in the 15th and 16th centuries (the metadata mention the years 1436-1438, 1544, 1595 and, for Stoenescu’s novel, “the 15th century”).

The results are different for novels containing 10 or more occurrences of “străin” (strange/r) meaning “an unfamiliar person,” because, except for the novel *Maria Putoianca. Roman istoric. Extras din cea mai glorioasă epocă a vieții lui Mihai Viteazu* [Maria Putoianca. Historical Novel. Taken from the Most Glorious Time in Michael the Brave’s Life], set at the end of the 16th century, the other 18 novels offer more ambiguous information regarding the temporal “setting” of the story (6 of these novels include references to longer periods of time) and, what is more, all these periods belong to the nineteenth century. That is to say, the average distance is, in this case, insignificant. At this juncture, we must also consider one of Radu Vancu et al.’s conclusions, namely the directly proportional relationship between the “modernization” of the novelistic genre in Romanian literature, “the index of contemporaneity” and the absence of precise temporal settings (a tendency for “abstraction,” discussed by the authors)⁶⁶.

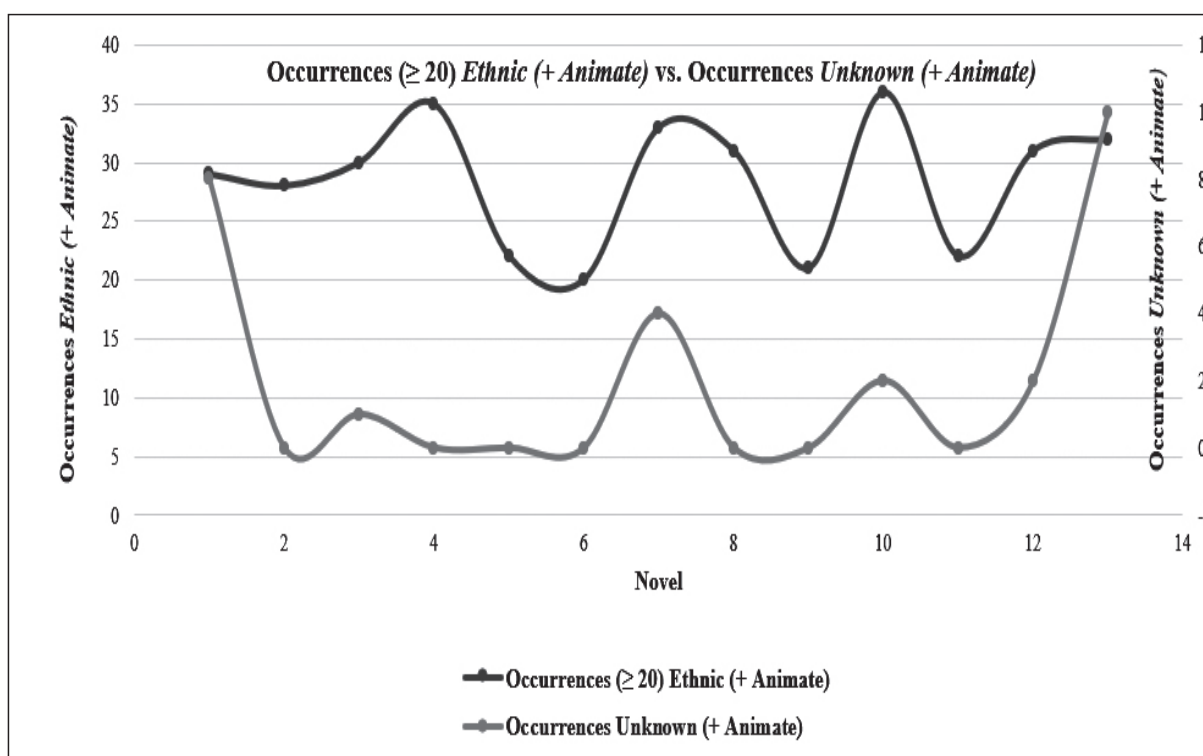
Of course, we cannot claim that the “modern novel” was truly present in a century when the novel was a barely emergent genre; in fact, the two notions are rather

incompatible. However, I am trying to shed light on the fact that the frequency of the two categories of semantic valences pertaining to the word “străin” (foreign/er or strange/r) in novels that are characterized, on the one hand, by a significant average “distance” between publication and internal temporality (in the case of the first valence) and, on the other hand, by an insignificant average value and a high degree of “contemporaneity” (in the case of the second valence) serves to consolidate and verify the working hypothesis concerning a connection with novelistic subgenres. While the first category mainly contains historical and outlaw novels, which employ the term “străin” to name a representative of another nation/people and favor extended time spans, the novels where the word refers to “unknown/unfamiliar people” (as concluded above, these narratives are dominated by the attempt to create an atmosphere typical of detective scenarios) appear as replicas of “popular” novels, novels subsumed by Drăgan under the “paraliterary”⁶⁷ discourse or even as initial local attempts to borrow and adapt the famous novelistic formulas mandated by the realist doctrine, as well as import the conventions of the social novel, the novel of manners or the chronicle-novel from Western literatures.

A final observation regarding the corpus of fragments and semantic valences I have operated with has to do with an aspect which I believe to be one of the most significant outcomes of my analysis. A clear conclusion uncovered by the correlation between occurrences (signals) and subgenres (concepts) is that the novels corresponding to the two semantic valences do not overlap. More precisely, none of the case studies above confronted me with the need to discuss a particular novel as a representative of both categories from the table—that is, a novel containing more than 10 occurrences for “Ethnic (+ Animate),” as well as “Unknown (+ Animate).” This is precisely why, while trying to interpret this observation, I reconsidered and compared the number of occurrences belonging to the first category with those belonging to the second. The outcome of this comparative approach is more than satisfactory, because it shows a lack of semantic variation in the nineteenth-century Romanian novel. The tables and the figures below are an exact reflection of this discovery. Nonetheless, in just a few words, it can also be explained as follows: in all the situations where the number of occurrences for “Ethnic (+ Animate)” is greater than or equal to 20, without exception, the number of occurrences for “Unknown (+ Animate)” is not only less than or equal to 10, but it also never represents more than 31% of the number of occurrences associated with the first semantic valence:

Since the highest number of occurrences is 10 (in the novel *Străin în țara lui...*)—considering the entirety of the lexical family—the ratio between the two columns is very obvious, given that there are 7 novels that contain no occurrences of the second semantic valence (which also has fewer than 544 occurrences in the whole corpus). This difference is also noticeable in the following diagram (Fig. 2):

No.	Title of the novel	Author	Occurrences (≥ 20) Ethnic (+ Animate)	Occurrences Unknown (+ Animate)
1	<i>Elena. Roman original de datine politic-filosofic</i> (1862)	Dimitrie Bolintineanu	29	8
2	<i>Catastrofa întâmplată boierilor în Muntele Găvanul – 1821</i> (1864)	Al. Pelimon	28	0
3	<i>Revoluțiunea română din anul 1848. Mușatoiu</i> (1868)	Al. Pelimon	30	1
4	<i>Matei Vodă la mănăstirea Sadova</i> (1870)	Al. Pelimon	35	0
5	<i>Un funcționar sinucis. Fratele și sora</i> (1873)	Al. Pelimon	22	0
6	<i>Iancu Jianu, căpitan de haiduci. Nuvelă originală</i> (1873)	N. D. Popescu	20	0
7	<i>Trei sergenți. Campania românilor în Bulgaria</i> (1879)	Al. Pelimon	33	4
8	<i>Miul Haiducul. O pagină din epoca fanarioților. Nuvelă originală</i> (1881)	N. D. Popescu	31	0
9	<i>Ioan Tunsu, căpitan de haiduci. Nuvelă originală</i> (1887)	Panaït Macri	21	0
10	<i>Iancu Jianu, zapciu de plasă. Nuvelă originală</i> (1887)	N. D. Popescu	36	2
11	<i>Ștefan cel Mare. Nuvelă originală</i> (1892)	T. M. Stoescu	22	0
12	<i>Moara din Șișești. Roman</i> (1894)	Ioan Costin	31	2
13	<i>Străin în Țara lui...</i> (1900)	N. Rădulescu-Niger	32	10

Table 3. Occurrences (≥ 20) Ethnic (+ Animate) vs. Occurrences Unknown (+ Animate)Fig. 2. Occurrences (≥ 20) Ethnic (+ Animate) vs. Occurrences Unknown (+ Animate): linear diagram

A similar result can be obtained by comparing the numbers in the case of novels with more than 20 occurrences for “Unknown (+ Animate).” With a percentage of 45 of the number of

occurrences in the other column, the 9 occurrences in the novel *Clotilda sau Crimele unei femei* represents the highest numerical value and the closest value to those in the first column.

No.	Title of the novel	Author	Occurrences (≥ 20) Unknown (+ Animate)	Occurrences Ethnic (+ Animate)
1	<i>Dramele Veneției sau Pumnalele răzbinătoare</i> (1889)	Al. I. Alexandrescu	20	1
2	<i>Clotilda sau Crimele unei femei. Roman original</i> (1891)	Al. I. Alexandrescu	20	9
3	<i>Unul scapă, altul pier. Narațiune romantică</i> (1891)	Alexi Theochar	22	3
4	<i>Maria Putoianca. Roman istoric. Extras din cea mai glorioasă epocă a vieții lui Mihai Viteazu</i> (1892)	N. D. Popescu	44	0
5	<i>Mina Haiduceasa, fata codrilor. Nuvelă originală</i> (1894)	G. Baronzi	27	0

Table 4. Occurrences (≥ 20) Unknown (+ Animate) vs. Occurrences Ethnic (+ Animate)

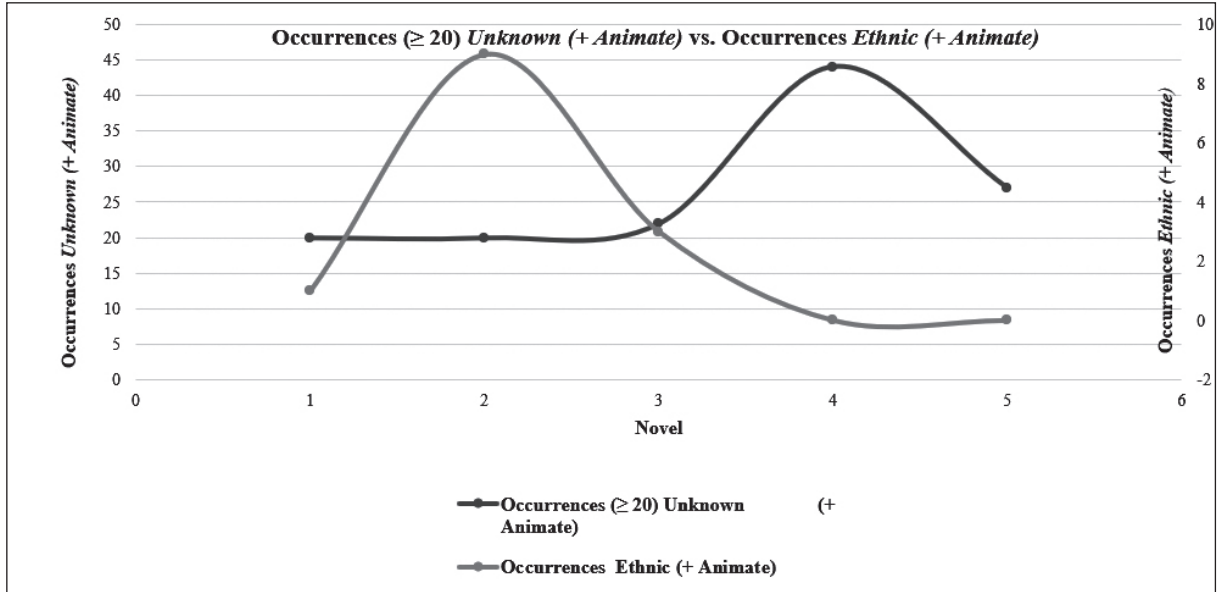


Fig. 3. Occurrences ≥ 20 Unknown (+ Animate) vs. Occurrences Ethnic (+ Animate): linear diagram

To further consolidate this observation, I made the same operation for the novels with 10 or more occurrences, and the results were almost identical. The only exception has already been mentioned, namely the novel *Străin în Țara lui...*, where

the number of occurrences for “străin” meaning “Unknown (+ Animate)” is less than in the other column. The tables and the figures below (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8) confirm the fact that these ratios remain unchanged.

No.	Title of the novel	Author	Occurrences ≥ 10 Ethnic (+ Animate)	Occurrences Unknown (+ Animate)
1	<i>Ciocoi vechi și noi sau Ce se naște din pisică șoareci mănâncă. Romanș original</i> (1863)	Nicolae Filimon	12	5
2	<i>Nopțile carpatine sau Istoria martirilor libertății. Roman istoric</i> (1867)	Ioachim G. Drăgescu	12	0
3	<i>Grozea, mare haiduc național</i> (1882)	D. D. P.	16	5
4	<i>Mesterul Manole sau Fundarea monastirei Cuvții de Argeș</i> (1882)	N. D. Popescu	15	1
5	<i>Bujor haiducul. Nuvelă originală</i> (1882)	N. D. Popescu	18	1
6	<i>Stroe Corbeanul</i> (1885)	Alexandru Lăzărescu	19	0
7	<i>Fata de la Cozia. Nuvelă istorică originală</i> (1887)	N. D. Popescu	11	2
8	<i>Monștrii Bucureștilor. Roman original</i> (1888)	I. P. Valerianu	16	4
9	<i>Primul rănit. Nuvelă istorică contemporană</i> (1890)	N. D. Popescu	12	2
10	<i>Haiducul Țandură. Scriere originală cu adaose și modificări</i> (1894)	Panaït Macri	10	0
11	<i>Bătălia de la Călugăreni. Roman istoric. Extras din cea mai glorioasă epocă a vieții lui Mihai Viteazul</i> (1890)	T. M. Stoenescu	16	0
12	<i>De vânzare. Moravuri sociale</i> (1897)	Const. I. A. Nottara	17	4

Table 5. Occurrences ≥ 10 Ethnic (+ Animate) vs. Occurrences Unknown (+ Animate)

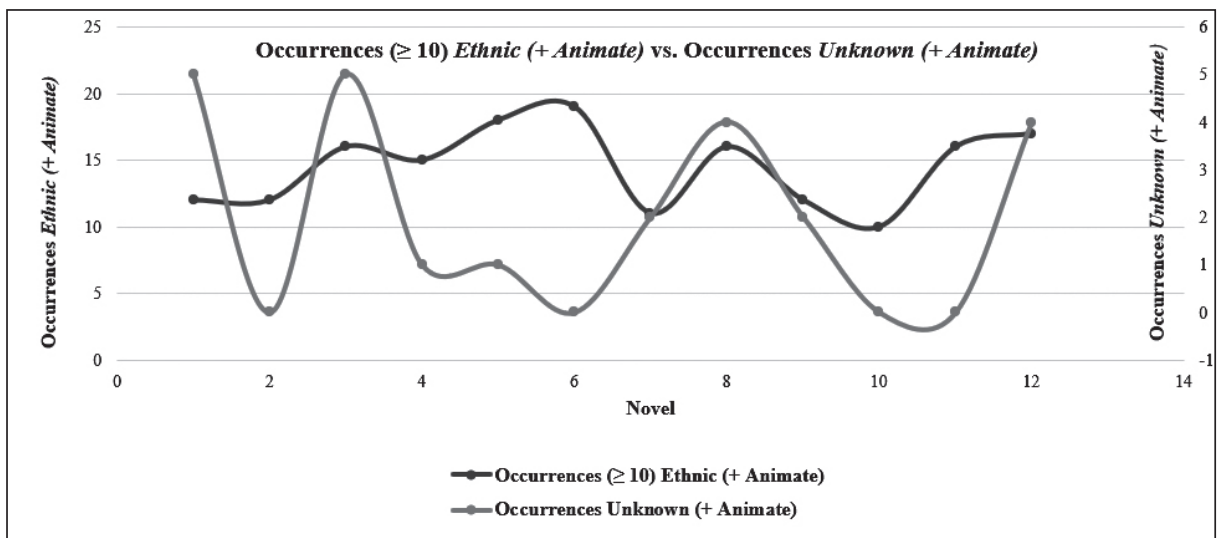
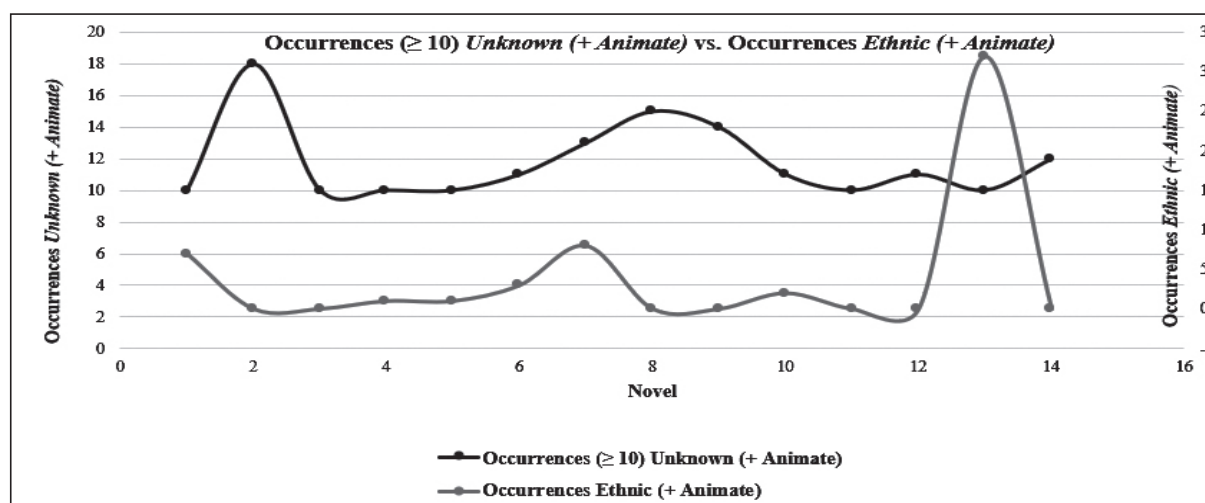


Fig. 4. Occurrences ≥ 10 Ethnic (+ Animate) vs. Occurrences Unknown (+ Animate): linear diagram

No.	Title of the novel	Author	Occurrences (≥ 10) <i>Unknown (+ Animate)</i>	Occurrences <i>Ethnic (+ Animate)</i>
1	<i>Mistere din București</i> (1862)	Ioan M. Bujoreanu	10	7
2	<i>Batista cea albă. Narațiune originală</i> (1875)	G. Dimitropolo	18	0
3	<i>Ai carte, ai parte. Roman umoristic</i> (1878)	Alexi Theochar	10	0
4	<i>O cură radicală. Novelă</i> (1881)	Alexi Theochar	10	1
5	<i>Dinu Milian. Roman</i> (1887)	Const. Mille	10	1
6	<i>Domnul de Ghiavazi, Măria-sa. Novelă din popor</i> (1888)	Alexi Theochar	11	3
7	<i>Misterele unui nabab</i> (1889)	Al. I. Alexandrescu	13	8
8	<i>Misterul din Turnul Eiffel sau Resbunarea unei principese ruse</i> (1889)	Al. I. Alexandrescu	15	0
9	<i>Crima misterioasă din calea Mogoșoaiei</i> (1893)	Panait Macri	14	0
10	<i>Dan</i> (1894)	Alexandru Vlahuță	11	2
11	<i>Dragomir</i> (1895)	Petru Vulcan	10	0
12	<i>Fecioara. Psihologie socială</i> (1900)	Petru Vulcan	11	0
13	<i>Străin în Țara lui...</i> (1900)	N. Rădulescu-Niger	10	32
14	<i>Mara. Roman</i> (1894f, 1906e)	Ioan Slavici	12	0

Table 6. Occurrences (≥ 10) *Unknown (+ Animate)* vs. Occurrences *Ethnic (+ Animate)*Fig. 5. Occurrences (≥ 10) *Unknown (+ Animate)* vs. Occurrences *Ethnic (+ Animate)*: linear diagram

This lack of semantic variation in the vast majority of the novels listed in these tables (besides *Străin în Țara lui...*, I have also added *Mistere din București* (1862) and *Misterele unui nabab* (1889), since they generate a 10/7 and 13/8 ratio, respectively) is an important observation from a linguistic point of view, but it also brings further proof that these occurrences can be interpreted as subgenre markers.

On Continuity: New Avenues for Analysis

Finally, it is worth noting the potential for broadening the discussion such a topic proposes. In fact, I intend to continue the analysis on the first decades of the 20th century, decades that reveal many changes in the macro context (in the political and social context). The specific dynamics of the period 1900–1918, the years leading up to the First World War (and the special situation of the Romanians in Transylvania), the characteristics of the post-unification years and the Second World War represent some extremely important parameters for how the image of “foreignness” is configured at the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, the dynamics of the novelistic subgenres, the last stage in the evolution of the outlaw novel and of the novels that fall within the paradigm of Romanticism, as well as the characteristics of the new subgenres (such as, for example, the “event novel,” strongly anchored in the historical and social context of the time) constitute other coordinates that certainly influence the meaning of “foreignness” and the semantic valences of this term. In the end, the variety at the level of production centers and the atomization of the authors’ origins, both demonstrated by the first analyses on the new archives of the *Digital Museum of the Romanian Novel* (1901–1932 and 1933–1947), reveal once again the fertile ground for such a research. The multiplication of the variables according to which the semantic valences and their trends can be interpreted is directly proportional to the increase in the number of possibilities of questioning the texts and, therefore, to the thoroughness of the results.

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Note:

1. Ioana Drăgan, *Romanul popular în România: literar și paraliterar* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2006), 90.
2. Ibid.
3. See Andrei Terian et al. "Genurile romanului românesc în secolul al XIX-lea. O analiză cantitativă," *Transilvania*, no. 10 (2019): 17-28. See also Andrei Terian et al. "Genurile romanului românesc (1901-1932). O analiză cantitativă," *Transilvania*, no. 10 (2020): 53-64.
4. There are, in fact, many factors that have influenced the "modern era" in the evolution of literary language. From the political and socio-cultural context to that "institutionalization" (through the development of educational institutions, the press, literary cenacles) and the ability to adopt and adapt borrowed content—these are just some of the characteristics pointed out by Munteanu and Țăra in the study they devote to the diachronic mapping of the evolution of literary language and its delimitation according to the two eras: the old and the modern. See Ștefan Munteanu and Vasile D. Țăra, *Istoria limbii române literare. Privire generală. Privire generală* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1978).
5. Paul Cornea, *Regula jocului* (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1980).
6. Ryan Heuser and Long Le-Khac, "A Quantitative Literary History of 2,958 Nineteenth-Century British Novels: The Semantic Cohort Method," *Pamphlets of Stanford Literary Lab*, May 2012, <https://litlab.stanford.edu/LiteraryLabPamphlet4.pdf>.
7. Cornea, *Regula jocului*, 209.
8. The analysis of the "nations" presented in the novels is the topic of another article. See Vlad Pojoga et al., "Diversitate identitară în romanul românesc (1844-1932)," *Transilvania*, no. 10 (2020): 33-44. See also Cosmin Borza, Daiana Gărdan, and Emanuel Modoc, "The Peasant and the Nation Plot: A Distant Reading of the Romanian Rural Novel from the First Half of the Twentieth Century," *Rural History* (2022): 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793322000140>.
9. Therefore, my study is based on the occurrences of a single key-word and differs from a semantic search like the one in Ștefan Baghiu and Cosmin Borza, "The Sickle and the Piano. A Distant Reading of Work in the Nineteenth Century Romanian Novel." Following Moretti's model from *The Bourgeois: Between Literature and History*, the two researchers analyse words such as "labour," "worker," "peasant" and "clerk." See Ștefan Baghiu and Cosmin Borza, "The Sickle and the Piano. A Distant Reading of Work in the Nineteenth Century Romanian Novel," *Metacritic Journal of Comparative Studies and Theory* 6, no. 2 (2020): 107-128. <https://doi.org/10.24193/mjcs.2020.10.06>.
10. Adam Schaff, *Introducere în semantică* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1966).
11. Ibid., 25.
12. Ibid., 26-32.
13. Tullio de Mauro, *Introducere în semantică*, transl. Anca Giurescu (Bucharest: Editura științifică și enciclopedică, 1978).
14. Ibid., 201-202.
15. Boris Tomașevski, *Teoria literaturii; Poetica*, transl. Leonida Teodorescu (Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1973).
16. Ibid., 63.
17. Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse Semantics and Ideology," *Sage* 6, no. 2 (1995): 268. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926595006002006>.
18. Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse Studies and Hermeneutics," *Sage* 13, no. 5 (2011): 6-7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445611412762>. In this context, the syntagm "context models" should also be added, as it makes even clearer the factors influencing the particularities of the context, since "[c]ontext models explain how and why language use is socially, personally and situationally variable." Teun A. van Dijk, *Society and Discourse. How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), viii.
19. van Dijk, "Discourse Studies," 7.
20. Vezi Nick Riemer, *Introducing Semantics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 87-106.
21. These Romanian terms are not fully translatable into English, at least not including all the meanings in the Romanian language. For instance, "abroad" is a partial equivalent of "străinătate" and, moreover, it is an adverb translating a noun. Similarly, "to estrange" is not a reflexive verb in English, but "a înstrăina" allows reflexive use etc. (IN)
22. ***. *Dicționarul limbii române* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2010).
23. For all these meanings, see *DLR*, Volume 15: Spongiar—Ș: 1685-1689.
24. See the distinction between "animate" and "inanimate" in Angela Bidu-Vrănceanu et al., *Dicționar de științe ale limbii*, second edition (Bucharest: Nemira & Co., 2005): 54; 260.
25. I have proposed the dichotomy "abstract/concrete," understood, in this case, in terms of semantic traits, which means that I am using these labels without referring to the "inherent traits" of lexical-grammatical noun classes. Bidu-Vrănceanu et al., 13. The dichotomy is based on the distinction and the delineating criteria between "concrete concepts" and "abstract concepts," as detailed by Harpaintner, Trumpp and Kiefer: concrete concepts have characteristics attributed to "objects" or "places," while the category of abstract concepts includes terms which name "emotions," "mental states," "social aspects" etc. Marcel Harpaintner, Natalie M. Trumpp, and Markus Kiefer, "The Semantic Content of Abstract Concepts: A Property Listing Study of 296 Abstract Words," *Frontiers in Psychology* 9, art. 1748, September 19, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01748>.
26. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, third edition (London and New York: Pluto Press, 2010).
27. Ibid., 10; 17: "The term 'ethnicity' refers to relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive, and these groups are often ranked hierarchically within a society. (...) When cultural differences regularly make a difference in interaction between members of groups, the social relationship has an ethnic element. Ethnicity refers both to aspects of gain and loss in interaction, and to aspects of meaning in the creation of identity. In this way it has a political, organisational aspect as well as a symbolic, meaningful one."
28. Joseph E. Grady, "Metaphor," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, ed. Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuyckens (New York, Oxford University Press, 2007), 188-213. For a discussion of the concept of "metaphor" from the perspective of a relationship between the "source domain" and the "target domain," see William Croft, D. Alan Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 193-221.

29. Grady, "Metaphor," 188-189. George Lakoff has also written about the "conceptual metaphor," "conceptualization" and the way in which the transition is made from one "domain" to the other, in the sense that the former is depicted according to the characteristics of the latter: "In short, the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another. The general theory of metaphor is given by characterizing such cross-domain mapping." George Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, ed. Dirk Geeraerts (Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), 185-186.
30. Daniel-Henri Pageaux, *Literatură generală și comparată*, trans. Lidia Bodea (Iași: Polirom, 2000): 99.
31. Mircea Popa et al., *Dicționarul cronologic al romanului românesc de la origini până la 1989* (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, 2003), 1345.
32. Victor Anestin, *În anul 4000 sau O călătorie la Venus* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1986), 90.
33. Gabriel Recchia, Michael N. Jones, "The Semantic Richness of Abstract Concepts," *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 6, art. 315, November 27 (2012): <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2012.00315>.
34. What is particularly interesting in the identification of this "ambiguation" process is its nature and the strategy underlying its configuration. And this aspect must be clarified, because the use of the term "străinătate" (abroad/foreignness) cannot be framed and analyzed through the explanations and the solutions offered by van Dijk and Kintsch when discussing this phenomenon that influences the global meaning of a given discourse, since the two theorists address ambiguity from the point of view of imprecisely formulated contexts or semantic relationships between words (for example, homonymy). In fact, I believe that the strategy which has been noticed in the case of nineteenth-century Romanian novels is, rather, an attempt to blur the lines between the semantic valences of the word, to use it with a less precise, yet totalizing meaning and to place it in a vague context. Teun A. van Dijk and Walter Kintsch, *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 33-34.
35. Ștefan Baghiu et al., "Geografia internă a romanului românesc în secolul al XIX-lea," *Transilvania*, no. 10 (2019): 29.
36. David Morariu, "The Affective Geography of Paris in the 19th Century Romanian Novel: Between Admiration and Aversion," *Metacritic Journal of Comparative Studies and Theory* 6, no. 2 (2020): 129-147.
37. Ștefan Baghiu et al., "Geografia romanului românesc (1901-1932): străinătatea," *Transilvania*, no. 10 (2020): 8.
38. Heuser, Le-Khac, "A Quantitative," 9.
39. The Romanian word "lîftă" was used as a pejorative term by Christians and was a direct reference to the religion of the invaders. It does not have an English equivalent (TN).
40. N. D. Popescu, *Miul haiducul. Nuvelă originală* (Bucharest, Editura Librăriei H. Steinberg, 1881): 4-5.
41. N. D. Popescu, *Maria Putoianca. Roman istoric. Extras din cea mai glorioasă epocă a vieții lui Mihai Viteazul* (Brașov, Editura Librăriei Ciurcu, 1892): 138.
42. Duiliu Zamfirescu, *În război. Roman* (Bucharest: Editura Tipografiei "Clementa," 1902): 246.
43. N. D. Popescu, *Tînsul haiducul. Nuvelă originală* (Brașov: Editura Librăriei Ciurcu, 1881): 55.
44. N. Rădulescu-Niger, *Străin în țara lui...* (Bucharest: I. Negreanu, 1923): 96.
45. Const. Mille, *Dinu Milian. Roman* (Bucharest: Ig. Haimann, 1887): 171.
46. See Roman Jakobson, "Lingvistică și poetică. Aprecieri retrospective și considerații de perspectivă," in *Probleme de stilistică. Culegere de articole*, trans. Mihai Nasta & Matei Călinescu (Bucharest, Editura Științifică, 1964), 93-95.
47. Duiliu Zamfirescu, *Viața la țară. Roman* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Storck & Müller, 1898): 151.
48. *DCRR-1*: 1340.
49. D. D. P., *Grozea, mare haiduc național* (Bucharest: Tipo-litografia Dor. P. Cucu, 1882): 133.
50. N. D. Popescu, *Bujor haiducul. Nuvelă originală* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei H. Steinberg, 1892): 110.
51. Panait Macri, *Haiducul Țandură. Scriere originală cu adaose și modificări* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei H. Steinberg, 1894), 47.
52. Morariu, "The Affective," 138.
53. *DCRR-1*, 1340.
54. *Ibid.*, 1342.
55. *Ibid.*, 1277: "reminiscente din romanul balzacian *Le Lys dans la vallée*."
56. *Ibid.*, 1297: "linia socială a romanului de mistere."
57. *Ibid.*, 1348: "o viziune socială utopică."
58. Terian et al., "Genurile," 2019: 24.
59. Drăgan, *Romanul*, 125.
60. *DCRR-1*, 1320: "cu tentă de policier."
61. Alexandru I. Alexandrescu, *Clotilda sau Crimele unei femei. Roman original* (Bucharest: Isac Binder Press, 1891): 98-104.
62. *Ibid.*, 43: "[n]ecunoscutul, după ce se asigură că frații Sabatūs erau singuri, și că nicio altă ureche străină nu era să asculte, se apropie de masa unde erau ei, și fără să zică niciun cuvânt se așeză pe cel de-al treilea scaun ce părea că-l așteaptă. Un moment de tăcere urmă, timp în care streinul încetă cu examenul; apoi, după ce se convinge pe deplin: - Am venit, zise el cu o voce schimbată, pentru a vă spune că ziua se apropie..."
63. *DCRR-1*, 1299: "abundă în întâmplări neverosimile (sinucideri, asinate, răpiri)."
64. Baghiu et al., "Geografia internă," 33.
65. See, for an initial analysis of internal temporality in the nineteenth-century Romanian novel, a study of both archives, Radu Vancu et al., "Temporalitatea internă a romanului românesc (1844-1932)," *Transilvania*, no. 10 (2020): 22-32.
66. *Ibid.*, 24-25.
67. Drăgan, *Romanul*, 14-15.



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