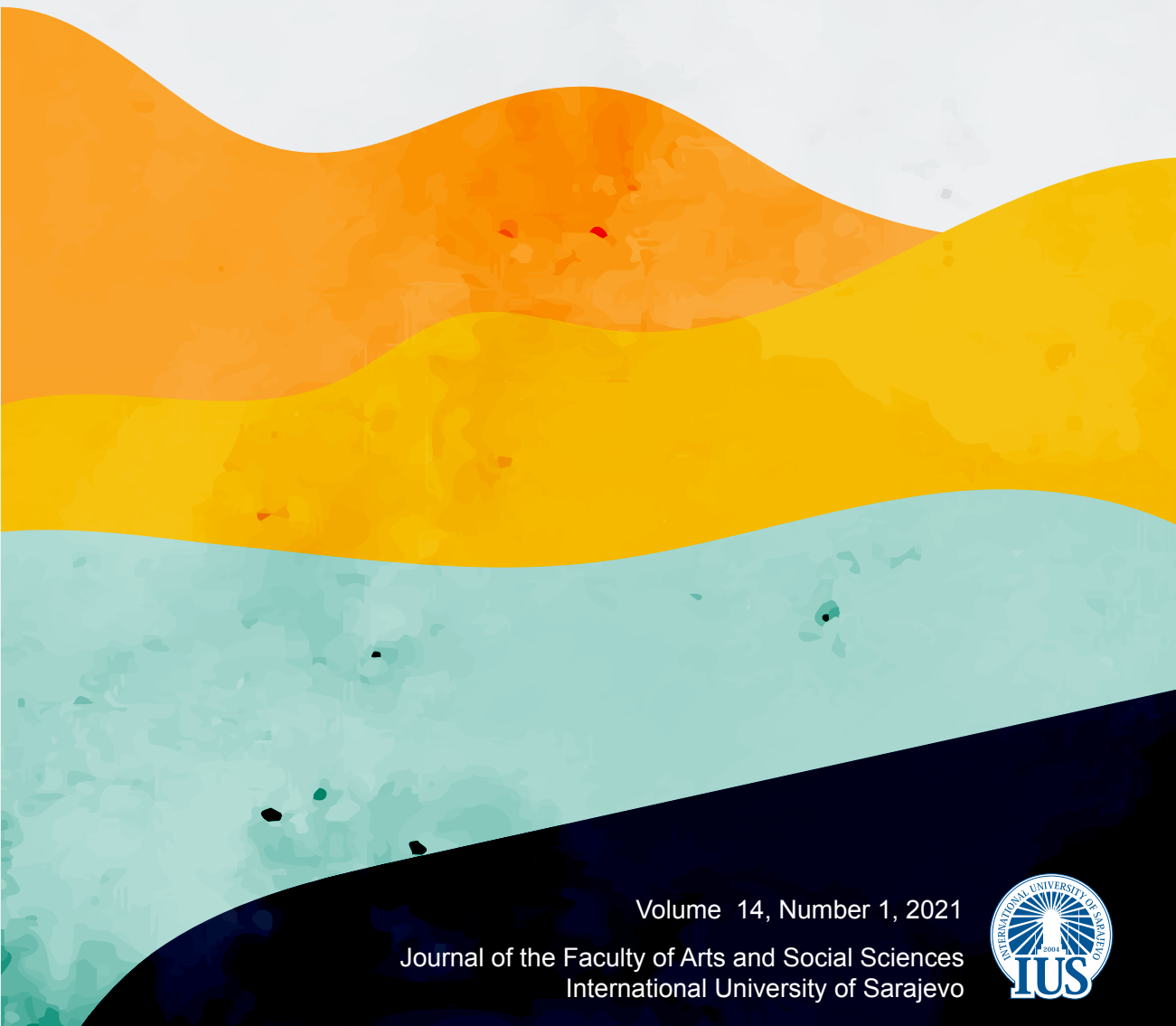


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DEBATES ON TURKEY'S SOFT POWER IN THE AUSTRIAN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Ružica Čubela Bajramović
Şule Dursun-Akdeniz

Abstract: This paper provides a brief overview of Turkey's soft power in Austria through the example of the faith-based public diplomacy institution ATİB (Avusturya Türkiye İslam Birliği, Türkisch-Islamische Union in Österreich), a branch of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı). It addresses the significance of ATİB with regard to the religious and cultural needs of the Turkish Muslim community in Austria and the negative perceptions of Turkey's soft power strategy in this country. The paper also focuses on the current challenges faced by the ATİB, as well as by Austria's Muslim community in general, as a result of the Law on Islam that was adopted in 2015 (Islamgesetz 2015) and the accompanying discussions around Muslim associations financed from abroad. The research design is primarily based on a critical discourse analysis of political and academic debates about the ATİB, the 2015 Islam Law, and their catalyzing effect on Islamophobia in Austria.

Keywords: Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Diyanet, ATİB, Turkey, Austria, Islamophobia

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Introduction

After the first coup of the Freedom Party in Austria (FPÖ) in 1999, which was preceded by an anti-foreigner (and especially anti-Muslim) campaign and followed by the 9/11 attacks, Islamophobia in Austria intensified (Hafez, 2010). Muslim immigrants in particular continued to be a focus of political debates, where Islam was represented and stereotyped as incompatible with European values in the public discourse (Wets, 2006). Due to the long historical presence of Islam in Europe which has been expanded considerably by recent migrations, the discussions also focus on the outstanding features of Islam, as Basam Tibi emphasizes:

“[T]he problem is not the number of Muslim people living in Europe, but rather what Islam is coming to Europe. Is it European Islam, enlightened Islam compatible and consonant with the civilizational identity of Europe, or is it Shari’a-Islam? This is the real issue and this is what the future of Europe is all about.” (Tibi, 2008, 71).

The content of the debates held in public space varies in regard to the topics encompassed and the conclusions commonly reached. Particularly since the phenomenon of radicalization associated with the Islamic religion has become an increasingly tangible element of public discourse in Austria, the breadth of these debates has widened. We can see this, for example, in the response of the former interior minister, Herbert Kickl (Freedom Party of Austria), to the decision to declare the headscarf ban in elementary schools unconstitutional:

“In its decision on the headscarf ban, the Constitutional Court seems to have forgotten for which type of state the constitution, the guardian of which it is intended to be, was written - namely for a democratic constitutional state, in which fundamental and freedom rights are guaranteed, and not for an Islamic Republic” (Freiheitlicher Parlamentsklub – FPÖ, 2020, December 11).²

² Translated by the author.

Due to the large numbers of Muslims in Austria³, the public discourse is also focused on the integration of the Muslim population in Europe, and Islamophobic incidents including discrimination against Muslims in the areas of employment, education, and religious practices. As we can see from the ‘Anti-Muslim Racism Report’ for 2020, anti-Muslim hate crimes and Islamophobic incidents in Austria rose by a third over the course of the reporting period, from 2019 to 2020 (Antimuslimischer Rassismus Report, 2020).

In recent years, origin-oriented religious institutions have also featured more and more frequently in the Austrian public discourse. Defined for the purposes of this research as origin-oriented institution we understand associations that are initiated by diaspora living in Austria or foreign state organized as associations mainly for promoting culture, language and religion of the country of origin. Among the most prominent and controversial of those currently operating in Austria, noteworthy examples include Islamische Föderation (IF) and Österreichisch-türkische Föderation (ATF) – Avusturya Türk Federasyonu (Addendum, 2020, May 18). In this context, the Turkish faith-based institution ATİB is of particular interest, due to its important role in the Turkish state's expanding soft-power approach to foreign policy.

The following paper takes a closer look at the origin-oriented faith based public diplomacy institution ATİB (Avusturya Türkiye *İslam* Birliği, Türkisch-Islamische Union in *Österreich*), a branch of the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet *İşleri* Başkanlığı) — hereinafter referred to as Diyanet. The aim of this paper is not to deal with political developments in Turkey, but to explain the backlash against Turkey's soft power in Austria, the allegations against the ATİB, and the challenges faced by Turkish Muslims in the country since 2015, when the Islam Law ignited a new wave of public discussions and restrictions (Islamgesetz 2015). Before starting with the core content of the paper, it is necessary to explain the theoretical concept of soft power and its main instrument, public diplomacy (Nye 2004, 2011).

³ According to the research report ‘Muslim Diversity - A Compass on Everyday Religious Practice in Austria’ from 2017, around 202.901 Muslims have Austrian citizenship, and 114.119 Muslims have Turkish citizenship. Muslims in Austria with Turkish migration background are the biggest Muslim group in Austria followed by the Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina (50.995) Former Yugoslavia (21.419) and Macedonia (14.722) (Aslan et al., 2017, 25-29)

Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

The term soft power is also known as the 'other face of power', and as 'power by attraction.' It is recognized for its potential to shape the preferences or actions of other countries through benignity (how an agent relates to others), brilliance (how an agent does things to produce admiration or respect), and beauty (agent's relations to ideals, visions and values) (Nye, 2004, X, 5; Nye, 2011, 92; Vuving, 2009, 8ff). States usually use power to achieve political goals (Nye 2011: 81). In contrast to hard power, which relies on the subsidiaries of military power (threat or force) and economic power (payments and sanctions), soft power's primary currencies are culture, values, policies, and institutions (Nye, 2004, 31; Nye, 2011, 84).

Despite criticisms that question soft power's relevance and its clarity and utility as a theoretical concept (Fan, 2008; Hocking, 2005; Pells, 1997), Nye claims that it is actually hard power which is declining in popularity and relevance. This is largely, Nye argues, due to the mounting expenses, both financial and social, which are accrued not only through the use of force itself, but also through the measures required for its justification and popular support (Nye, 2004, 19f). In the absence of force, soft power can be a source of attraction promoted by governments or non-profit organizations (ibid., 17, 122). According to the author:

"It is possible to get many desired outcomes without having much tangible power over others. For example, some loyal Catholics may follow the pope's teaching on capital punishment not because of a threat of excommunication but out of respect for his moral authority. Or some radical Muslim fundamentalists may be attracted to support Osama bin Laden's actions not because of payments or threats, but because they believe in the legitimacy of his objectives." (ibid., 2).

However, an oft-noted weakness of soft power is its difficult and time-consuming implementation into government strategy. Furthermore, the instruments of soft-power are such that it cannot be entirely controlled by govern-

ments. Therefore, it is said that "soft power [...] is hard to use, easy to lose, and costly to re-establish" (Nye, 2011, 83f). Additionally, Brannagan & Giulianotti (2018, 1140) identify the phenomenon of "soft disempowerment" which refers to the potential "unintended and weakening consequences" which can result from soft power strategies. They go on to explain that soft disempowerment commonly arises from three practices: "contravening international laws and rules," "failing to uphold international conventions or standards on global development," and acting in ways that are perceived to "have direct and negative impacts on other individual nations or communities of nations" (ibid., 1152ff). Whereas soft power is an attempt to wield "attraction" in foreign policy, soft disempowerment describes the effects of "unattractiveness," due to actions that are considered unacceptable, on the perceptions of nations in foreign countries (ibid., 1152).

Cultural activities which promote the foreign policy interests of a state by building a positive image (Hubinger, 2006: 85; Pajtnika, 2014, 100) fall under the domain of cultural diplomacy and soft power. Apart from promoting the culture and identity of the nation in question, other activities aim to disseminate cultural values and encourage public engagement, such as the negotiation of treaties on cultural cooperation, and the maintenance of ties with expatriate communities (Pajtnika, 2014, 95, 103f). Cummings (2003, 1) sees cultural diplomacy as an exchange of aspects of culture among nations and their people to achieve a better understanding among states. In order to experience benefits from cultural diplomacy, it is necessary to engender attraction through public diplomacy, which is regarded as one of the key instruments of soft power (Melissen, 2005, 4).

It is the "government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies." (Tuch, 1990, 3).

Along with communicating information and promoting a positive image, public diplomacy aims at building long-term relationships to create a conducive environment for government policies (Nye, 2011: 105). Some authors do not believe that public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy are one in the same, but nevertheless consider public diplomacy an important

tool for the dissemination and exchange of culture and values between one country and the general public abroad (Pajtnika, 2014, 101). These efforts can easily be dismissed as an attempt to manipulate of foreign populations (Melissen, 2005, 11). Public diplomacy targets the general public, non-official groups, individuals, and organizations abroad (ibid., 5) in order to engage with the foreign audience and establish long term relationships (ibid., 21). There are three important dimensions of public diplomacy function to create a conducive environment for government policies: daily communication, strategic communication, and the development of lasting relationships (Nye, 2011, 105).

As Nye observes, the “effectiveness of public diplomacy is measured by minds changed” (ibid., 107). In this respect, several activities must be undertaken in order to influence the public opinion of another state through establishing a positive perception of one country. One of the first examples of a public diplomacy institution is the Alliance Française, founded in 1883, which sought to popularize French culture and language as well as to restore national prestige after the Franco-Prussian war abroad (Nye, 2004, 102). Other noteworthy examples of public diplomacy institutions include the German Goethe Institute, which promotes German language and culture worldwide (Goethe Institut, n.d.); the British Council, which also works closely with the British foreign ministry to promote the English language and international relations (British Council, n.d.); and the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research, which is an advocate of international cooperation in education, science, and research and owned by the Republic of Austria (OeAD, 2021, September 2).

Faith-based institutions have also become increasingly active in public diplomacy. Because religions are often transnational in nature, they have particular potential to transcend national boundaries to promote certain cultures and values. If we start from a broader understanding of culture as a set of practices and values which create meaning for society (Nye 2004: 11), religion can be used as a “subject and medium” of cultural diplomacy (Lenozowski, 2009, 82, 87) or a cultural element of soft power (Golan 2018). Examining several transnational religious actors, including Roman Catholics, American Evangelical Protestants, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Haynes (2016, 5) came to the conclusion that each actor

seeks to use [...] ‘religious soft power’ to advance their interests [...] all wish to see the spread and development of certain values and norms, which impact on international security and order.”

Emergence of the Muslim religious community in Austria

The diplomatic relations between Austria and Turkey extend back as far as 1574, when the first diplomatic mission of the Habsburg Monarchy (or Danubian Monarchy) in Constantinople was recorded. In 1791, the first Ottoman Embassy was opened in Vienna. With the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the “Danubian monarchy,” legalized under international law in 1908, the Islamic religion has had a long historical presence on Austrian territory. To institutionalize Islam within the state, Austria-Hungary issued a Law on Islam in 1912, pertaining to the recognition and rights of those in the country who were followers of Islam.⁴ One of the outcomes of this law was that the adherents of Islam were granted official recognition as a religious community,⁵ which was unique in Western Europe at the time. In 1932, the Islamic Cultural Federation (Islamischer Kulturbund) was established to unite the Muslims in Austria, including prominent converts (Windhanger, 2008, 33f). It was later dissolved by the Nazi regime in 1938, after which the 1912 Law on Islam was largely forgotten until the end of World War II.

Since Austria needed workers to rebuild the country after the destruction of the Second World War, the government began negotiating bilateral agreements with foreign countries to facilitate reconstruction. Turkey and Austria signed the first agreement on labor recruitment (Anwerbeabkommen) in 1969 which enabled ‘guest workers’ (Gastarbeiter) to come

⁴ The basis of the Austrian legal framework concerning Religious Societies is freedom of religion guaranteed in the Austrian Constitution as well as the guarantee of freedom of religion and conscience found in the Basic Law on the General Rights of Nationals (“Staatsgrundgesetz”) of 1867 and the Law on recognition of Religious Societies (“Anerkennungsgesetz für Religionsgesellschaften”) of 1874. (Bundeskanzleramt 2019)

⁵ StGG- Staatsgrundgesetz - Basic Law of 21 December 1867 on the General Rights of Nationals in the Kingdoms and Länder represented in the Council of the Realm, RGBL. Nr. 142/1867.

to Austria from Turkey. As a result of the labor migration, the number of Muslims in Austria, especially those from Turkey and ex-Yugoslavia, grew significantly during the 1960s. By 1974, approximately 31.270 Turkish immigrants had arrived in Austria (Lichtenberger, 2000). The majority of those workers stayed in the country and were later joined by their families through the process of family reunification. The substantial number of Turkish immigrants coming to work and live in Austria created a growing demand for organizations which would represent the Muslim faith.

The Islamic law of 1912, which remained in oblivion after the collapse of the monarchy, was rediscovered in the national library by the Bosnian scholar Smail Balić. He and other Muslim intellectuals saw it as a basis for the creation of a religious community in Austria. Together with the Association of Muslim Social Service, which was working on religious issues and the provision of humanitarian aid, they campaigned for an appropriate legal framework for incorporating Austria's Muslim community (Strobl, 1997, 29; Sticker, 2008, 3). In 1971, the association applied for approval to establish a religious community based on the Islam Law from 1912, which resulted in the establishment of the Islamic Faith Community of Austria (IFCA- Islamic Faith Community in Austria or IGGiÖ- Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich). It was recognized as a Public Law Corporation (Grabherr et al., 2019, 40) responsible for the official administration of religious affairs and the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in public schools (IGGÖ, n.d.). Today, the IFCA claims to represent all Muslims living in Austria (Hafez, 2013, 230), however, not all Muslim communities are represented in the IFCA's High Council. Still the IFCA has the privilege of playing the role of mediator on issues of government cooperation, thereby limiting the consultation between other Muslim communities and the state. The former IFCA president, Fuat Sanac, was heavily criticized for approving the Islam Law 2015 (Grabherr et al., 2019: 42; Ortadoğu, 2013, 176; Stricker, 2008, 9).

The Faith-based Public Diplomacy Institution ATİB and its Critics

The Turkish state was increasingly apprehensive of the growing number of non-governmental Turkish-Islamic associations in Austria, e.g. *Österreich-Türkische Förderung* (ATF), *Union Islamischer Kulturzentren* (UIKZ) and *Islamische Föderation* (IF), and their influence "in the Islamic religious field" (Hafez, 2006, 70; Hafez, 2013, 230). For this reason, it established

the faith-based public diplomacy institution ATİB in 1990, as a branch of the Turkish Diyanet⁶ (Bauer, 2016, 23; Grabherr et al., 2019, 40; Kroissbrunner, 2001, 23). This institution soon rose to become the largest⁷ mosque association of Turkish Muslims in Austria (Bauer, 2016, 23f). According to the mission statement of Diyanet in Turkey, it is a particular concern that its branches abroad "protect Muslims from assimilation, strengthen their national identity, and promote integration in their new living space" (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, n.d.). Like other Diyanet-linked organizations in Europe, ATİB claims to represent 'Turkish Islam,' which is portrayed as compatible with modernity and democracy (Çitak, 2013, 177). Up until the 2015 Islam Law (Islamgesetz 2015) was passed in Austria, the chairman of the ATİB was always a diplomat from the Turkish embassy. Additionally, the roughly sixty imams in the ATİB mosques were sent from Turkey as employees of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Bauer, 2016, 24; Grabherr et al., 2019, 40). The imams based their work and preaching on legal opinions (fatwas) of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Like in Turkey, ATİB promotes the Hanafi⁸ School of law, one of the four most widespread schools of Sunni Islamic law. Because the Hanafi School had also shaped the Muslim community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was also the body of law that had been recognized by the Islam Law of 1912 (Grabherr et al., 2019, 41).⁹

However, ATİB's associations didn't take part in IFCA until 2011. One reason for this is the nature of the relationship between state and religion in Austria. The internal, self-determined structure of the IFCA is defined in its constitution, which contains, among other things, the so-called 'one-third rule,' which is heavily criticized by the ATİB. This clause lays out provisions which regulate the linguistic and ethnic composition of the IFCA bodies.

⁶ Diyanet itself was established in Turkey in 1924 and is today subordinated directly to the presidency (Grabherr et al., 2019, 40)

⁷ Around 75.000 members and around 60 sub-associations (Bauer, 2016, 23f).

⁸ The Hanafi School is one of the four schools of law in jurisprudence within Sunni Islam. It uses reason, logic, opinion, analogy, and preference in the formulation of laws and is distinguished from the other schools through its relatively liberal doctrines (Oxford Islamic Studies Online, n.d.).

⁹ The Austrian Constitutional Court declared this as unconstitutional and the restriction of rights to members of the Hanafi School of Law was lifted (ORF, 2020, September 15)

The IFCA Community Committee consists of nine members, at least half of whom are supposed to have Austrian citizenship, and not more than a third of whom may belong to a different ethnic and linguistic group (Grabherr et. al, 2019, 42; Stricker, 2008, 9; IGGÖ, n.d.).

Although various Austrian institutions accepted the special status of ATİB as a part of Turkish diplomacy, the organization is often considered to be too close to AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) government. In its early years, ATİB was perceived as being oriented against conservative Islamic associations. Later, however, there was an emerging consensus that the AKP had begun to infiltrate the Diyanet leadership with party supporters and to assert its influence, both in Turkey and among the diaspora, with a conservative interpretation of Islam (Grabherr et al. 2016, 42f). According to Çitak, the Turkish government is trying to establish a sort of religious monopoly, in order to promote Turkish Islam and consolidate national unity among the Turkish diaspora. This is in stark contrast to the ambitions of other governments in Europe to create 'European Islam' (Çitak, 2013, 169). Aslan claims that due to its size, ATİB has many members in the IFCA steering committee which is believed to enable it to expand its influence on Muslim and Turkish communities in Austria (Arslan, 2015; Aslan et al., 2017). He attributes the high level of participation of Austrian Turks in the 2015 and 2018 elections to the influence of ATİB (Aslan, 2018, 2f).

The attempted coup d'état in Turkey in 2016 was met by widespread public condemnation of the Gülen movement and calls to boycott the institutions of its members. This in turn has led to indignation by Austrian party officials, and the initiation of proceedings to investigate whether the imams of Diyanet are agents of the Turkish government (Aslan, 2018, 8). Another trigger for a public debate about the ATİB was an event in 2018, when uniformed children in a Vienna mosque belonging to the ATİB re-enacted the 1915/1916 Battle of Gallipoli (*Çanakkale Savaşı*) (Wiener Zeitung, 2018, April 20). Although the AKP is accused of using religion and nationalism as foreign policy tools (Ipek, 2015; Ozturk, 2016; Ozturk, 2018; Ozturk and Sozeri, 2018), Islamophobia researcher and political scientist Hafez claims that the AKP has no real religious base. Until recently, it consisted of various political movements such as the Milli Görüş, the Gülen movement, the Sufi Squad, and others. There are also factions within the party which, while nationalistic, are not religiously conservative or associated with political Islam (Hafez, 2017, February 27).

According to Muhasilovic (2020, 103ff), Turkey's faith-based diplomacy under the AKP differs from Western models by using the Presidency of Religious Affairs as the official public diplomacy state institution. However, this has created suspicion around the party's political influence in Austria, and as Nye (2004) points out, no country likes to feel manipulated, even by soft power. Grabherr et al. (2016, 42f) write that the political developments in Turkey do not necessarily have to be reflected in main features of the ATİB in Austria, and that all ATİB functionaries cannot be automatically assumed to have close connections with the AKP. The ATİB itself repeatedly emphasizes its apolitical status and insists that it does not tolerate politics of any party in its associations. In 2017, ATİB publicly distanced itself from some positions of the Turkish government and for the first time, a non-diplomat was elected chairman.

The Changing Law for Muslims (Islamgesetz 2015) in Austria and Islamophobia on the Rise

Parallel to the discussions about the Turkish public diplomacy intuition ATİB in Austria, the debate around changing the Law on Islam from 1912 began in the Austrian public and parliament. In 2015, a new Islam Law was enacted, under the pretext of preventing foreign political and theological influences, as well as to promote an understanding of Islam based on Austrian and European values. The main regulation of federal law on the external legal relationships of Islamic religious societies in the 2015 Islam Law concerned the legal status of Islamic Religious Societies, including their structure, rights, and obligations, as well as their relations with the Austrian state. Among these societies are the Islamic Community in Austria and the Islamic Alevi Community. Among other things, the 2015 Islam Law also regulates important issues like the protection of the religion's name, pastoral care, Islamic teleological studies, Islamic graveyards, regulation on the interdiction of foreign financing, dietary rules, and the presentation of teachings and sources of faith in the German language (RIS, 23.04.2020; Federal Chancellery, n.d.). However, the most important intention of the Law is to train imams in Austria (§6 and §24 Islam Law 2015). Another noteworthy regulation places emphasis on a positive general attitude towards society and the state (§11.3 Islam Law). It is also important to keep in mind that "teachings, institutions and customs are not allowed to contradict statutory rules" and that, in that case, the recognition can be taken

back (RIS, 23.04.2020; Federal Chancellery, n.d.). This was, among other things, a direct attack on the public diplomacy intuition ATİB, who would no longer be allowed to receive funding from Turkey, and whose imams employed in Austria would be denied any extension of their residency permits.

In 2021, an initiative started to change the 2015 Islam Law, which was launched as a part of an anti-terror package. Suggesting tighter legislation, the main amendments proposed by the reforms would introduce better control of funding sources of Islamic Religious Societies, an easier process for the closing down of mosques and religious community centers, and means of accessing precise information about which imam is preaching were. This would give the Office of Churches and Religions more control over the IFCA (Religion ORF.at 2021). The Amendment passed the Austrian National Parliament and is currently being discussed by the Federal Council (Republik Österreich Parlament, n.d.).

The efforts to tighten the 2015 Islam Law, in conjunction with public debates and political discourse accompanying this decision, indicate growing levels of Islamophobia in Austrian society. This has been galvanized considerably through the new discussions about the proposed amendment. As demonstrated in a 2018 study on Islamophobia, conducted by the University of Salzburg, hostility towards Muslims in Austria has increased substantially in recent years. 70% of Austrian citizens think that Islam does not fit into the Western world, and the majority of Austrians support stricter regulations on the practice of Islam. Additionally, 45% of respondents reported that they were in favor of denying Muslims certain rights.¹⁰ When we take into account that, according to data from 2016, 700.000 Muslims live and pay taxes in Austria, a number that has consistently trended upwards (Wolfgang Aschauer, n.d.) the attitudes of the general population towards Muslims and Islam become an even more delicate issue.

Numerous examples of these trends can be observed in the political discourse of prominent Austrian politicians surrounding the public diplomacy institute ATİB and the 2015 Islam Law and its proposed amendment. Before the Law was implemented for example, MP Mag. Ewald Stadler (Alliance for the Future of Austria, BZÖ) posed an inquiry (Parlamentarische

¹⁰The study was conducted with 1.200 respondents, about the opinion of Muslims in Austria.

Materialien, n.d.) to the Austrian parliament in 2011, arguing that the last IFCA elections represented an agenda of Turkish domination through lobbying by the ATİB.

He went on to criticize ATİB representative Mr. Bozkus his statements that ATİB "is not an association dealing with integration," that the "German language does not in itself represent integration," and that Austrian policy needed to be assigned greater "responsibility when it meets integration." Furthermore, he complains about the fact that prayers in ATİB mosques are still performed in Turkish and that there is no German version of the ATİB homepage. He also points out that Bozkus works as a religious official of a foreign state ministry. By comparing MP Stadler's representation of Bozkus' statements with the original interview which Boskuz gave in the Austrian newspaper 'Die Presse' (Kocina, 2011, June 3), we are able to conclude that these quotes were taken out of context.

Based on these allegations, MP Stadler questions the Islam Law of 1912 and asks the Minister for European and International Affairs 21 more questions in this parliamentary debate. These questions are primarily related to the reform of that law, examining whether the IFCA is pursuing the agendas of private associations. He also questions whether there are grounds for the existence of ATİB, as a state body of Turkey, in Austria. We can clearly observe here how the suspicion of the ATİB and of IFCA itself is based on the decontextualized statements of the ATİB representative and the victory of ATİB within the IFCA elections. Furthermore, these arguments are used to mobilize support for the initiative to amend the Islam Law of 1912 by the MP. In light of the fact that the ATİB only joined the IFCA in 2011, these statements can be understood as expressions of fear regarding the ATİB's level of influence in the IFCA, as well as an outgrowth of competition among Austria's radical right-wing parties and Islamophobic campaigns¹¹ (Hafez, 2018, 8).

It is not only Austrian politicians who catalyze debates around foreign influence in the country. The Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, said at a 2014 pre-election campaign event in Austria for example that "Turks in Europe are the grandchildren of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent," and proclaimed "You can be proud of this Turkey" (Herger, 2014, June 19).

¹¹The MP's party, Alliance for the Future of Austria, came about through the break with the with the radical right Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ).

Such rhetoric provides ample opportunity for right-wing parties in Austria, who are eager to manipulate such statements to imply the impossibility of Turkish integration due to Turkish nationalism, or a supposed loyalty to Turkey which supersedes their Austrian patriotism. Similarly, such rhetoric fuels accusations that the ATİB is involved in Turkish elections. A related discourse is embodied by the statements of the former Austrian Minister of Integration, Sebastian Kurz (Austrian People's Party, ÖVP). At the time of the implementation of the Islam Law 2015, he repeatedly emphasized the need for an Islam with "Austrian characteristics" (Dietrich, 2015, September 22). In a later statement, he claimed that "parallel society, political Islam and radicalization have no place in our country." and that the law would be a "step against political Islam" (Deutsche Welle, 2018, June 8). From his statements, we can affirm the discursive construction of an 'Austrian Islam,' with 'Austrian characteristics' and under the control of the Austrian state. This 'Austrian Islam' is represented as the 'good Islam,' and juxtaposed to 'bad Islam,' manifested in Muslim associations founded abroad. His framing has the potential to incite Islamophobia in Austrian society by suggesting the latter organizations have radicalizing potential and should be held under general suspicion. This is also an example how Turkey's soft power efforts are dismissed as an attempt to manipulate Austrian population.

After the implementation of the 2015 Islam Law, an ATİB spokesman criticizes the quick implementation of the financing of the imams from abroad, stating

"we have demanded that we have at least three to five years of transition, with which we can also pay off the imams from Turkey. Now we have to pay the imams ourselves and financially that is a big challenge for the individual associations." (Auerbach, 2017, April 5).¹²

Considering that other religious communities, such as the Russian Orthodox Church for example, are allowed to be financed from abroad (Dietrich, 2015, September 22), the provision in the 2015 Islam Law which bans Muslim associations from accepting foreign funds also constitutes discrimination against Muslim religious associations.

On the other hand, the spokesman expressed enthusiasm for the day when

¹²Translated by the author.

Austrian-educated imams are in office, because

"the children understand the Turkish language less and less, it is important that they understand what is being preached. And it is important to us that the imams also receive an excellent German education." (Auerbach, 2017, April 5).¹³

His moderate attitude, in the end, may be connected to the fact that, apart being an ATİB spokesperson, he was also a politician of the Austrian People's Party. The fact remains that the new Islam Law came into force in 2015, and the education of Imams in Austria began in the autumn of 2018. The portrayal of all Muslims in Austria as a potential danger is accompanied by acts such as when the Minister of Integration, Susanne Rab, (Austrian People's Party) recently presented a "state map of Islam," which identified mosques and organizations, the names of their leaders, and their international connections (ORF 2 27.05.2021). This was heavily criticized by, among others, the Austrian Catholic Church (DerStandard, 2021, June 1) and is reminiscent of a dark past in Austria.

According to Hafez (2010), right-wing parties see the topic of integration and political Islam as an opportunity to collect political points. This precipitates distrust and hostility towards Muslims and Islam and has an impact on the perceptions and feelings of the country's Muslims. In the 2012 study 'Muslims in Austria,' the authors conclude that six out of ten Muslims felt that they were (at least temporarily) disadvantaged in Austria because of their religion (Bauer, 2016, 38).

Constitutional lawyers strongly criticize the Islam Law 2015 for violating the principle of equality by discriminatory treatment of Muslims relative to other religious communities (ibid, 2016, 4), who, for example, are not subject to financial prohibitions in Austria (ORF, 2014, October 3). The law has also been characterized by one Islamic legal scholar as "somewhat excessive legislation that may also violate the European Convention on Human Rights," and as driven by the "basic political direction of a great skepticism about Islam" (Deutsche Welle, 2018, June 8). Hafez sees the new restrictions as "institutionalized Islamophobia," (Hafez, 2017, February 27) and criticizes the common stereotyping of Muslims as disloyal to the state (Hafez, 2014, November 3).

Integration politics have proven highly controversial in Austria. When it

¹³ Translated by the author.

comes to immigrant integration, religion is also heavily politicized. The initiatives are largely driven by the concern that Islam is a potential political problem and is incompatible with Western society. The loyalty and values of Muslim citizens, who view themselves as Europeans, are regularly questioned (Shakir, 2017, 191). It is important to bear in mind the fact that as the Austrian model of religious governance is changing, origin-oriented faith-based Muslim minority organizations will become even more relevant. If the state does not succeed in facilitating sustainable integration into society, migrants will turn to those organizations in pursuit of their rights, and these organizations will offer them a social network. The aim of the Austrian government should be to promote equality and integration in Austria, while seeking a balance between assimilation and cultural imperialism (Nye, 2011, 87). This could be done in cooperation with those associations as well as faith-based public diplomacy institutions. In the words of Nye: "Soft power need not to be a zero-sum game in which one country's gain is necessarily another country's loss" (ibid., 2011, 90).

Conclusion

Since the Second World War, the number of Muslim migrants arriving to live and work in Austria has continue to rise, creating a need for organized religious representation. In 1990, the Turkish faith-based public diplomacy institution ATİB was established in Austria, as a branch of the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs, Diyanet. With over 60 Turkish imams in Austria, ATİB was tasked with attending to the religious needs of the Turkish diaspora. Over the past two decades, as the conservative AKP party has consolidated power in Turkey, suspicions that the ATİB is being used as an instrument of the AKP agenda have sparked heated debates in Austrian politics. However, the implementation of the new Islam Law in 2015 led to significant changes in the ATİB's operations. They are no longer allowed to employ imams from Turkey, or to receive foreign funding. These restrictions have resulted in financial difficulties for the institution as well as upended the lives of Turkish imams working in Austria. The extent to which these restrictions are justified by any concrete effort on the part of the Turkish government to instrumentalize the ATİB as a part of a malign foreign policy agenda remains a subject of political controversy. The debates engendered by this controversy have inevitably exacerbated underlying Islamophobia in Austrian society, which calls for extensive monitoring.

The present research has employed critical discourse analysis to demonstrate the link between the debate surrounding the public diplomacy institution ATİB, the 2015 Islam Law, and growing Islamophobia in Austrian society. By examining the statements of Austrian officials, it becomes clear that constructions of Islam as a political threat and incompatible with European values is an enormous aspect of the debates around faith-based public diplomacy institutions, religious restrictions, and integration policy. The politics and policies of 'restriction,' the politicization of Islam in the context of migration issues, and the portrayal of Muslim migrants as disloyal or a political threat to the Austrian state are all damaging practices by which politicians in Austria galvanize Islamophobic sentiment. Going forward, policy makers should understand the potential of their rhetoric and efforts to tighten restrictions on Muslim communities to intensify Islamophobia.

To this end, the present research has identified problems that should guide policy makers dealing with issues of integration in cooperation with migrants' associations and faith-based institutions. Austrian decision makers should involve representatives of all major associations in the decision-making process given that these associations are not all equally represented in the IFCA. Greater exchange between government officials involved in integration policy and representatives of Muslim communities in Austria is an essential part of this process. In dealing with contentious issues such as radicalization and foreign influence, cooperation between these two sectors is especially vital in order to avoid fomenting Islamophobia or resentment and ensure an equitable policy towards migrants and minorities in Austrian society.

Finally, in regards to soft power, this paper has shown that Turkey's public diplomacy strategy as embodied in the ATİB in Austria, is an example of "soft disempowerment." The actual Turkish government has acquired a largely negative reputation in Western countries like Austria, despite its expansive faith-based public diplomacy efforts like the ATİB. The assumed close ties between the ATİB and the ruling AKP party have engendered suspicion in Austrian society that this supposedly cultural and religious institution is actually pursuing a Turkish political agenda in Austria. This suspicion in turn generates fear of foreign influence in Austrian politics, and more specifically, distrust and negative perceptions of the Turkish state, as evidenced by the discourse analysis presented in this article.

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HOME AND LANDSCAPE IN JURAJ KUNIAK'S POETRY: SEEKING AND FORMING PERSONAL IDENTITY IN THE AUTHOR'S POEMS AND POETIC TEXTS

Anna Slatinská

Abstract: The primary goal of this paper is to elucidate the attachment to place (topophilia) throughout the poetry of Juraj Kuniak - the Slovak contemporary poet. Our aim is to focus on the most significant aspects of his poetic discourse pertaining to home, landscape, and identity. The origin of the phenomena is also explored as well as how it affected Juraj Kuniak and his writing process. From his poetry, we exemplify concepts such as rootedness, birthplace bond, and devotion to native land. The research-based evidence consists of decoding allusions and intertextual meanings which are incorporated in the selected collections of poems. Our analysis reveals the diversity of author's poetic discourse and his interest in global issues. The paper concludes that Juraj Kuniak's poetry could be used effectively in terms of cultivating our inner selves, love for landscape, homeland, national culture and language alongside the cultivation of key life values.

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Introduction

Poetry operates as a dynamic visual reflection of the world outside and inside, being part of an author's innermost identity (Liashuk, 2019). Furthermore, thanks to translation, poetry can be described as an effective tool for dialogue between cultures and nations. When reading Juraj Kuniak's poems, we have the opportunity to communicate with the author through his work and to tackle the issues connected with the concepts of home, landscape, identity, language, culture, everyday human existence, past and future, emphasizing cultivation of life-supporting values such as tolerance, love towards others, respect and empathy in the context of the 21st century. Juraj Kuniak belongs to one particular poetic group, i.e. *the work of lay spiritual poets* (J. Kuniak, R. Jurolek, E. J. Groch, M. Milčák, V. Kupka, P. Milčák, J. Gavura, J. Palaščák) which reveals *the weakening of the historically strong tradition of "symbolic" tendency in favour of "(post)avantguard" approaches* (Juhásová, 2016: 143).

Aim of the article

The primary aim of this article is to reveal the poetic semantics of the selected author, his opinions, values and beliefs concerning home, landscape and place attachment alongside references to historical and cultural, local and global issues which are deemed as crucial for our interpretation. The proposed analysis reveals the poet's linguistic mechanisms, common to his poetic discourse, creating implied and sometimes explicit messages to its readers.

While exploring the phenomena present in Juraj Kuniak's poetry and identifying the sample material, we will be driven by the idea of designating cultural and social interactions located in his works.

The cardinal premise of this paper is interlinked with the view that the poems of Kuniak generate space for fostering national cultural identity, bond towards landscape, and appreciation of home in the context of the 21st century.

Our exploration of Juraj Kuniak's poems takes place in a context which needs to be uncovered. Reading comprehension requires a range of skills to be applied in order to make the most of intertextual and extratextual

information as well as our previous knowledge. The act of interpreting the poems makes them more comprehensible to the reader. Moreover, many of Juraj Kuniak's poems have been translated to English (as well as Belarusian, Serbian, and other languages) thus making them available internationally.

Research Methods

Referring to Kuniak's poetic discourse, we take into consideration not only what is expressed explicitly but also what is or might be implied through the power of figurative devices. One of the article's goals is therefore to interpret and reconstruct allusions and implicit intertextual meanings which are incorporated within the text. This amalgam of lexically articulated meanings provides a challenge to author-interpreter. Although certain lines within poems require an experienced reader who is capable of recognizing the context, subtext, and references, generally, the majority of Kuniak's poems are capable of capturing the attention of anyone who (accidentally or otherwise) encounters his poetry. In short, his poems are appropriate for the wider public due to their versatility and varied topics. Therefore, they became part and parcel of many contemporary Slovak poetically-oriented journals.

In our interpretative approach we have tried to look for the most frequent topics recurring in the poems and poetic texts of Juraj Kuniak and to explore the artistic subtleties as presented in his works like topicality, motifs, themes, repetitive elements, significant historical and cultural events, etc., regarding the concept of home, landscape, and identity.

We have applied the principle of hermeneutic interpretation as part of a qualitative research strategy, giving us the possibility to understand the author.

Analysis of Juraj Kuniak's Poems and Poetic texts

The following section explores in detail particular motifs, themes, allusions, and references, as used by the poet in his poems and poetic texts. Any interpretations included here are based on the particular excerpted line or verse which underwent a process of analysis of selected collections of poems and poetic texts, namely: *Pilgrimage to the Self* (2003), *Rock Rose*

(2004), *A Bit of the World's Space* (2006), *Cor Cordi* (2007), *Private Open-Air Museum – Etudes on Ethnic* (1993), *Landscape in Me* (2015), *Amonit* (2019), *Out past town* (2015), *Lamium Album* (2012), *Rosa Mystica* (2016), *7 poems series* (2017), *POEMS OF THE WORLD No. 3.* (2015), *POEMS OF THE WORLD No. 4.* (2015).

Juraj Kuniak in his *Cor Cordi* collection of poems mentions Milan Rúfus profoundly.² He was a famous Slovak poet, a national bard whose poems have been translated to many languages (died in 2009). Throughout Kuniak's works we can trace the line of memories through the outstanding oeuvre of Milan Rúfus, the most translated poet in Slovakia, whose poems have influenced immensely the poetic work of Juraj Kuniak: *Seven crossings / dear Mr. Rúfus: / the 7 times blessed poetry / of your life / Your Valley / of Violets / high above the Danube* (*Cor Cordi*, Greeting 2007: 9). Here Juraj Kuniak mentions the national river, the Danube, which is symbolic and has been used as a literary motif in many literary works for centuries. The Valley of Violets is a district in Bratislava where Milan Rúfus lived. In his recollections of Milan Rúfus, Kuniak mentions Gerlach Vale which is a landscape feature of symbolic value to Slovak people and is a typical region in which chamois are found (*Cor Cordi*, "From the Seclusion of Kordíky", 2007:59).

In another line within the poem *Greeting* he pays tribute to Milan Rúfus, again writing ... *the lark... / Oh please / sing to my Rúfus / the greeting I have in my heart* (*Cor Cordi*, Greeting 2007: 17). For Kuniak, Milan Rúfus is a true national bard, one who has not been surpassed yet. The poet is begging the lark to sing a greeting to Rúfus, which Kuniak alone is not able to express. It is evident that home is not only about landscape but also about people who helped to create, remodel, and sustain it during difficult times. Throughout his life, Milan Rúfus subtly opposed the Communist regime, fighting cautiously through the medium of word.

In his next extended poem called *From the Seclusion of Kordíky*, Kuniak describes his new home and reveals to Milan Rúfus his true feelings for the place: *In our new "nest" / under the mountain / almost everything seems /*

² Note: These are two poetic epistles. Epistles as a specific genre are letters addressed to someone. Juraj Kuniak used a poetic form for his epistles and dedicated them to his much-loved **mentor** Milan Rúfus for his 70th birthday.

more genuine than before / When there's a blizzard here / it's the real thing (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky, 2007: 23).

Kuniak's poems belonging to Cor Cordi³ intertwine the personality of Milan Rúfus with particular places in Slovakia. Juraj Kuniak often mentions Kordíky in his poems. It is the place where he lives and writes. The title of the book Cor Cordi represents intergenerational emotional interconnection between two hearts (the heart of Milan Rúfus and the heart of Juraj Kuniak), hence its origin which is, phonetically, composed of two words, i.e. Cor Cordi. They create a root declination (nominative and dative) in the village's title Kordíky. He also mentions the original inhabitants who devoted their lives to woodcutting and making tables from wood. They are described as plain people who did not care for material things and did not overindulge in a consumption-oriented way of life, enjoying every minute of life, being mindful: *People are scarce – not a feverish mass / But wood-cutters are near... / And makers of tables...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 25).

The next insightful piece deals with the typical winter weather conditions in Kordíky. Indeed, one of the main reasons for Kuniak's love of this district is its bleakness, wildness, and seclusion... *Winter is grim in Kordíky / Five months we are snowed under...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 29). The district of Kordíky near Banská Bystrica seems an ideal home for the poet regardless the fact that the landscape here is quite rough: *... The metro does not run in Kordíky / as you know / To get down there and back / can be a superhuman labour...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 41).

Except for his remarks concerning Slovakia, he also gives his poems global perspective when mentioning and sharing his thoughts and opinions about the current situation and direction of the world's civilization, he feels that *... The world is getting rundown / It needs to strengthen heart / And arms, / legs, / back... / Instead it propagates Viagra / for what's not muscle at all...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 31-33). Kuniak also admits his doubts about life in the 21st century: *... I know that I'm afraid / Who is without fear?...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 33). This goes hand in hand with the memory of his deceased father and other relatives mentioned throughout all his works.

³ Cor cordi = heart to heart (Latin)

The issue of the world's future has also been raised by him, giving prominence to questions about people's unreasonable actions: *The world is playing its match / To judge by the current score / it does not seem / likely to win the tie / No wonder too / when it evokes the footballer / who throws a kick at the ball / and only then lifts his head / to see / who he's been beaten by...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 35). Here Kuniak gives us an example of indifference, vanity, a desire for fame and popularity, which often rule people's decisions: *... But popularity / is a strange patron indeed / Shooting to the heights / she'll change to an ogre / suddenly malign...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 37).

Kuniak's poems could be used effectively in reminding people about true life's values which are worth following *... To appreciate pure things... / Know how to pick them out... / ... Someone makes mainly money / He's worm-eaten inside / outside he wins acceptance...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 45). Here he points towards an overindulgent way of life which can cause numbness of the human soul and can hinder intrapersonal, interpersonal as well as intercultural communication, being a hindrance to life competencies development (the ability to think critically, to be creative and genuinely cooperative). These negative human attributes are seen by Kuniak as *... The latest forms of evil... / Tasty on the tongue / and tantalizingly ruddy...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 45-47).

The poet also accentuates man's personal identity interlinked often with confusion and despair over one's life: *... Just that no one knows if he is / What he's cooked in his head / how he's knotted himself up / why actually he lives...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 49) referring to immense possibilities that people are given. Furthermore, he underlines the idea of occasionally reminding people living in Slovakia about the gift they have been given in the form of an ordinary, plain, war-free (if only once also wifi-free) way of life.

His poems could be used when teaching the youth (secondary school students and university students) about the advantages and disadvantages of internet epoch and bringing to the fore the importance of home in the turbulent 21st century. *... We are flooded with information /... One needs to have a straw stuck over the surface / and not to forget that there's air / and*

independence / and privacy and human happiness / the home... (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 51). Many of Kuniak's poems were translated by John Minahane, an Irish translator. We suppose that English poetry could challenge and motivate students of different ages to engage in discussions about their beliefs, likes, dislikes, interests, etc., enhancing their creativity as well as their ability to think critically and to coherently articulate their thoughts and feelings, thus fostering their self-confidence and willingness to share their opinions with others.

At the very end of his poem *From the Seclusion of Kordíky*, Kuniak offers some suggestions on how to live responsibly, not waste life on material things, focusing on the need to be and creation of the nest as he did in his beloved district of Kordíky. Nest is an equivalent of home in his poems. He deduces that without it (nest) ... *there's no privacy / and home is not upheld...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 53).

There are also passages where he mentions roots and the situation in which a man finds himself when he loses his home (in case of war, ethnical conflicts, natural disasters, nomad way of life). This can lead to feelings of uprootedness ... *a tree when it is flattened / shows its roots only then...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 55).

The final verses seem truly prophetic, holistic, accentuating the importance of roots in human life. He especially highlights those who are the most vulnerable and he wishes them all the goodness in the world and the ability to find their own anchor in life ... *That you / children / may have roots / deep / deeper / deepest / and each of you be a tree / that the wind cannot level... / Everyone can do something / Yes and everyone can do more / I think / if we don't waste life in the grind...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 57). The author believes in the power of young people to overcome burdens and obstacles they meet while growing up.

Kuniak's collection of poems *Cor Cordi* ends by expressing his best wishes to Milan Rúfus and a positive look into the future expressing hope for new beginnings. He also takes into consideration the fact that human fate is unpredictable and peace can vanish in a minute if we do not cultivate it in our lives : ... *I look forward to the future / just ahead / with one foot home... / For we know the future smiles / But one small vacillation / and it'll push us to the wall...* (Cor Cordi, From the Seclusion of Kordíky 2007: 67).

To conclude, in *Cor Cordi* as a collection of poems-as-letter and letters-as-poem, the author defines his spiritual home located in poetry as well as his family roots interweaving with place and landscape attachment (Cor Cordi 2007). In his *Cor Cordi* we are exposed to his self-reflections, descriptions of home in Kordíky (the mountain village near district city Banská Bystrica) which is viewed as a secluded place, a family base, a shelter for the poet's world. In his poems-as-letter *From the Seclusion of Kordíky* one learns a great deal about his family, communication with children during their academic year in America, and about the harsh weather conditions in the region, which reminds the poet of how easily we can become uprooted.

Furthermore, Juraj Kuniak contributed to the collection of poems and stories called *Landscape in Me* (Biarinec et al. 2015). Thus, landscape as part of identity dominates his poetic pieces and prosaic reflections. The poet compares a poem to the landscape located in his soul which intertwines with the outer environment, landscape outside soul. He admits that he cannot imagine a poem without landscape nor himself without a poem. The author mentions that he has already chosen his home together with his wife. He finds it important to have a fixed place within the country and to know that this place is the right place to live (Biarinec et al. 2015: 103). Juraj Kuniak is one of the most significant poets who draws inspiration from topics such as: home, attachment to place, country, family, faith, etc.

Landscape as a symbol for fostering identity dominates his descriptions: ... *Landscape is a wide, deep, full and spacious concept. Landscape falls to sleep. Landscape rises in the morning. Landscape talks to me. Landscape opens to me. Landscape opens me up. I am rooted in her. I grow up in her. It animates me. Landscape is diverse. Diversity is Divine. Disunity is Diabolic*⁴ (Landscape in Me 2015: 116-117). The concept of roots is a recurring one throughout his poetry, interlinked with home and landscape, reminiscing about previous generations of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. In one of his reflections, he mentions his grandmother: ... *My grandma, Mrs. Kaliariková used to talk to me about Feng – shui and that our home is also like a living being, therefore it is important to locate it in a right way in terms of the points of the compass...*⁵ (Landscape in Me

⁴ From Slovak script translated by Anna Slatinská.

⁵ From Slovak script translated by Anna Slatinská.

2015: 119). The author himself could not believe that his grandmother was familiar with concepts that became popular only in the late 20th century in Slovakia; ideas about where to locate one's house and how to organise one's rooms, etc. in order to most enjoy the dwelling. As it is evident when reading Kuniak's poetry, he is thankful for what his grandparents taught him and how this knowledge has been transmitted successfully across the generations.

Juraj Kuniak has had a chance to explore the landscape of his home by foot, and other means. Being an experienced mountaineer, the poet's vision has been broadened by taking part in various walks, hiking tours, trips and expeditions in Slovakia and abroad. That is why there is a multitude of geographical places and references found in his poems and lyrical prose. The poet frequently mentions amazing winters in Kordiky (his home) caused by a lot of sunny days due to inversion as it was indicated in the same-titled poem (Inversion): *From this point of view, inversion is time for being happy / a reason to take a breath and relax / water vapors slither down the valleys / swallowing up civilization...*⁶ (Landscape in Me 2015: 122-123).

In 2019, Juraj Kuniak published *Amonit*; a collection of poems written between 2008 and 2016. *Amonit* is a bilingual book which intertwines Belarussian with Slovak, Kuniak's first-native language. Viktoria Liashuk translated the texts (Liashuk, 2019). We have found many poetic devices in his poems related to his family, spirituality, honesty, landscape, idea of one's mortality, intergenerational proximity of relatives, sadness, etc., all through the eyes of a 21st century writer living and creating in today's turbulent times. Kuniak reaffirms repeatedly the existence of God as Creator of humanity and calls for the protection of relationships we establish during our life. The poet provides us with descriptions of landscapes in different seasons, memories of his birthplace, memories of his childhood, his parents, the role of mother and father, the raising of a child, the Virgin Mary, the meaning of life, etc.

We have excerpted several passages related to the concept of landscape which is viewed as part of his identity: *I see how the landscape, I was born into, has changed / The trees are on retreat and withering away / woodcutters have destroyed nests of herons / there are tree stools in a row, once*

⁶ From Slovak script translated by Anna Slatinská.

*they were poplars / roads lined with crosses built after fatal accidents...*⁷ (Cliff, Amonit, 2019: 12). As exemplified in this poem, the author is a sensitive, lyrical hero, empathising with the country, in which sadness and sorrows become prominent because of uncontrolled passions and desires. Beside his doubts about nature's survival and human indifference, he refuses to cultivate negative emotions connected with fighting, conflict, war, and raiding: *... growing up in this state where sincerity towards oneself is a weakness and the only / acceptable way of life / seems to be conflict, deceit and fighting*⁸ (Illness of the Immature Tribe, Amonit 2019: 20), he decides not to take part in them.

Juraj Kuniak represents an attentive observer of seasons describing the nuances of weather conditions: *... Frost is after the water / Horizon resembles flat line / rosehips are like drops of blood... Exhausted body of country / Let snow cover it all!*⁹ (Compassion, Amonit 2019: 14). *Winter hasn't said its last word yet. / In the hollow the water has frozen, within it a flower / deceived by the heat of preceding days / and a ladybird deceived by the flower. / ... the freeze will paint your eyebrows, eyelashes – smile*¹⁰ (Lateran Basilica, Amonit 2019: 98).

The previous examples of seasons are intertwined with his childhood memories related to his birthplace in the Čutkovská valley region in the area of Ružomberok: *A breeze arose, I recognised it well, / with that same hand it cooled my brow in childhood; / the wood began to rustle, the water mirror / rippled, and I lost and found myself*¹¹ (In Čutkovská dolina, Amonit 2019: 58).

The author often mentions his relatives, his parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents who created his past and present home: *... lines on the wall at my grandparents' reveals truth about / how I grew up...*¹² (Amonit, Proglas 2012: 43). The people who looked after him from his early years

⁷ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

⁸ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

⁹ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

¹⁰ Translation: John Minahane (Juraj Kuniak & Ján Kudlička: Rosa mystica 2016)

¹¹ In Čutkovská dolina / Juraj Kuniak ; translated by John Minahane – In: POEMS OF THE WORLD. – ISSN 1092-0897. – Vol. 19, No. 4 (Summer 2015), s. 22. – Palatine, Illinois (USA) : International Poetry Press.

¹² Translated by Anna Slatinská.

are recurrently used alongside metaphors in his other poems: *Mother's love is at work in me, my spirit / has its origin there, a string well-strung, / cultivation of mercy in the self, / expansion of green, disturbance of limits*¹³ (Consciousness, Amonit 2019: 100).

Moreover, his parents laid the basis for the author's faith in God: ... *Mother said, it's simple: / to take one's place in the smallest magnitude, / receive the child into oneself, / open one's inner eyes and silently / utter: welcome!*¹⁴ (Imagination, Amonit 2019: 102). Many of his poems reveal lines of gratitude to his mother whom he views as one of the most valuable people in his life: ... *mother was then far away, / now farther still: always she wanted, and taught him too, / to do something sensitively and exactly, one might say / with a scalpel to cut a drop of dew*¹⁵ (Dewdrop, Amonit 2019: 96), stressing that there is someone who guides his steps: ... *there is a never-ending feeling that someone up there / from where the grass gains energy to grow... / is looking after me / and I retreat to meet him*¹⁶ (Direction, Amonit 2019: 38).

Madonna or the Holy Virgin are symbols expressing his faith: *Oh, Madonna, / in all languages only a thrown away word / if it doesn't leave the lips as a small cloud...*¹⁷ (Rosa Mystica, Amonit 2019: 104). Referring to family members who influenced his spirituality, Kuniak writes... *The eyes look ahead, only behind / is everything clear. My parents, grand and great grandparents / come from a devout country...*¹⁸ (Lamium Album, Amonit 2019: 86).

¹³ Translation: John Minahane (Juraj Kuniak, Ján Kudlička: Rosa mystica, s. 61, Skalná ruža 2016)

¹⁴ Translation: John Minahane (Juraj Kuniak, Ján Kudlička: Rosa mystica, s. 62, Skalná ruža, 2016)

¹⁵ Dewdrop / Juraj Kuniak ; translated by John Minahane. – In: POEMS OF THE WORLD. – ISSN 1092-0897. – Vol. 21, No. 4 (Summer 2017), s. 18. – Palatine, Illinois (USA) : International Poetry Press.

¹⁶ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

¹⁷ Translation: John Minahane (Juraj Kuniak, Ján Kudlička: Rosa mystica, s. 63, Skalná ruža 2016)

¹⁸ Translation: Viera and James Sutherland Smith (Juraj Kuniak, Ján Kudlička: Lamium album, s. 46, Skalná ruža 2012)

Kuniak pays homage to his parents depicting them as “*two sources / issuing one beside the other: / Olga and Matúš*”¹⁹ (To my Parents, Amonit 2019: 54) who symbolize his youth and childhood home. He imagines the home of two people who love and respect each other as: ... *Fixed Points / they are two / one for each of us / you for me and me for you / Your face, lit by talking / Memories can see us*²⁰ (Fixed Points, Amonit 2019: 46). His poetry is interspersed with references to his father who used to instruct him in art: *Try to paint it / my father used to encourage me to sit over the white drawing paper / and he added as if to himself: / The sky is like an open dome / the warble of lark is a line*²¹ (Father, Amonit 2019: 22).

When mentioning home, the author cannot exclude the political past of the Slovak nation, especially the year 1969 when it was occupied by the armies of the Warsaw Pact, recalling “*the dark times when even our teachers / pulled blinds down their faces in 1969*”²² (Amonit, Amonit 2019: 110). Kuniak also mentions our present time(s). He is a proponent of peace, tolerance, respect, and love towards others, disillusioned by what is happening, not only at home but worldwide: *The same burns, frostbites / the same insensitivity of the world / new forbidden words (father; mother) / another newborn in the drop box for the unwanted...*²³ (The second Advent Sunday, Out past town 2015: 27). In the following lines, the author has brought to the fore several topics that have not yet been solved, lamenting (some) current habits. On the one hand, Kuniak is not afraid to talk about sensitive topics with a great deal of subjectivity, corresponding to his embodiment as a literary hero subject.

¹⁹ Translation: John Minahane (To my Parents / Juraj Kuniak ; translated by John Minahane. – In: POEMS OF THE WORLD. – ISSN 1092-0897. – Vol. 19, No. 3 (Spring 2015), s. 28. – Palatine, Illinois (USA) : International Poetry Press.)

²⁰ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

²¹ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

²² Translated by Anna Slatinská.

²³ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

On the other hand, he proposes the idea of mindfulness to be fostered in these insecure times, instructing the reader how to start living, by using a good deal of positive thinking: *Try to recall / anything if small, / no ogre in your imaginations / do not call them into life / an apple-tree petal / in your mind / is more powerful / than the bear behind the hill* ²⁴ (Abreaction, Out past town 2015: 25).

At the same time the poet reflects on his own mortality and seems emotionally balanced with the fact that there will come a day (probably unbeknownst to him) which will be his last.: The universe *glitters in deep peace / I can die the next morning* ²⁵ (Proximity, Out past town 2015: 22).

Rock rose poems seem to be reflections of home, love, and relationships, as described by the poet himself: *Only on your own / roots / can you lean / says a tree / And a man? / And a rock rose?* ²⁶ (Rock Rose, Rock Rose 2004: 97), giving philosophical questions and assumptions: *For what currency / can love be had today?* (Gilded Banknote, A Bit of the World's Space 2004: 16), describing his desires not to walk alone in life: *...so that my hand will not clasp / forever / only its own / lifeline* ²⁷ (The Depth of a Plunge, Rock Rose 2004: 74). He is also not indifferent to his roots: *Where have I come from and where am I bound?* ²⁸ (Situation, Rock rose 2004: 69).

Pilgrimage to the Self (Pút' k sebe 2003) is the penultimate collection of poetical-prosaic stories (prosaic text interspersed with poetry) that we have analysed. It is documentary in character, based on memories of Kuniak's travels in Russia and Australia, and also describes moments in his family's history such as the Černová massacre of 1907; also known as the Černová tragedy.

²⁴ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

²⁵ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

²⁶ Translation: John Minahane. In: A Bit of the World's Space, p. 37, Slovak PEN Centre 2006

²⁷ Translation: John Minahane. In: A Bit of the World's Space, p. 17, Slovak PEN Centre 2006

²⁸ Translation: John Minahane. In: A Bit of the World's Space, p. 15, Slovak PEN Centre 2006

It was part of the Slovak Nation's oppression by Hungarian troops who shot dead 15 Černová villagers who wanted the village's first Catholic church to be consecrated not by Martin Pazurik but by Andrej Hlinka, a local priest who first proposed the building of the church and raised money for its construction. A well-known Norwegian writer, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, reacted fiercely against this act of suppressing the free will of villagers in Černová. Thanks to him the message about the national oppression of Slovaks by Hungary spread quickly across the whole world at a time when the Slovak nation existed only within the Austro-Hungarian empire, without independent status.

In his poetic texts Juraj Kuniak sees his roots in the village of Černová. Kuniak also mentions his genealogy, the cemetery where his relatives are buried, the Kriváň mountain as a national symbol, the heritage of his ancestors, and the country and landscape. He also refers to the idea of language, stressing that *"Language is the base. Only there will you build / house and temple, / feeling and thought, / life"* ²⁹ (Pilgrimage to the Self 2003: 139). The poet describes the cemetery as a place which makes him realize that his role in life is not finished yet, reminiscing about his father who is the author of the painting called *Tragedy in Černová*. The poem is dedicated to this specific work of art. The depiction of the Černová tragedy went down in history. It can still be seen hanging on the wall in the Černová House of Culture. Moreover, the painting entered the school history-books in Slovakia.

Simultaneously, he ponders reflects upon the message of his dead relatives, figuratively describing his way of life, which is influenced by his predecessors. Juraj Kuniak represents a mindful hero aware of his life, past and present while anticipating the future step by step: *The cemetery is a place where I am reborn/reawakened. Every dead body reminds me of the fact that their acting on stage has finished and mine lasts still* ³⁰ (Pilgrimage to the Self 2003: 140). The author hopes that he will be able to carry on the familial heritage and contribute to it with his own activities, praising unique places in the life of man. Juraj Kuniak has found his second home in the village of Kordíky near Banská Bystrica (Pilgrimage to the Self 2003: 141-143). ³¹

²⁹ Translated by John Minahane.

³⁰ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

³¹ Translated by Anna Slatinská.

The author has frequently travelled around the world. In his *Arbat 1989* poetical report, he describes his stay in Russia. Arbat is the name of a significant street in the center of Moscow, which was the place for artists and revolting youth in the period of Perestroika. Many of his accounts and descriptions of this place supertemporal character, speaking to sensitive (and) experienced readers in the 21st century. He describes one moment during his travels around Arbat when he met a man in the Poet's Corner who was reciting poetry about some of the Soviet Union's social tragedies such as overcrowded orphanages, children fleeing from homes, people infected with AIDS, dysfunctional relationships, and spiritual loss, all as antonyms to sensibility, clear conscience, justice, etc.. (*Pilgrimage to the Self*, 2003: 19-20). Many of the topics explored by the author are hotly debated nowadays with no universally satisfactory solution reached.

While staying in Australia, the poet was inspired by the Writers' Walk in Sydney, describing the literary accomplishments of engraved authors and combining information about them with his reflections on home, his university study in Prague, specifically his parents, realizing the special qualities of his home: *Home is a very simple feeling, one of the most difficult... not carried on the tongue* (*Pilgrimage to the Self*, 2003: 60).³²

Kuniak's latest poems published in 2020 reveal a lot about his family history with direct references to past events concerning the procedure of creating and establishing cooperative farms and his grandfather's firm stance against the Communist regime: *He enjoyed himself / stubbornly against the time and fashion. In the village / where he lived, they could never launch a cooperative. // He was pedaling on his bike when he was hit / by the drunk driver of an allegorical wagon / in the First of May parade* (Binding, Sense 2020: 55).³³ In the last lines of the poem, the author adds more facts about his grandfather's likes, describing him as a man immensely connected with nature: *He loved apple tree and jasmine. / Me too: the autumn fruit, the fragrance of spring* (Binding, Sense, 2020: 55).³⁴

³² Translated by Anna Slatinská.

³³ Translated by John Minahane.

³⁴ Translated by John Minahane.

In the poem titled *Ignoramus et Ignorabimus* (Binding, Sense, 2020: 55)³⁵ he again refers to the idea of home: *Sometimes a thing is revealed only in an urgent echo. / For example, the word "home" spoken by extraterrestrial E. T. / sounds like snow glistening at night in the beam of a torch.*, playing with words, adding word by word to create an authentic description of things dear to him.

In the 2020 series of poems entitled *Omnia Mea Mecum Porto*, Kuniak's poem *Family History* documents another tragic event namely the death of his brother: *My brother was four months old when he died... My grandad's brother died in 1918 in the Lowlands (today's Hungary)... He was 20. He never came home, not even in the coffin... / I don't remember how I perceived the world at four / but when aged twenty I wished to marry* (*Family Anamnesis*, Sense, 2020: 56).³⁶

In his poems, Juraj Kuniak often ponders the meaning of life and the concept of a soul which are inseparable entities: *forming / the soul means nurturing imagination, and vice versa. ...Crossing by, never stopping over, behind the steering wheel / I stop in myself* (Waypoint, Sense, 2020: 56)³⁷. The series *Omnia Mea Mecum Porto* ends with a poem titled *Femme Fatale* (2020: 57) he poetically describes his relationship with his wife, saying *"My wife and I have grown together"*, emphasizing the importance of cultivating the family relationships. The reference to his wife occurs quite frequently in his poems and acts as a model of a sustainable marriage built on the principle of love, respect, and tolerance. Juraj Kuniak honors his spouse for the person she is, expressing his deep admiration and recognition of her. Thus, the line analyzed above symbolizes the unity of man and woman and their interconnection which was created in the process of sharing and cultivating a life together.

³⁵ Translated by John Minahane.

³⁶ Translated by John Minahane.

³⁷ Translated by John Minahane.

While reading, decoding, analyzing, and evaluating Kuniak's poems we encountered detailed descriptions of landscape, as is exemplified in the following: *Where the stream is now, there was a stream / long ago in my youth and in the childhood / of my great-grandfather – he used to tell / how he went down it to America* (Contact Point, VLNA 2018: 26-29).³⁸

The stones our grandchildren throw in, / the stream accepts them with the friendly splash / that's so important for the joy of the littlest / – I hold that jubilation in my hands! (Contact Point, VLNA 2018: 27).³⁹ In another place within the same cycle he returns to the landscape again: *Transcription of the landscape: snow / gives way to prevailing green... / No place. / No word, no memory. / Birds trill. To be there is unity* (Geography, VLNA 2018: 27).⁴⁰

In the last poem *Bewildered Nietzsche* he thinks deeply of the fate of man: *In the end / what remained was a bare nothing, / an emptied, hollow space with man, / as if he were in a cave and through an opening / gazed at the landscape, to see if something there / would move him: a swallow, the shine of grass / bent by the wind, anything to give life / to the image of God dying in himself* (7 poems series, 2018: 29).⁴¹

Moreover, Kuniak's *Private Open-air Museum* (Súkromný skanzen 1993) - subtitled *Études on Ethnic* - contains poetically tuned linguistically experimental prose based on village life. They are written in the dialect of Černová (in the vicinity of Ružomberok City). The act of using this regional vernacular contributed to the preservation and cultivation of the linguistic landscape of the given area. The stories written in this particular form are almost non-transferrable to any foreign language, thanks to their semantic nuances and variations posing a huge challenge for the future translators of historically based Slovak dialects.

³⁸ Translated by John Minahane.

³⁹ Translated by John Minahane.

⁴⁰ Translated by John Minahane.

⁴¹ Translated by John Minahane.

Results and Findings

The selected lines and verses extracted from Juraj Kuniak's poetry all converge in terms of being the intercultural metonymical substitutes for words like "home", "identity", and "landscape." Semantically, his poems are united around the above-mentioned core-meanings while explicating and naming different layers of home, identity, life, landscape, and future. Together they form an additional message for the spiritual welfare of society. We have discovered that the addressee of these messages can interpret them as reflections on home, landscape, place attachment, identity, family, roots, past, etc..

We have concluded that his poems contain many playful elements created by using figurative language, but recipients of his message stand to gain important insights from understanding Kuniak's poems and poetic texts as the poet intended them to be understood.

The intertext created by Kuniak is apparent not only to himself but also to sensitive readers, who can decipher and understand his messages. Juraj Kuniak is a poet who does not authorize privilege to his poems, but instead address readers with a variety of topics. We stress the fact that Juraj is not the only one who knows all contexts but lends this experience to other readers so that they can viscerally understand his message.

Juraj Kuniak's poetology is based on the use of lexical, stylistic, and visual devices, which are challenging for the translator. Almost all of his poems are titled. The title is the first clue to understanding the poem. Kuniak's eclectic choices of subject matter are bolstered by an intense intertextuality. Kuniak is a lyrical hero who describes many of life's moments, experiences and phenomena such as childhood memories and (religious) faith, which is of the utmost importance to him. Through the medium of rich lexical and syntactic devices, his work is molded into a coherent unit interlinked with many a spiritual message for mankind. His poems have a great capability and power to influence others in a positive, constructive, morality-based way.

Despite the fact that all his poems are peculiar in their nature and refer to several sources and may allow different interpretations, they converge to yield an intertextual poetic representation of the words "home, identity, landscape, family roots, relatives, and place attachment". Kuniak's poems

include topical issues like the future of humankind, inclusive love towards others, the importance of being respectful, tolerant, sensitive, empathetic, responsible, caring, willing (and able) both to break boundaries between people and to build nurturing relationships. His poems open space for discussions, fostering development of global and life skills (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, etc.). Juraj Kuniak succeeded in creating a coherent poetic story based on his own life experiences, beliefs, expectations, and good wishes for the future of all humankind.

Juraj Kuniak opens his heart to his readers and reveals his beliefs, ideas, and descriptions of his newly-built home, interlinking inner and outer dialogue and reflections of human subjects, reacting to today's existence and to unprecedented advances in technologies which can be a double-edged sword. In this way, his poems seem to be not only a form of his own self-reflection and autobiography, but it offers us much more in an intertextual way referring to the context, subtext, references and allusions. Those who either read or passively listen to Kuniak's poetry have a chance to take part in his intra- and inter-personal dialogue, transcending intersubjective borders, reaching for broader cultural spheres (Šabík 2007).

Kuniak's poetry is capable of healing human psychological wounds due its invigorating poetic power and energy. He frequently mentions Milan Rúfus, whom considered a master of poetic craft and a personal guru who help Kuniak to mature his own poetry. This is of interest since it could be applied within various spheres of society including education of the youth who are constantly searching for their own identity, which is not easy to find. In this way, we opine that the poetry of Juraj Kuniak could be used effectively for young people on the verge of maturity, looking for their place in society. Milan Rúfus, his idol, builds upon Slovak, Czech and European traditions, bringing his readers closer to our national heritage as well as global cultural heritage.

Moreover, he is constantly returning to his past childhood, youth, and maturity have found a profound place in his poetry. Last but not least, for Kuniak, home represents a society of people who are open, genuine, and positively tuned. Home can survive all storms if it is firm but peaceful. He confesses to the reader that home without love would have no meaning for him. Family and home are interlinked in Kuniak's poems. To be more precise, family is cardinal in his life: *I was brought up to cultivate a different*

set of values (that are opposed to today's consumerism which destroys all that is human, makes our feelings shallow and stops our natural agility) such as self-sacrifice, honesty, modesty, rich spirituality, emotionality, fostering creativity, sense for art, and desire for education. I support multiculturalism but only that version which is governed by sense and sensibility (Literárny týždenník, Literary Weekly Paper, 2015: 2).⁴² Juraj Kuniak sees poetry as a powerful tool to be able to bring remote cultures and civilizations closer while still remaining genuine to one's own culture.

Conclusion

Juraj Kuniak uses poetry as a way of intergenerational dialogue in which readers can encounter his memories and experience and become acquainted with several significant Slovak places (Černová, Ružomberok, Bratislava, Banská Bystrica) and personalities important in author's life. In his poems and poetic texts we encounter such names as Milan Rúfus (the Slovak national bard famous for his non-violent opposition against the Communist regime), Andrej Hlinka (a Slovak priest active in the period of Černová Massacre), his parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, poet's spouse, etc.. Kuniak's poetic discourse is highly diverse. The previously mentioned motifs and themes represent a proof of a great attachment-both psychological and physical-to home and to landscape.

The poems of Juraj Kuniak are about local and global issues. On a local level, the author appreciates a non-material, non-consumption-oriented way of life, and highlights that the original inhabitants of Kordíky (his second home where he settled down with his wife and family) were devoted to woodcutting, living in the moment, and being mindful. Taking the global perspective into account, he is not indifferent to the uncertainty of the 21st century and expresses his doubts and concerns about the fate of humanity. He is not reluctant to metaphorically criticize negative human qualities such as vanity, mediocrity, and desire for fame, money, and popularity, which often outweigh the positive human qualities such as respect, tolerance, honesty, etc..

All in all, Kuniak's poems could serve as a manual for living a better life (in which superciliousness, dishonesty, overindulgence, hatred, and evil do not have a place), simultaneously reminding the reader about the gift of

⁴² Translated by Anna Slatinská.

war-free life that we (the Slovaks) were given and the reasons why it is so important to build a nurturing. The poet reminds us of our roots and urges us to remember our predecessors and consider matters pertaining to our origins and future direction in life, emphasizing the fact that there are also people who have been uprooted.

Furthermore, the poet introduces the reader to a sample of cultural and geographic representations of Slovak culture when he mentions the capital city of Slovakia Bratislava, the river Danube, the Valley of Violets in Bratislava, the Gerlach Vale, Čutkovská valley in Ružomberok (the area where he was born), Kriváň mountain as a symbol of the Slovak nation, etc., redirecting the readers to the peculiarities of Slovak nature (which are often taken for granted), stressing the significance of our own local environment, and encouraging us to explore our country more profoundly than we tend to. The poetry of Juraj Kuniak is interwoven with a detailed description and elaborate observations of landscape during different seasons.

Among other topics, his poetry embraces religious elements which are connected with his faith and beliefs, too. Thus, the use of symbols like: Saint Mary, Virgin Mary, God, Church, Faith etc. accentuating the importance of inter-confessional peaceful dialogue and significance of respect and tolerance in communication of any kind.

Juraj Kuniak directs our attention to the way in which his life and the life of previous and current generation have been shaped by the 1907 Černová Massacre, the Communist regime, environmental issues, globalization, etc. Kuniak does not leave unmentioned the role of language and language cultivation. He is aware of Slovak history regarding the struggle for independence and freedom from the Austro-Hungarian empire and -in later years- the Communist regime.

Last but not least, we note that the author is not indifferent to the current political and cultural affairs in Slovakia. Experiencing the Communist regime and all it entailed, he has been a proponent of intercultural dialogue based on respect and tolerance, proposing the philosophy of mindfulness which he views as worth applying in these uncertain times.

In Kuniak's poetry, we have seen how the concept of home and landscape permeate his poems even when viewed through the lens of topics such as childhood, (birthplace), family roots and relationships, genealogy, history, politics, culture, etc.

In conclusion, there is a great deal that one can learn from the poetry of Juraj Kuniak. He is a sensitive observer, careful with words, and is determined to spread peace, respect, tolerance, and love throughout his homeland and the world via his poems and poetic texts.

Regarding the current life of Juraj Kuniak, he is the founding father of the Rock Rose Publishing House with the premises in Kordíky (near Banská Bystrica) which supports publication of Slovak (Mária Ferencuhová, Dana Podracká, Anna Ondrejková, Marián Milčák, Mila Haugová, Ján Gavura as well as foreign authors (Knuta Ødegård, Walt Whitman, James Wright, Barbara Korun, Macuo Bašó, Czesław Miłosz, Tózsér Árpád, Octavio Paz, Louise Glück etc.). Evidently, the publishing house is not limited to one-nationality authors only, what is more, the published and translated poetic works of art create a sample of different cultures (Slovenian, Croatian, American, Slovak, Norwegian, Japanese, Polish, Hungarian, Mexican). Through the medium of translations realized by the Rock Rose Publishing House, Juraj Kuniak (a poet, translator, and publisher) contributes to the culturally rich mosaic of local and global poetry.

It is worth mentioning that Juraj Kuniak's poems and poetic texts transcend time and can be enjoyed by a diverse group of readers who find them to be stimulating and invigorating. As Juraj Kuniak himself said: "*Art becomes art when it cultivates, reawakens and softens values, so important in the turbulent 21st century*" (Literárny týždenník, Literary Weekly Paper, 2015: 2).

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“CORONA BUT FREEDOM”: SELF-DISCOVERY AND FAMILY IN SAJEEV SASI’S SHORT STORY DISCOVER YOURSELF: A TALE OF COVID-19 DAYS

Ali Güneş

Abstract: This paper examines the impact of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the human in Sajeev Sasi’s short story Discover Yourself: A Tale of COVID-19 Days. In doing so, the paper looks at two opposing sides of the COVID-19 during the pandemic. First, it briefly argues the negative aspects of the pandemic because it has disrupted the normal flow of life and caused the death of millions of people. Secondly, the paper explores how the pandemic has also created opportunities. Individuals reconsider their lives and discover themselves, their hidden identity, unknown potentials, and their way of life positively when locked down at home. Given the opportunity created by the lockdown, the article also discusses the importance of a warm, safe, and comfortable family life during hardship and difficulties. The paper argues these points through the life and views of the fictional character Karihaalan in the story above.

Keywords: Coronavirus, pandemic, patriarchy, identity, and family.

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"Corona but Freedom": Self-Discovery...

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), which occurred in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019, has highly shaken the entire world with its crippling impacts on daily life, healthcare system, economy, education, social relations, and so on (Cohut, 2020; Engle 2020; Radcliffe, 2020; Azhari, 2020 and Huang, 2021). As in the previous plagues experienced in different places worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused life to come almost to a standstill and paralyzed the sense of peace, harmony, and community. For instance, as Kimberly Chriscaden, Communications Officer at the World Health Organization (WHO), argues, “the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems, and the world of work.” She also continues to state that “The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year” (2020, para. 1). Here, what is essential is that these vast multilevel “devastating” disruptions and impacts, as Amiri, Paghgeh & Amiri argue, have not remained local but become global, seriously affecting every corner of the world. Thus, although intrinsic policy-making is problem-oriented and aligned with changes in policy issues and contexts, the speed and extent of this crisis have necessitated changes in macro-decision-making systems (2020, para. 7). All these views and arguments above are correct and give us an insight into how the entire world suffers mainly economically and socially. In addition, the fatal contagious COVID-19 does not remain there, yet it has traumatized the people mentally and spiritually throughout the world during the pandemic lockdown. Kritika Poudel and Pramod Subedi point out that the COVID-19 has brought about some psychological problems such as “anxiety”, “fear”, “uncertainty,” “hopelessness”, and “stark spiritual breakdown” not only among those who have been infected and experienced the harsh side of the virus with its severe post-traumatic effect but also among those who have been exposed for a long time to “the lockdown curfews, self-isolation, social distancing and quarantine” (2020, pp. 748–755). These “lockdown curfews” and “quarantine,” as Brooks et al. argue, are often linked to “an unpleasant experience for those who undergo it. Separation from loved ones, the loss of freedom, uncertainty over disease status, and boredom can, on occasion, create dramatic effects,” sometimes leading to “suicide” (2020, p. 912).

As seen in the discussions above and in many other studies elsewhere, this lethal virus has severely disturbed the normal flow of daily life and turned everything into hell across the world. In addition, it has caused the death of more than 2 million people, the collapse of the healthcare system, economic recession, the loss of jobs, massive damage to education, social isolation, post-traumatic mental problems, and so on. The scientific world has been working very hard to develop a vaccine to achieve mass immunization against the spread of the deadly virus to leave all these abnormal situations behind. Several pharmaceutical companies have promisingly developed some kinds of vaccine, even though an entirely satisfactory result is yet to come very soon.

The Coronavirus pandemic has given rise to the crisis in almost every aspect of life worldwide. Yet, Amiri, Pagheh, and Amiri argue that this compelling situation could also lead to a "point of hope", which is "the vast 'accumulated experience' that the people worldwide have gained in the face of future crises. If the history of epidemics is a guide to humanity, the spread of the disease, like any other, could create a wave of innovation tailored to how lifestyle changes" (2020, para. 4). This paper argues, reflecting on Sajeev Sasi's short story *Discover Yourself: A Tale of COVID-19 Days* (2020), how the COVID-19 pandemic also creates an opportunity in life, an option that enables one to re-"discover" himself/herself, reconsider her/his life and realize what s/he has lost in life as for the meaning of the life and the values that used to give sense to life and keep the community closer together as being safe and sound in every aspect. In so doing, the paper first examines in the story how the COVID-19 pandemic causes the main character Karihaalan, an English teacher in Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India, to "discover" himself and re-examine his life. He psychologically frees himself from "his routine life," "subjugation", and "suppression" imposed on him by "the gender norms" of the male-dominated society (Sasi, 2020, p. 56). His lifestyle and perception of his life visibly change. He becomes able to find what was "missing in his life." He achieves a sense of freedom, realizes his different potentials, and finds space to practice whatever he wants to do in life without being subjected to the routine of everyday life and confinement imposed on him by society. Secondly, the paper argues that when he shifts his viewpoint and perspective of life, when he may find what was missing in his life when he controls the center of his life on his own and when he learns how to think differently from others, Karihaalan also "discovers" another aspect - another value which has been ignored for

decades in life – the importance of a warm, peaceful and secure family life, which "turns out to be a place for the uplifting emotional and psychological spirit" (Gunes, 2020, para. 16) and the value of the excellent family "relationship" with family members. As the paper debates, Sajeev Sasi's short story suggests that a warm family and good family relationships are essential during crises and pandemics. A comfortable family may enable individuals to cope with the crippling effects of trouble; it also connects individuals to and causes them to remain at the center of life and look into future life with hope.

Sajeev Sasi's short story *Discover Yourself: A Tale of COVID-19 Days* takes place in Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India, and talks about the life of Karihaalan, the protagonist, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Friends and students also call Karihaalan "Kari". As Sajeev Sasi represents him, Karihaalan "enjoys [his] profession," but "he did not enjoy his routine life" (2020, p. 56). Strangely, his discontent may derive from the fact that he, though a male, feels that "he had been subjugated, dominated and suppressed by the gender norms. He knew that a male-dominated society set up the subjugation" (p. 56) and "even being a male, he couldn't liberate himself from the misery of the boredom, emptiness and mundane life. He had to breathe within the frame of the society's freedom" (p. 56). These quotations do not give us a clue about how the "male-dominated society" restricts Karihaalan's life and causes him to feel "the misery of the boredom, emptiness and mundane life." Yet, it seems that "the male-dominated society" may impose many rules and norms on both males and females, in which they may feel that their "freedom" is crippled in different ways. In addition, these quotations may suggest that the routines of rules and norms may always be familiar and stable, which does not let individuals see other aspects of life and enjoy them. Still, they have "to breathe within the frame of the society's freedom". Karihaalan feels that this is indeed the nature of a patriarchal society, which pushes both males and females to align with its expectations differently.

However, Karihaalan yearns for enjoying his complete "freedom": "He dreamed to be a cook at home, homemaker and baby sitter at home" by going beyond the rules and expectation of the society, and "he often wanted to hit the roads," even though "he used to go long drive on the empty roads, he often irritated to pick up the shortcuts and on the messy roads. He preferred Chennai by-pass and Madurai by-pass where he could hit the road

in a couple of minutes" (p. 57) so that he feels that the way he lives and acts "was not him, something was missing in his life. He always wanted to find himself" (p. 56). In his story, Sajeev Sasi writes about the nature of a patriarchal society and how it crumbles identities and destroys dreams of individuals as being repressive, dominant, and uncompromising. Sajeev Sasi writes that his story mainly relates to the Indian society and other patriarchal societies worldwide, where gender identities are constructed in line with the expectations and norms of the community. Therefore, in the story, when Karihaalan intends to remain at home, do the housework, and look after the baby. Still, the patriarchal Indian society regards these activities as women's responsibilities and thus insults men if they act contrary to the patriarchal expectations. Moreover, Karihaalan wishes "to hit the roads and achieve a sense of freedom without being subjugated to the constraint and decimation of the patriarchal culture and ideology. He experiences a severe identity crisis between two marginal views of life – on the one hand, he feels forced to submit to the patriarchal norms and views, which impede the ways for individuals to act freely and practice what they year for, and on the other hand, Sajeev Sasi endows Karihaalan with a different strategy which allows him to forge the patriarchal "subjugation" and "dominance" so that he becomes able to hit the roads, distance himself from the society and take refuge into nature and to achieve a sense of psychological liberty, even though it is temporary.

However, "COVID-19 stopped [Karihaalan's temporary] relaxation, his hobbies, his joy and his empty roads" (p. 57) when the pandemic virtually restricts people's mobility. As well known, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the states across the world to apply sometimes a partial and occasionally total lockdown to keep people at home, which, they have intended, will contribute to avoiding the spread of the infectious virus (Kaplan, Frias & McFall-Johnsen, 2020). Like many other people in different parts of the world, the COVID-19 lockdown also initially disturbs Karihaalan and interrupts his daily life and teaching at the college. At the beginning of the pandemic, he shows mixed reactions to the new situation. For example, he learns that "the college was going to be shut down, immediately" and thus "he felt relieved from the tedious routine and mundane life" because he, unlike many other men, wants to be "home all the time, cooking the favorite fish gravy, and dry fish gravy" (Sasi, 2020, pp. 56-7).

However, "his happiness lasted only for a while, he was called for the duty that was, 'to sign the attendance register'" at college:

He wasn't assigned any work for a couple of days. Along with other professors, he also stayed in the department without any role to play. They just discussed the new virus for hours. But after a couple of hours, they felt normal and started bullying each other. Most of the normal routine working days, they never had that much free time and general talks. Only the lockdown for the students made them be in the department for an unusual task (p. 57).

As the quotation suggests, there appears confusion between the college administration and the teachers, in which nothing was clear as to the teachers' duties during the lockdown. Instead of teaching, they constantly talk about the new virus, and uncertainty and confusion occupy their mind, leading them to fight each other because the constant talk about the latest virus and what it has brought to life annoy them psychologically. Another point, the quotation suggests, is that being together in the room may also cause them to be infected and thus be in jeopardy. They are just forced to come to college without any practical purpose and duty so that they loaf about. This situation gives Karihaalan a feeling that the teachers' lives and health are not cared for much by the college management and the higher administrative body of the country. Finally, the news of the lockdown reaches the college management that "asked [the teachers] to be at home. He felt happy and relaxed" (p. 58).

Being locked down at home provides Karihaalan with one negative outcome and one positive outcome. As for the negative outcome, for instance, the COVID-19 pandemic confines him, like millions of others worldwide, to home, where he constantly uses his mobile phone, often reads and listens to the news on the deadly effects of the COVID-19, which negatively influences his life and attitudes. He feels isolated, disturbed, and hopeless since the bombardment of the news of the death and the rapid spread of the Coronavirus continuously keeps his mind busy. Eventually, Karihaalan comes to realize that such kind of news will further traumatize him and his sense of peace, so he starts listening less to the news about the Coronavirus, which visibly leads him to allocate space to other activities, in which he gradually restores to peace of mind (pp. 59-61).

This peace of mind gained by the lockdown creates a strongly positive view, which enables him to discover himself – a self-discovery, in which he not only frees himself from the psychological “subjugation” of the patriarchal society, as well as from the routines of everyday business and chronological flow of life from the early morning to the evening mainly in the college but he also becomes able to act in the way he wants and practice what he enjoys the most. In doing so, Karihaalan subverts the identity and roles given to him by the patriarchal society, he finds himself amid the distressing lockdown of the pandemic. For example, when he listens less to the news, Karihaalan finds time and space to think of other things, other aspects of life, or what he calls a new “relationship” in his life (p. 64). He starts spending much time with his mother; he also watches “the horoscope” together “with his mother” (p. 61), even though he sometimes criticizes and angers his mother. For him, “that was the most important moment of the day as the laughing and happiness stay for a while but think about the laughing for the rest of the day and could be a reminiscence for the rest of the years to come” (p. 61; emphasis added). As seen in the quotation, being together with his mother, being closer to his mother, spending good time together and “laughing” with his mother not only reduces his anxiety and boredom and then removes Karihaalan from the adverse effect and feelings of the Coronavirus but also makes him happy for a while. As in the Romantic sense, he imaginatively free frees him and feels a sense of peace and happiness, which keeps him alive and motivated.

The “laughing and happiness,” which Karihaalan achieves in his life when he is together with his mother and when he spends good time with his mother, causes him to realize how warm, secure family life and closeness with love and kindness are essential in the time of a crisis and hardship as in the trouble of the COVID-19:

The COVID-19 made him understand his family and be with his family for hours. As he spoke to his mother as much, he could, as much time he could spend. He used to talk to his parents whenever he needed something and whenever he was bored. He didn’t realize before the lockdown he was squeezing his parents’ time. He didn’t know that he was using them, didn’t know they worked and lived for him. After the week pas[sed], he could understand them as they spent their life for him (p. 62).

As the quotation suggests, it is true that the Coronavirus has disrupted life

in many ways and caused the loss of life of millions. Still, it may also have reminded us of what we have lost—the importance of a warm, stable and secure family life., the Coronavirus has forced us to go back to the basics of life—the values that have been forgotten or ignored for decades. As I argued in my short article on the negative outcome of the corona pandemic, today family life “is no longer the concern of many people, particularly young people: simply, it has no meaning in their lives because they believe that the family life imposes restrictions on them and brings many responsibilities and that it is too hard to manage family life and children dues to the economic hardship” (Gunes, 2020, para. 12). The family as an institution, since the advent of modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century, has gradually lost its importance in life because modernism had waged war against what were traditional values and establishments resulted from the radical developments and changes between the last part of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century (Daiches, 1967; Faulkner, 1977; Brown, 1989; Eysteinnsson, 1990; Childs, 2000 & Parsons, 2007). Modernism disparaged the family, but it also considered it an old-fashioned institution used by society and its ideology as the center of reproduction and control to restrain individual life and freedom. Mainly the feminist movement, which gained speed during the modern period, has powerfully slammed the family institution in the sense that the family is a patriarchal construction, which had suppressed and curbed the life of women, while it had given men many privileges over women, so the family has become one of the contentious subjects and then gradually lost its importance and credibility in the eyes of both young men and women. In addition, the economic reasons have led young women and men not to marry or delay their marriages until the age of 35 and even beyond because both men and women have started working. Money and economic welfare have become the center of their lives, particularly during consumerism in the wake of World War II. Besides, the divorce rate has enormously increased in recent years, further undermining the basis of stable family life. As Taylor Brownwell argues, the divorce ratio has increased further during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the “financial stress, boredom, disagreements about parenting, and household chores” (2020, para. 4); the family as the cornerstone of a stable society and a haven for its members, the cornerstone of a stable community and a haven for its members have been exposed to a massive disruption in many ways since the beginning of the twentieth century.

In his short story *Discover Yourself: A Tale of Covid-19 Days*, however, Sajeer Sasi suggests that COVID-19, though it has given rise to so many negative aspects in life, has also brought about a few opportunities, which have enabled us to understand what we have lost and what we need in the future as a proverb says: "Misfortune is better than thousands of pieces of advice." Therefore, through his representation of the life of his fictional character Karihaalan, Sajeer Sasi illuminates that a warm, secure and stable family life is of vital importance during the time of hardship and calamity such as the COVID-19 pandemic that has caused the whole world to suffer for more than a year. In the quotation above, for instance, Sajeer Sasi enables Karihaalan to discover what has been lost – a warm family life, which not only saves him from boredom, psychological stress, and the harsh reality of COVID-19 throughout the lockdown of the pandemic but also causes him to uncover what he has missed or what he has craved inside him for years. Before the lockdown, he did not spend much time with his family; there were more or less formal relationships between him and his parents, suggesting as if they had lived in a hotel room with minimum contact. In addition, before the lockdown, he did not help his parents at home at all with an excuse of saying, "I need to study". His parents used to say, "Stop your studies, you've been studying for many years". After listening to that, he knew he was excused. Being at home, being a boy, he never did any household works before" (pp. 62-3).

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 lockdown makes Karihaalan realize that other things are more important than "studying". These "other things" bind him to life, make his life meaningful, peaceful and happy, he undergoes "self-discovering" that "was like discovering the anatomy of a plant" (p. 65). Another "discovery" he perceives in his life is that "the COVID-19 made him realize what is important in his life", "discovering the relationship" (p. 64), in which "the bonding and understanding in the family grew well as never before" (p. 65). Thus, this "self-discovery" and "realization" brings him to the point that a warm family with a good "relationship" is of importance in one's life and that his parents actually "worked and lived for him": After the week passed, he could understand them as they spent their life for him" (p. 62). Having "discovered" himself and "realized" other vital things in his life, Karihaalan strives to act in line with these new perspectives:

Because of boredom, because of being at home, he volunteered to do house-

hold works. Even he chopped onions with watery eyes, even he cleaned his toilet and swept the floors with dust behind. Though it wasn't a shock for him, it was a great shock to his parents. Being a bachelor, without hitting the gym, he knew he would put on weights. So, he decided to take part in the household works which made his belly stop from protruding. At one point in time, even he felt of having mask-wearing at home, by the way, it was not to stop protecting from the virus but to protect from the habit of the excess of eating, especially of the junk foods (p. 63).

This quotation suggests that the difficult times or intolerable crises in life enable one to "discover" themselves, their abilities, find other ways and "relationships" to get out of the deadlock, rejoice in their life and eventually look into the future with hope because it is natural that an individual cannot live forever under anxiety and tediousness. In the story *Discover Yourself: A Tale of Covid-19 Days*, for instance, the COVID-19 lockdown bestows vital energy and vision on Karihaalan to "discover" himself, his other abilities and find other "relationships" under the stressful predicament of the COVID-19 lockdown to keep him away from "boredom."

With this new vision, although it is a shock to his parents, Karihaalan, contrary to his previous life, starts helping them with household chores; he cleans his toilet and the floors; he starts eating the home-cooked foods, whose importance he did not realize before since "he used to purchase the snacks outside, especially Mixtures, Murukku, Chips, and so on" (p. 64); he also spends time in conversation, particularly with his mother, who is a very knowledgeable woman and who knows much about cooking, horoscopes, the cinema, stars, and their past and present lives. All these activities may help him in two ways. First, they make him forget the monotony and tension caused by the COVID-19 lockdown so that he manages to minimize the adverse impact of the plague in his life. Secondly, he realizes that family is not a place which its members use like a hotel where they come and sleep with minimum contacts as in a typical modern family but it is a place where there is warmth, peace, happiness, security, and uplifting spirit, where its members collaborate, help each other when any need occurs, protect each other when they are in danger and difficulty and spiritually support each other when they are bored and depressed. His perception of home and family shifts, and he becomes more household-oriented. Thus, Karihaalan reverses what "many claimed COVID-19 was 'freedom but corona', but for him, it was just the opposite, 'corona but freedom'" (p. 63). COVID-19, unlike anything else, frees him from his old illusions of

the so-called truth that he was shown by the patriarchal society as correct ways of his life:

His parents were cooking something which he wasn't aware of. They gave him mixtures, he liked that one and asked how and where they did get this one. He felt that was too good. To his surprise, they cooked themselves. At the age of 34, he never knew his mother would know how to cook mixtures at home. He had a shocking and surprised look on them. The COVID-19 made him not only open himself but his parents, too. The bonding and understating in the family grew well as never before (pp. 64-5).

"[D]iscovering the [new] relationship" (p. 64) with his family through "freedom" created by the COVID-19 pandemic opens Karihaalan's mind and makes him realize how good and quality relationships with family members are of vital significance in life. His relationship with his mother gradually improves, and he reaches a point where he starts to find happiness in doing chores with his mother. They also comment on the news on the smartphone or Facebook; they exchange ideas with each other about so many things related to life; they talk about "cinestars' past and present life" (p. 64). This new relationship and life overthrow the basis of what he was taught before, how he acted, and what he practiced in his life. This "discovery" of a new relationship with his mother expands his mind and understanding. Eventually, it creates a communal perspective, in which both he and his mother entertain themselves and forget the damaging influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, Sajeev Sasi suggests that the warm family with its close members is crucial when putting up with the crisis, suffering, and poverty caused by destructive events such as a pandemic, earthquake, flood-related disasters, and so on; family people who act communally help, support and comfort each other: in his story *Discover Yourself: A Tale of Covid-19 Days*, Sajeev Sasi artistically points to the fact that people look for a haven in difficult times and situations.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic, though it has affected life negatively worldwide, provides Karihaalan in the story with an opportunity to know who he is and what is essential and what is not essential in life. Thus, "after the lockdown, his talking was limited only to updating his intrapersonal skills rather than the interpersonal skills" (p. 65), which enables him to explain further "what he needed and what he lacked" in life (p. 65). It is what he calls "self-discovering [that] was like discovering the anatomy of a plant" (p. 65):

The lockdown made him watch nearly a hundred films. At a point in time, two movies per day. Sometimes movies helped him reduce the boredom and sometimes increased his boredom. It was like, what he did to others was not a matter of concern, but what he did to himself counts a lot. He didn't know how long the lockdown extend[s] but locking down to himself would continue forever. The COVID-19 made the male-dominated society to be at check, it made no gender disparity. It made a male Karihaalan be at home as he wished. At last, because of COVID-19, he felt, he wasn't suppressed, marginalized, and, moreover, DISCOVERED HIMSELF! (p. 65)

In his short story *Discover Yourself: A Tale of Covid-19 Days*, Sajeev Sasi suggests through the life of his fictional Karihaalan that human beings can change negative situations into positive ones with their inner power, energy, realization, and understanding, which often come in a time of crisis, misfortune, and hardship like COVID-19. Indeed, Sajeev Sasi gives the reader hope and vision that it is always possible to find a way out of any trouble and destitution without surrendering to despair and deadlock.

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ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE USAGE BY SPEAKERS OF
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Nejla Kalajdzisalihović

Abstract: The paper discusses language changes in contemporary English with regard to recently introduced inclusive expressions and challenges pertaining to activating their usage. The aim of the paper is to illustrate strategies that students use to activate inclusive language and politically correct vocabulary in English as a foreign language and to discuss whether the lexico-grammatical structures may reveal more about difficulties in activating inclusive vocabulary. For students of English as a foreign language, or even speakers whose L1 is English, what may cause certain problems in activating inclusive language is not only the question of being unsure about the correct expression but also being unsure about the syntactic and semantic structure of inclusive forms or expressions. In terms of the lexico-grammatical structures, it is proposed that inclusive language acquisition needs more attention in the future for speakers of English as a foreign language.

Keywords: inclusive language usage, politically correct language, contemporary English, vocabulary acquisition.

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Introduction

The present paper is concerned with inclusive language usage in contemporary English as understanding how language changes as times change may be crucial for an academic or business setting. This topic can be studied from various points of view and using different theoretical frameworks. However, the focus of this paper casts light on some aspects of the usage of inclusive language by students whose L1 is not English. In order to address the issue of language production in relation to inclusive language and political correctness, the theoretical framework of the present paper will include references to Slobin's Language and thought online—Cognitive consequences of linguistic relativity (1987), Pinker's *The stuff of thought—language as a window into human nature* (2008), Burridge's Euphemism and language change—The sixth and seven ages (2012), and Teaching politically correct language (Tsehelska, 2006).

The research also revolves around the claim that cognition plays a dynamic role within the framework of linguistic expression as we are constantly involved in preparing, producing, and interpreting verbal messages (Slobin, 1987). In terms of language production, it is important to mention a quote by Burridge by which she concludes her research on euphemism and the word formation processes claiming that “modern speakers of English share with their ancestors a profound respect for the close relationship between word and meaning and this remains a powerful motive for language change” (Burridge, 2012, p. 89). For that reason and in terms of political correctness and inclusive language, it will also be observed how one fits one's thoughts into “available linguistic forms” (see Slobin, 2003; Traxler & Gernsbacher, 2006). According to Slobin and in relation to linguistic expression, “a more codable expression is more *accessible* in psycholinguistic terms—that is, it is short, and/or high frequency, and generally part of a small set of options in a paradigm or small set of items” (Slobin, 2003, p. 435). In the case of inclusive language acquisition and activation, it is proposed in the present paper that, regardless of instruction or awareness about language change in terms of political correctness and inclusive vocabulary activation, students studying English as a foreign language will face difficulties with regard to activating inclusive pronouns, nouns and adjectives.

On Inclusive Language Usage — Theoretical Background

In some cases, even speakers whose L1 is English, as previously mentioned, may be confused about a novel usage as is the case with the term *cat's eyes*, now replaced by *road studs* (Nsubuga, 2017). Also, the definition of euphemism as “the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant” (Merriam-Webster, 2021) becomes problematic if learners of English do not recognize what may be offensive or what has become offensive recently. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that some attempts to apply inclusive language are considered unlikely to be accepted by speakers of English such as a replacement or change of the word *genius*, for instance, which is also listed among the words said to carry assumptions of gender inequality, class and ethnicity (see Sellgren, 2017). On the other hand, the word *forefathers* is likely to be semantically shifted to *ancestors* just like a *snowman* is likely to be semantically shifted to *snowpal*. This is, perhaps, not due to a lack of awareness pertaining to political correctness but due to a lack of an accessible linguistic form, a noun in this case. Of course, it would be impossible to list all the issues in the present paper as there are numerous examples and hot debates in newspaper articles and blogs on euphemism, language change and political correctness, among the most recent ones being related to gender-inclusive solutions pertaining to the nouns ‘mother’ and ‘father’ suggesting replacements such as ‘gestational parent’ and ‘non-birthing parent’ (see Mazzoni, 2021; Naumoska, 2010, p. 28). Nevertheless, the changing face of what is considered to be inclusive, or politically correct, presents a challenge in terms of how to assess linguistic content in terms of language production as the *law of semantic change* and Pinker’s *euphemism treadmill* imply that, generally, euphemisms become tainted over time and that “negative associations reassert themselves to undermine the euphemistic quality of the word” (Allan, 2019, p. 189).

When it comes to inclusive language usage, there are several approaches which could be taken into consideration in order to relate language production to language acquisition with learners of English in mind. What is relevant for an academic or business setting and in relation to the previously mentioned newspaper articles related to inclusive language usage on the campus, for instance, is the emergence of the so-called *codes of practice* presented to university students in some countries, giving them clear guidelines on how to use the English language to avoid stereotyping,

discrimination, making assumptions on ground of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion, or belief. For instance, *Cardiff Metropolitan University Code of Practice on Using Inclusive Language* (2017) raises awareness about the effects of potentially discriminatory vocabulary. Other similar examples may be found in the *University of Warsaw Anti-Discrimination Guidebook for Students and Employees* (2017).

Although codes of practice may be of relevance as a material for the acquisition of inclusive language and terminology, it could be discussed whether the production of unacceptable or ungrammatical solutions, in some cases, is also a result of the language acquisition process. In other words, students studying English as a foreign language, or studying *in* English, may unintentionally produce offensive or grammatically unacceptable forms due to a lack of knowledge with regard to inclusive vocabulary and inclusive syntactic forms in the process of FL production. Therefore, guides and manuals, such as the previously mentioned codes of practice, may also be used as materials for studying and analysing syntactic structures of the newly introduced forms and may as well be used as a material for translation classes.

Research Framework and Methodology

In order to assess how inclusive language production operates on a micro-level without labelling sentence elements as (politically) incorrect or lexical items as non-inclusive, an anonymous survey was conducted in April 2019 at the University of Sarajevo (Department of English Language and Literature, 25 participants) and the University of Warsaw (Institute of Applied Linguistics, 20 participants). A printed handout (see: Appendix 2) was distributed to students during the class in order to determine which linguistic strategies they use to change the sentences containing non-inclusive language as to make them more inclusive and as instructed in the handout. In total, 158 responses were collected and examples on how different parts of speech (pronouns, nouns, adjectives) were changed into more inclusive equivalents will be provided in the next section of the paper.

The task-oriented research was based on similar tasks (see Appendix 1, Task 1 and Task 4) by Thehelska (2006). The tasks were merged and adapted for the purpose of the present research and data collected will be analysed for sentences 1, 3, and 6 from Task 1. As for Task 4, data collected

for paraphrases of sentences 2 and 7 will be also provided and analysed in further text. As for sentences 4 and 5 from Task 4, the handout distributed to both groups of students also included these two sentences, but they will not be analysed since the responses were either absent or stated that nothing should be paraphrased as the expressions are idiomatic.

The motivation for doing this research is found not only in the previously mentioned papers by linguists on language change, political correctness and activating available linguistic forms, but also in the fact that the author of the inclusive language exercises mentioned the relevance of the subject of inclusive language as one linking historical, cultural, social and linguistic issues. Since the article was published in 2006, the suggestions for the tasks provided (see Thehelska, 2006, Task 4 Key) shows how language changes in relation to the current usage and how the responses provided below may reflect such changes.

Interpretation of Data

For Example (1)—*A teacher should be tolerant with his students*, the following paraphrases (the number of responses is indicated in brackets) were collected:

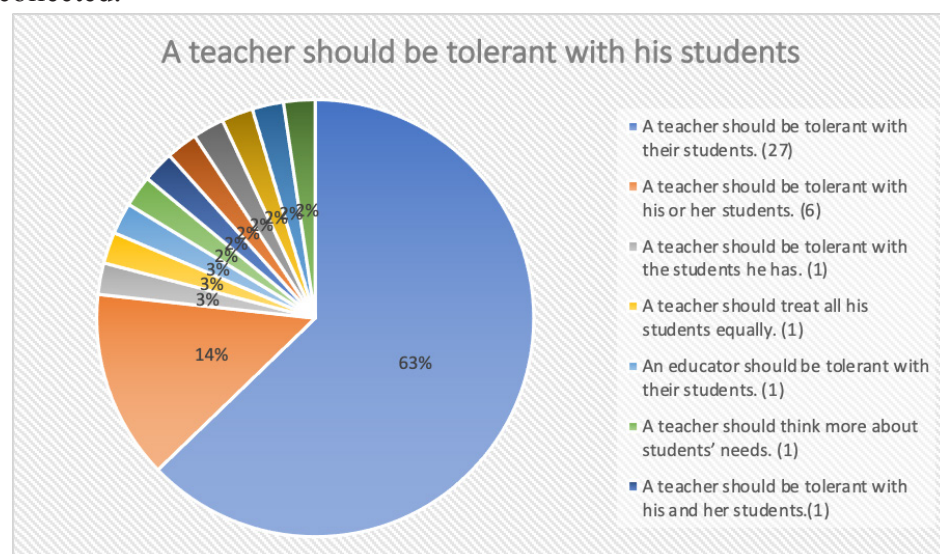


Fig. 1. Responses for Example (1)

As can be concluded for paraphrases provided for Example (1), the greatest number of responses (27) indicates that the pronoun 'his' was detected

as the sentence element, i.e. pronoun, that needs to be replaced by 'their'. Other strategies were used as well, the second most frequent being a replacement of 'his' with a more inclusive equivalent 'his or her' or even 'his and her' (1). Still, a number of responses (4) did not focus on the personal possessive pronoun 'his' but on other sentence elements that did not require replacement in which case some ungrammatical solutions were also provided. In the greatest number of responses, the participants replaced one pronoun (in singular) by another pronoun (in plural).

For Example (2)—*An actress is usually nervous before the show*, students provided the following responses, whereas the responses are reproduced as given (i.e. where no full sentences were provided by the students):

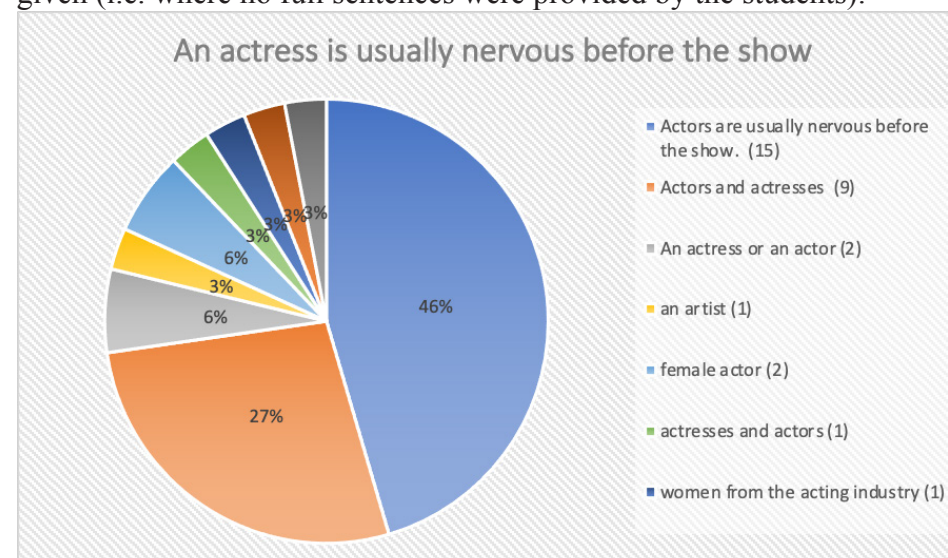


Fig. 2. Responses for Example (2)

As for paraphrases provided for Example (2), the greatest number of responses (15) indicates that the noun 'actress' was detected as the sentence element, i.e. the noun that needs to be replaced by another noun and was replaced by the word 'actor' in plural. Other strategies used included both nouns (i.e. actors and actresses) in 9 responses, which indicates that students do not find the word 'actress' carrying negative connotations or are not familiar with the questions raised on whether individual actresses prefer to be called 'actors'. Other responses, as can be seen from Fig. 2, show inconsistency or are not correct with regard to meaning. As for paraphrases provided for Example (3) —*Man is destroying our planet*, the word

‘man’ was replaced by ‘people’ in 17 responses, followed by ‘humans’ and ‘the humankind’. The responses also indicate that the learners are not sure whether a noun in singular or plural should be provided in the paraphrase.

In one response, the participant of the survey was, as it seems, more critical of the claim in the sentence to be paraphrased and provided a more empathetic response to indicate that it is not people who are destroying our planet but their actions (see Fig. 3):

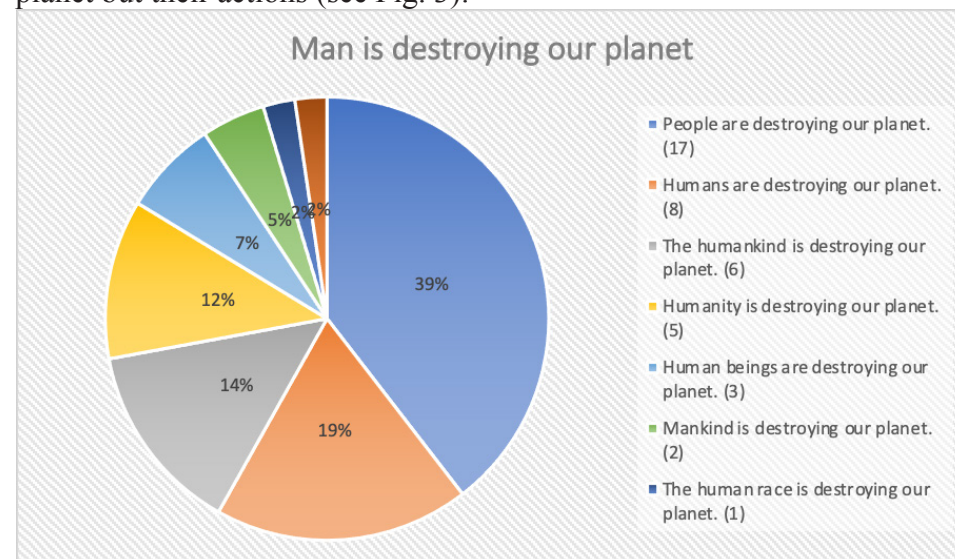


Fig. 3. Responses for Example (3)

Interestingly, the greatest number of different responses was collected for the following sentence: (4) *Fat people need to go on diets*, as can be observed from the examples provided below (See Fig. 4). In terms of the available linguistic forms and strategies, the greatest tendency to shift towards a ‘people first’ approach on the sentence level was found in Example (4). At the same time, the number of numerous and varied responses may indicate that learners are not confident about activating inclusive nouns and pronouns in English as a foreign language as well as that there may be external and culturally-embedded factors involved (e.g. whether ‘obese’ and ‘overweight’ are perceived as offensive words).

The answers provided are also in line with the suggestions by Thehelska in 2006 (8 responses), but attempts to opt for a ‘people first’ approach are clearly seen from Fig. 4 (‘people with obesity’, ‘people who are over-

weight’, ‘people who struggle with weight’, ‘people with an unhealthy body mass index’, etc.).

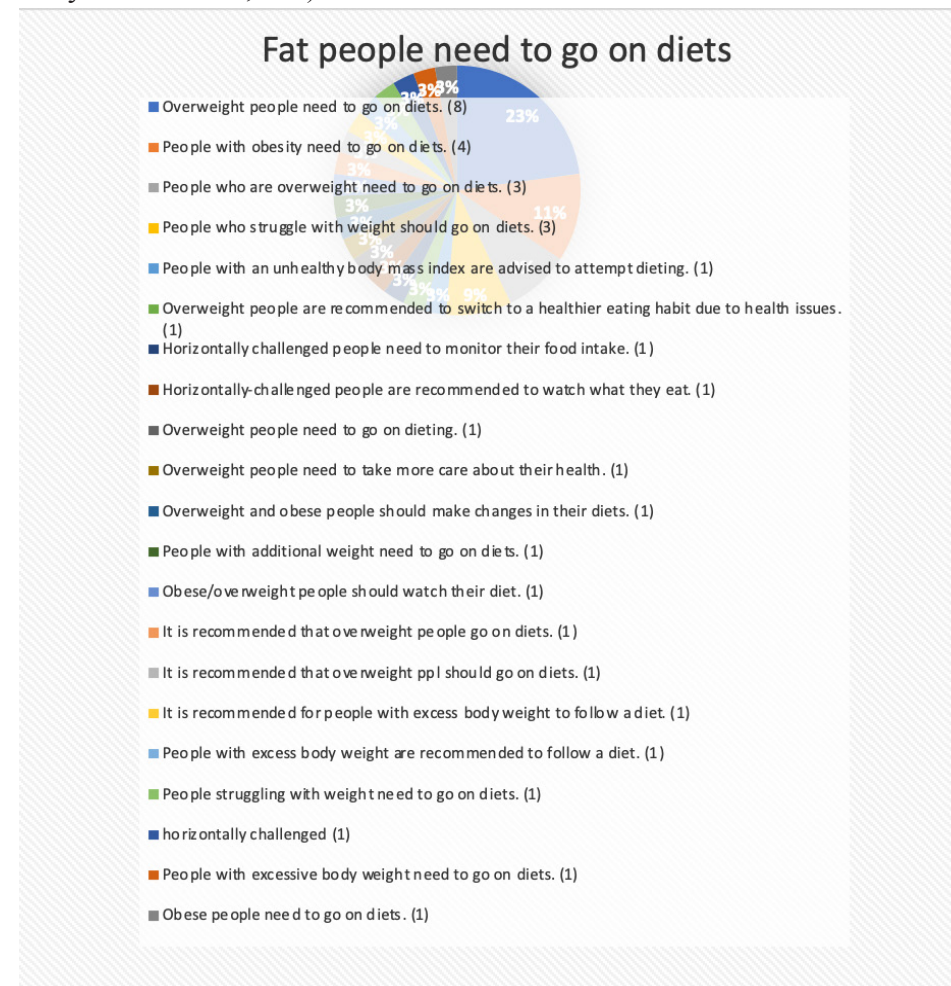


Fig. 4. Responses for Example (4)

Therefore, in the case of Example (4), as can be seen from the responses above, the participants activated inclusive or non-discriminatory language in a similar *people-first* manner (see PFL, *Using Inclusive Language—Guidelines and Examples*, 2020). Although Slobin, when referring to “readily encodable in language”, refers to closed-class grammatical morphemes, tense/aspect inflections, particles and prepositions (adjectives excluded), Example (4) could mean that more attention needs to be given to understanding patterns of inclusive language in FL/L2 (or the lack thereof) or perhaps ways how exposure to social networks affects language usage.

In addition, different linguistic strategies were also detected in examples on illness and old age, as can be seen from the responses below. As for 'the elderly', the responses provided show that the students usually opted for a less acceptable form from the one provided in the original and there were no responses that would use different and more recently introduced phrases such as 'senior citizens' (see Thehelska, 2006, Task 4 Key) or 'people aged'. However, it is interesting that the word 'people' occurs in almost all of the responses, which is why it can be claimed that the people-first approach was observed in Example (5) as well (see Fig. 5).

It is also necessary to mention is that all of the examples collected have not been produced through spontaneous language production and were obtained by means of task-based instruction and submitted in the written form. There is, of course, a possibility that language production, or even comprehension, in a different, more spontaneous spoken or written language activation and usage would have yielded different responses.

In terms of translation-based tasks, another activity that could contribute to results when it comes to activating inclusive vocabulary (especially nouns, pronouns and adjectives) could rely on asking students to provide translation equivalents from English into their L1. In that way, a comparison could be made between different language pairs to see if these categories present a problem in speakers' L1, as well as there are different inclusive expressions used that students may not be aware of or may not be using in their everyday written/spoken communication or academic writing.

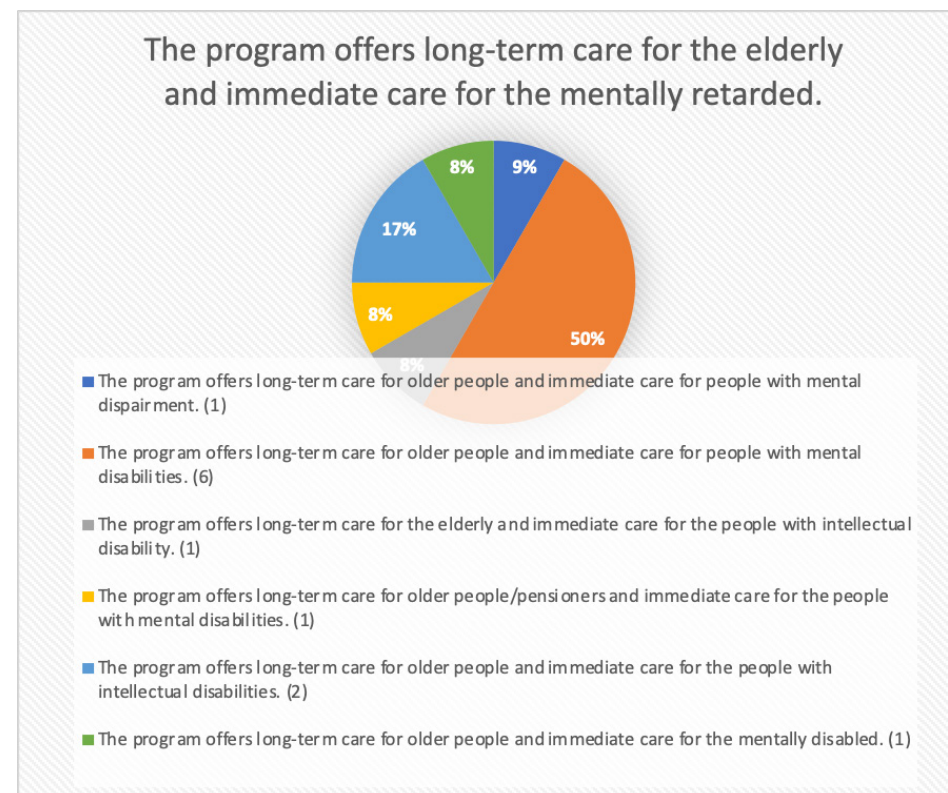


Fig. 5. Responses for Example (5)

Furthermore, what could also be tentatively concluded from the responses is that, in the case of pronouns and nouns, L1 could also be contributing to a lack of a ready-to-be-activated linguistic form. In the case of vulnerable categories, such as illness or old age, the responses for Example (5) show that there is a variety of responses, some of which are less acceptable when compared to the category of weight and physical appearance for which more types of responses were given. In order to assess what factors motivate correct or more frequent inclusive language solutions, regardless of one's L1, more extensive research needs to be done in the future using more examples or focusing on one part of speech only (adjectives, for instance).

Conclusion

In the present paper, task-based research on the usage of inclusive language conducted in 2019 at the University of Warsaw and the University of Sarajevo was presented to discuss how language changes in contemporary English affect inclusive language usage (especially when it comes to the activation of pronouns, nouns and adjectives) and how these changes may affect both inclusive language acquisition and production for learners of English as a foreign language or students studying in English. The material collected on the usage of recently-introduced inclusive language expressions was assessed for linguistic forms and their frequency for five sentences (see Tsehelska, 2006). In total 158 responses to five sentences were collected and analysed for the linguistic strategies used by 45 participants. It could be understood from the examples provided above that the students of English as a foreign language / students studying in English as a foreign language who completed the task are unsure about the usage of language that is considered inclusive, especially when it comes to gender-neutral / inclusive language in contemporary English, as well as whether to use adjectives before the noun, in a relative clause, or in a prepositional phrase. However, based on the responses collected for the purpose of the present paper, it may be said that adjectives present a lesser challenge in terms of inclusive language usage than nouns or pronouns and that the people-first approach is generally observed.

The paper also suggests that learners of English as a foreign language / students studying in English as a foreign language are struggling when choosing the correct inclusive language equivalent, aside from ungrammatical responses. As a solution, codes of practice and inclusive language manuals may be used to assist the learners in the process, as well as translation-based tasks. Furthermore, texts that discuss ageing, illness and disease, occupations, and other relevant topics may significantly contribute to a more insightful inclusive language acquisition.

APPENDIX 1

Task 1

The following phrases use sexist language. Rewrite them to make them inclusive.

1. A teacher should be tolerant with his students.
2. A child needs the love of his parents.
3. An actress is usually nervous before the show.
4. Mary is a camerawoman.
5. The committee elected a chairman.
6. Man is destroying our planet.
7. Today man-made fibers are used for manufacturing stockings.
8. This substance is not known to man.

Task 4

Many people are sensitive about their abilities, age, culture, and appearance. Make the following phrases sound inoffensive to the persons being spoken about.

1. She is looking after her insane mother.
2. The program offers long-term care for the elderly and immediate care for the mentally retarded.
3. A new clinic for the care of geriatrics is being proposed.
4. He is as blind as a bat.
5. My neighbor is as deaf as a post.
6. Jane is an emotional cripple.
7. Fat people need to go on diets.

APPENDIX 2

Rewrite the following sentences to make them inclusive:

1. A teacher should be tolerant with his students.
2. An actress is usually nervous before the show.
3. Man is destroying our planet.
4. The program offers long-term care for the elderly and immediate care for the mentally retarded.
5. He is as blind as a bat.
6. My neighbor is as deaf as a post.
7. Fat people need to go on diets.

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SARS COV11 AND OTHER CALAMITIES IN ADAM NEVILL'S LOST GIRL

Kübra Baysal

Abstract: Speculating about future based on the present, climate change fiction (cli-fi) proves its potential to predict the environmental and social repercussions of anthropogenic transformation(s) on Earth. As a cli-fi novel, *Lost Girl* (2015) envisions the collapse of the world through grim depictions of the nonhuman environment and restless societies and recounts the dangerous quest of a father to find his lost daughter amidst (un)natural disasters, pandemics, and chaos. In the realistic world of *Lost Girl*, new strains of deadly viruses take hold of the world. Prophesying the coronavirus pandemic and other calamities that came out to be true in 2020 such as the destructive wildfires in Australia or the heatwaves in Europe among others, *Lost Girl* has a realistic touch leaving a wake-up call effect on the reader to change their anthropocentric way of living through a posthuman perspective.

Keywords: coronavirus, pandemic, calamity, cli-fi, the Anthropocene, posthuman.

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Introduction

The seventh novel by British author Adam Nevill, *Lost Girl* (2015), is a pre-apocalyptic climate fiction novel which focuses on the horror of environmental transformations in “a nightmarish near future crippled by global warming and over population” (Kitching, 2015). Standing out with its realistic touch as based on scientific facts, predictions and research, the novel narrates the fast-approaching, inevitable apocalypse encompassing a series of environmental disasters, and simultaneous social, economic and political collapse worldwide as a perfect picture of the twenty-first century anthropogenic world.

An Englishman only referred as “the father” is the protagonist of the novel through whom the nightmarish world of the near future of the 2050s is depicted. His nameless position gives him an anonymous position to stand for any human being who can plunge into crime and unruly behaviour once the lives of their loved ones are in jeopardy. In other words, in “this bleak society – he and his missing daughter are just more statistics – and the fact that he goes about his search gloved and masked” (Morgan P., 2017) adds to his anonymity. Concentrated on the cosmic world of Great Britain, which is “overrun by refugees and the authorities overwhelmed” (Jarrod, 2016), the novel aptly projects the total demolition of the Earth while stirring sympathy with the emotional story and helplessness of a father desperately searching for his daughter, Penny, amidst havoc. In this respect, the novel displays “planet-wide horror of civilisation slowly-collapsing with the personal demons” of a father losing his child (Everington, 2015). In fact, it pictures Nevill’s concerns about the near future while enclosing the associable story of a father in the novel, himself being a father as well (“*Lost Girl: An Interview*”, 2015).

Nevill’s notion of horror recently trends towards environmental devastation which can be tracked across the world. In an interview, he voices his private fears and concerns about “deforestation, soil degradation and erosion, carbon emissions from our continuing and accelerating burning of coal, the thermal heating of the oceans, plant stress, and the impending collapse of civilization” (Centorcelli, 2014). These are accompanied with the recklessness and arrogance of the human species having failed to learn from great disasters, particularly the *anthropos*, or big capitalist corporations and individuals that exploit the nonhuman environment.

Lost Girl is set in Torquay, Devon, in 2053, in the future world taken by environmental disasters while a supernatural presence seems to control an undeniable number of people around the world through a cult (Morgan P., 2017). Characters and the main story in the novel are introduced *in medias res* while the past two years after Penny had been taken when she was four and previous years are referred to in the background information to emphasise the gradual degradation in both human and the nonhuman nature (Nevill, 2015, p. 1).² Before the tragic incident of the kidnapping is unfolded, the father lived with his wife, Miranda, and daughter, Penny, in their secluded house in Torquay surrounded by a garden in which Miranda grew their fruits and vegetables (2), which is a privilege only the two per cent of the world population can have (108) for there is a food shortage all around the world. Before that, the Thames flooded the cities, and the Father had to move his family from Birmingham to Devon out of necessity (2). On the day of the kidnapping incident, however, the father is supposed to look after Penny as she is playing in the front garden while Miranda works in the back. Still, he gets distracted with the idea of an affair, and his mind is elsewhere while his daughter is quickly taken away (5).

Father’s psychology is mostly unstable after the tragedy of his daughter’s disappearance, which gives a realistic quality to the narration. The novel is reviewed to be “faultless with regard to writing and evocation” (Fryer, 2015) and being realistic despite employing horror elements such as King Death, rituals, and spirits. For instance, as the father discovers a deserted chapel that has been turned into one of King Death’s ritual places, he finds a shrine inside the building standing as a bricolage of the artefacts of death and destruction across the world:

The shrine was a mortuary roll that depicted nothing but disaster, death and decay: chaos, the great passage from civilization to barbarism. In this place, the father suspected that *someone* had grasped some deep, personal connection with the wider diaspora and depopulation. The whole edifice suggested the morbidly spiritual, which further convinced him that there was meaning behind the selection of this place too, as if this room ended another journey, or a hideously idiosyncratic pilgrimage. It was an installation of the King Death group for sure, but a shrine for a seer, priest, or whatever kind of witch doctor or shaman the group’s nihilistic mysticism and superstition generated. (261).

² From this point on, references to the novel, *Lost Girl*, shall be indicated with only page numbers.

Furthermore, one of the most striking narrative qualities of *Lost Girl* is the anonymity and flaws of the protagonist, the father, who evolves throughout the novel. He stands for any human being who has their loved ones and can risk everything to protect them, which is a realistic and humane touch in the novel. Losing his daughter Penny because of a moment of weakness and distraction, Father questions everything about himself: his morality, ethics and even humanity while he sets out on a bloody quest for his daughter. He gets to like the feeling of adrenaline when he chases criminals and kills them because of “his slowly capsizing psyche” (Fryer, 2015). In the first year after Penny is kidnapped, he feels so depraved that he does not care whatever is happening around the world. Once he realises the police force or any other official/legal organisation cannot help him, and that he is on his own to find Penny, he feels utterly devastated and then realises the grave condition of the world: “[...] most of Bangladesh got swallowed by rising waters, Greece and Africa were lost to wildfires, and China and Australia were surrounded by wildfires whereas the U.S. ruled by the Mormons leave Central Americans to their death “against the fence” (137).

(Un)Natural Disasters and Ailments in *Lost Girl*

Set in the near future and speculating about the fundamental horror of the human species about their survival and fear of a father about his daughter, *Lost Girl* stands out as a “climate-dystopia” and “climate change novel” (Agranoff, 2017) ornamented with horror fiction qualities. Bringing the characteristics of both genres together in a well-knit plot, Nevill brings “the apocalyptic vision of *The Road* together with Nevill’s [his] own brand of bleak terror” (Everington, 2015). On the one hand, Britain is seething with climate-change-forced-to-become refugees like other countries in the north which are becoming the environmental and geopolitical centres of the world while Mediterranean Europe is struggling with wildfires, extreme heat and an impending hurricane. On the other hand, human conflict can be observed through international crime organisations, gangs, violence, lack of sympathy and the rise of suspicion and selfishness among surviving humans. The world is in such a dreadful condition that the father falls into desperation and cannot picture a future for next generations:

Where can we go? the father wondered. We are alone in space. There is nowhere to go. The quick, cold realization never failed to produce an icy tension, the size of a snooker ball, behind his sternum. The very earth was

getting smaller. To migrate north as a species and to go higher and higher as the heat rose, and to compete for fewer and fewer resources . . . The closing of borders. The end of food exports. The ever-emerging hostilities to seize fresh water and arable land... All of these things were part of the penultimate stage of mass collapse; the idea could still take his breath away. (235-236).

In this respect, climate change fiction as “a subgenre of sci-fi” (Bloom, 2018) gives an account to the fears of the human species mirroring the time and conditions of the said age. Climate change novels such as *Lost Girl* function as follows:

Climate change is unprecedented and extraordinary, forcing us to rethink our place in the world. At the same time, in looking at its causes and its repercussions, we find old themes. There have always been disasters; there has always been loss; there has always been change. The novels, as all novels must, both grapple with the particulars of their setting and use these particulars to illuminate enduring truths of the human condition. (Tuhus-Dubrow, 2013)

A momentous role of cli-fi as part of “speculative fiction” (Streeby, 2018, p. 4) involves urging people to speculate about themselves and the world when, in fact, they tend to ignore the anthropogenic changes in nature. This explains why authors of climate change novels work on the “what ifs” and “future Earths”, because through their novels they are likely to stir eco-awareness in people and succeed what scientific facts have failed for so many years (Abraham, 2017). With this perspective in *Lost Girl*, the nightmarish condition and the *en-masse* collapse of the world is aptly represented through grim depictions combined with the touching survival story of a family and their happy reconciliation, which is most likely to trigger a positive change in people’s perception of the nonhuman environment. Depicting the deteriorating conditions in the cosmic world of Britain, whereas the rest of the world is often referred to in the news report, *Lost Girl* bears a harrowing effect to conjure a change of perspective in the humankind: Too much catastrophe in the world needed to be comprehended, with more and more happening all the time. It was the age of incident. Merely at a local level in Devon, there was the hot terror of summer, the fear of another flood-routing winter, cliff erosion, soil erosion, soil degradation, blackouts, and the seemingly endless influxes of refugees. Up above, the sky began to bleach white-blue from blue-black. When it became silver-blue with sharp light in an hour, the heat would boil brains. (16).

Demonstrating the human-induced changes in nature, the heatwaves and drought cause immense deaths. Those who perish instantly are the old, impoverished and the weak, in other words, the non-*anthropos* people (17). On the other hand, even people with decent means have little to do against the heat: they can “[s]tay indoors, do not move during the hottest part of the day, use cold compresses, stay in the shade, sip water. *Stay, sit, sip*” (56). The number of people who go insane because of heat, “the mutterers or head-slappers, the screamers or the too silent” (56) is undeniably high. The scenes of dying nature from the novel find their equivalent in the heatwaves in Europe and wildfires in Australia and the U.S. in 2020, which is called “the year of fire” (Hess, 2020).

The “popular fiction” of the twenty-first century, climate fiction has adapted to the conditions of the new world and gives voice to “pressing [and undeniable] contemporary anxieties and real-world events” (Murphy, 2017, p. 8). In the same vein, climate fiction of the 2000s emerged like ecocriticism of the 1990s, which “responds to a period of scholarly neglect of questions of reality and an interest in fictional ways of accounting for it” (Bartosch, 2013, p. 50). What turned the chances for climate fiction and made it popular is the current state of the world and the extensive studies of interdisciplinary ““environmental humanities”” since the 2000s (Palsson et al., 2013, p. 5). Hence, the disasters and the human conflict displayed in the novel are not a product of fantasy, and they have already occurred or are occurring in several countries across the world at present, even though the novel itself is fictional. At this point, Nevill confirms in an interview that *Lost Girl* is not a work of fantasy since it conforms to the world facts: “I set my story in a pre-apocalypse situation, that is very close to now, and recognisable to us in 2015 [when the novel was published] (*“Lost Girl: An Interview”*, 2015). In other words, Nevill talks about the present and near-future realities of the world: “destructive storms, the loss of biodiversity, species extinction, and sea level rise [...] that are no longer on the horizon but are happening now” (Streeby, 2018, p. 4).

In addition to what can be observed within the borders of Devon as the third-person narrator of the novel reflects, the TV news presents the macrocosmic picture of the world suffering from disasters, famine and diseases. As illustrated in the novel, aside from environmental devastation, there is an extreme food shortage which results in the collapse of food

markets and weakens the capital holders around the world from the 2030s onwards, which explains why everyone becomes vegetarian for a decade until the 2050s, when synthetic meat is invented (3, 17). At this point, extreme air pollution among many other elements disturbs the harmony of nature which brings out “underproduction” of food lessening “agriculture’s biological productivity,” “yield growth” and “nutritional content” (Moore, 2017, p. 191). Similarly, fish, sheep and cattle have long gone extinct, and “genetically modified, drought-resistant crops” are the standard food for the decent citizen while the poor of the world are starving since the distribution of food is monopolised by international gangs like King Death and big corporations like the Open Arms charity (3).

More importantly, in the three decades preceeding 2050, a dozen pandemics took hold of the world as the father remembers: “[p]lague, legionnaires’ disease, E. coli of the blood, hantaviruses and various strains of influenza” (158). However, there was always a more urgent natural disaster: fire, hurricane or flood to deal with, so people tended to ignore and forget the deaths related to these diseases. However, two new pandemics, SARS CoV11 in Asia and the Gabon River Fever in Africa, seize the world in an even greater urgency which explains why there is a refugee influx into nearby countries, primarily because of SARS: “China, the Philippines, Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, the east of India: they were all coming down hard and fast with the bug” (91, 92). Likewise, the SARS bug is more contagious than the scientists expected as it soon infiltrates within the borders of Britain reaching Midlands, Oxford and London because of a “Hong Kong Chinese tycoon” who flies to Oxford to find a cure (243, 336). It is originally “zoonosis” (infectious disease between nonhuman animals and humans) spreading from bats to rats and from the rats to human beings in China as they were keeping rats for food in wet and congested conditions of the food market, which prepared the necessary conditions for the SARS virus to spread (382). Soon it became airborne and thus, “ninety per cent fatal” (383). Now the biggest threat to all human beings is the new SARS bug against which nothing works no matter how hard the Centre for Disease Control tries (158). Published in 2015, *Lost Girl* astoundingly predicts the coronavirus pandemic of 2020, which impacts the reader with the power of climate fiction as the tell-tales of the distant as well as not-so-distant future(s): “On 11 March 2020, WHO declared Novel Corona virus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak as a pandemic and reiterated the call for countries to take immediate actions and scale up response to treat, detect

and reduce transmission to save people's lives" (Budholiya et al., 2020, p. 311). In this respect, "it becomes much easier to empathize with the characters in this dystopian narrative [*Lost Girl*] for the contemporary reader that is currently experiencing a pandemic, Covid-19, a non-fictional horror in flesh and blood" (Çetiner, 2020, p. 230). In the novel which parallels the bitter reality of our world today, a vaccine is procured through antibodies of rats which were "the reservoir host", and only the rich ones like Karen, the father's old lover and the manager of Open Arms Charity, her husband Richard, Yasmin/Penny and those around them are inoculated (383-384). As Richard clarifies, the new bug is "[...] NBO. The next big one" (376) that has been transforming for the last fifty years and will be the cause of "the biggest sudden depopulation since the Black Death" (377).

The novel similarly lays bare the Anthropocene and its myriad consequences in real life because the Anthropocene is an age aware of its meaning and impact, unlike any previous epoch. Named within the same age it is happening for the first time in geological history due to countless evidence gathered from the strata, water and the air, the Anthropocene is "the first geological epoch in which a defining geological force [*homo sapiens*] is actively conscious of its geological role", and the positive change is expected to emerge "when humans become aware of their global role in shaping the earth and, consequently, when this awareness shapes their relationship with the natural environment" (Pálsson et al., 2013, p. 8). This notion is riveted in the persuasive narrative of *Lost Girl* as a climate fiction even more. For instance, there is an excessive drought in China for many years due to a freshwater shortage and "depletion of the Yellow River and the region's deep aquifers" and the disappearance of the monsoon entirely so much so that "[t]he water shortage has been classed as irreversible by the UN" in 2047 (23). In the same manner, water problems emerge in Europe with depletion of water sources and "the Rhine, the Po, [and] the Loire" rivers while the riverbeds are teeming with poisonous algae which cause waterborne diseases (53), which once again reflects the problem of the drought in the twenty-first century.

Furthermore, there is the worldwide phenomenon that is called the "[c]limate holocaust" (51-52) which ranges from the heatstroke in the locales of Kent and Devon with temperatures of around 40 °C degrees (50), forest fires in Mediterranean countries: Spain, Portugal, France (51) and wildfires in India and Australia (229). In southern Europe, the fire is thoroughly un-

controllable because a massive part of northern Spain and Barcelona, "an area as big as Denmark," has already been lost to wildfires (53) which resulted in Britain being covered with black smoke (20) and Germany with white smoke (53). In another part of the world, in Australia, similar events occur as Sydney and Adelaide are all gone while Perth and Melbourne are surrounded by "[f]ire superstorms" (229-230). All these extreme weather conditions recall the notion of "flat ontology", which refutes the Eurocentric notion of human superiority over the nonhuman and explains how human beings are vulnerable in the face of vast environmental devastations since "nonhuman objects have a force of their own that cannot be reduced to human intention [or intervention]" (Morgan A., 2017). As a result of extreme air pollution caused by wildfire smoke, people in the novel wear masks all over Europe and in the afflicted zones, which finds its real-life correspondence in British Columbia following the barely controlled wildfires in California in July 2018 (Sierra-Heredia, 2018).

Likewise, landslide and rockslide are common anthropogenic incidents in the new, devastated world of *Lost Girl* as can be seen in the mountains of Switzerland that are falling apart while glaciers melt in an alarming rate (53). In the same way, the sea ice is gone whereas the permafrost (solid frozen ground) has been melting and releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere, which is the legacy of devastation for future generations if they manage to survive the catastrophes, diseases or boundless human violence. The father meets an older man who gets into a fervent conversation with him about the impending end of the humankind. He fears that the "the hydrogen sulphide [...] [u]nder the ocean floor" (233) will come up and exterminate whatever is left in the seas and leave a stinking smell for future generations. At that moment, the father thinks about the condition of the nonhuman nature which is left wholly unbalanced with centuries-long human interference: "Ironical that it was no longer human emissions doing the most damage to the atmosphere; the earth's own expulsions had become far more deadly, and the planet now seemed to be pursuing a purpose of its own. Great fields of permafrost were releasing their terrible and long-withheld breath into the air, while the forests and oceans absorbed less carbon dioxide than ever. (233).

In this context, the fictional debate about permafrost and ocean floor in the novel reflects none other than the twenty-first-century reality. In the winter of 2017, it was discovered that "a string of days 60 and 70 percent warmer

than normal baked the North Pole, melting the permafrost that encased Norway's Svalbard seed vault - a global food bank nicknamed 'Dooms-day'" (Wallace-Wells, 2020), which is so vital for the preservation of seeds for future generations. Likewise in Alaska and Siberia, a research team tasked with observing the region for twelve years has lately found out that the thermokarst (protruding surface of permafrost and melting ice) lakes in Alaska and Siberia "could increase the emissions generated by permafrost by 118 per cent in the late 21st century" (Rosane, 2018), especially when the recent years of sweltering summers and dry winters are taken into account. As displayed in the novel, flora and fauna of the Earth similarly struggle with the heat and poisonous air like human beings and die, which can be called human-induced ecocide. Trees give their "dying breaths" as they release the CO₂ that they are supposed to absorb, which adds another pile to the already high rate of carbon emissions (52-53) while animals die a painful death escaping from surviving human beings:

The great dieback from drought, famine and disease was making inroads into the herd; the other animals were running wild-eyed with foam-lathered flesh. Their teeth were showing inside red mouths that cried out uselessly. There was panic. Clubs and rocks were being seized and hoisted aloft to defend what little was left, fences were being erected. Grieving mammals were thinning to extinction; their little ones went first. And it wouldn't stop. (140-141).

At this point, having left the Edenic "old world" of the Holocene, people are facing the consequences of a human-induced, "less congenial epoch" (Tuhus-Dubrow, 2013), the Anthropocene, whose "scarring" signs can be read anywhere on Earth (Colebrook, 2016, p. 151).

Human Conflict in the Novel

Lost Girl aptly reflects how human beings are drawn into social, personal and political conflict/evil that originates from the destruction of the non-human environment. This way, Nevill expresses that in the near future, the humankind will incline towards "protectionism, territorialism, and an even greater self-interest" once global catastrophes coupled with the constant threat of death become a norm ("*Lost Girl: An Interview*", 2015). Similarly, the novel pictures the lack of solidarity, empathy and moral codes among people and a dramatic rise of selfishness and the survival instinct:

"Community spirit was thin on the ground, even in the better parts of town. People heard shots popping, and they locked down, grateful it was not their turn. In many parts of the country, who even knew who lived next door? The national characteristic was mistrust" (17). This lack of morality is almost recurrent of "[t]he concept of nihilism, as the denial of religious morality and metaphysical truth [...] discussion of the meaninglessness of existence" (Yılmaz, 2017, p. 156) experienced amidst boundless natural and societal chaos in the post-apocalyptic world of the novel.

Escaping the catastrophes as much as they can, human beings are also put in a position to deal with criminals and gangs on their own as the police force does not interfere with gang matters, which presents "opportunities for the gangs to fast-track their interests through extortion, bribery, kidnap, blackmail, intimidation and violence" (100). Thus, normal people have become an "[e]asy prey [...] in the crumbling world where 'King Death' reigns supreme" (Everington, 2015). In this respect, the police force is feeble, with most of the officers corrupt and terrified of kings (130). When the father realises the police will not help him, he gets help and information from a handler, whom he names Scarlett Johansson (he puts her life in danger eventually for his vigilante acts) (274) and soon another one, whom he calls Gene Hackman (later killed by the kings) (277) to find his daughter. In the chaotic atmosphere of the world, people take justice into their own hands like Father does (14, 42) since "the forces of law and order are virtually non-existent" (Mahon, 2017). The state forgets about old crimes once the climate change hits (61) and the police classify the cases according to the kind of crime they have to deal with (94) while finding a gun is more natural than finding meat (83). The world is so corrupt and in the control of gangs that, when the father leaves his DNA in two crime scenes, his associate, Gene Hackman, informs him that his records could be national, but the kings keep them. It means they are going to finish off the father themselves (238), which they try hard until the end of the novel.

On the other hand, there is a refugee rush towards the northern parts of the world because of the heatwaves and wildfires in the southern parts. The narrator of *Lost Girl* calls it "Exodus," the great migration, for human species:

Millions had been displaced from southern Europe alone, augmented by further scores of millions from the Middle East and Africa, and all pushing

north into Europe. It had changed the continent. Every man, woman and child south of France was steadily fleeing drought, heat, starvation, the wars and innumerable diseases that accompanied each dilemma. *The biggest migration of a single species ever known on the planet was underway.* (95 *emphasis mine*).

A species successfully crossing with the rodent; *perhaps a farsighted evolutionary leap towards becoming envoys for the future*, when the planet's aridity seeped further north. (111 *emphasis mine*).

Becoming a geological force that interferes with the natural balance of the Earth and giving their name to an epoch, the Anthropocene, over the span of about 200.000 years with the emergence of *homo sapiens* in East Africa (Hart, 2007, p. 30), the humankind has not been able to predict the eventual turn-back of the Anthropocene in the future. As a result of centuries of anthropocentric exploitation and destruction of nature, human beings in *Lost Girl* end up running north for their survival as a species. As another outcome of the Anthropocene, environmental refugees populate specific regions in the north, which stirs social and political problems among human beings and countries. As the police officer who saves the father from the kings in the Commodore explains: "[...] The rules are changing, and the tone is changing. Every country for itself. What comes next? Every man for himself?" (136). Countries situated in the critical points for the refugee inflow close their borders to protect their own interests:

Following Spain, Italy, Turkey, the Benelux and Central European countries' decision last month to close their borders, the newly formed French government is now considering the reclosure of its own borders, claiming its territory has again been 'overrun by refugees'. President Lemaire has declared the current situation an 'uncontainable and unsustainable humanitarian crisis'. [...] The British nationalist leader, Benny Prince, applauded the news and urged the British emergency government to follow the French example. (19 *emphasis original*).

In addition, there has been political tension between Russia and China going on for fifteen years due to the issue of relocating Chinese people into Siberia and the subsequent Russian resistance about borders (23) while Pakistan and India are on the brink of war because of water sources, as the news report informs in the novel (92). These incidents increase the stakes

for a nuclear war especially after "a massive exchange of nuclear weapons on the Indian sub-continent" takes place at the end of the novel (431) that alarms the states all around the world. Similarly, Arabian countries and African countries (Egypt-Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia-Sudan) are at war over farmlands and precious livestock while "the Islamic militia groups" loot everything in Sub-Saharan countries (91).

As exemplified in the novel, during anthropogenic environmental catastrophes, public services and institutions cannot function properly while citizens are left to their fate, which in turn makes them self-centred, suspicious individuals. As can be seen in the case of Hurricane Sandy (2012), which bears similarities to Hurricane Katrina (2005) in terms of the humanitarian crisis that originated from racism, class consciousness and biased state demeanour, the U.S. government could not safeguard all its citizens and gave cause to "changed feelings regarding security, safety, stability, and [...] being unable to rely on the environment" (Kaplan, 2016, p. xvi). In the same fashion, climate security and issue of climate/environmental refugees are the issues in the world agenda as reflected in the climate change fiction because it realistically posits variant sides of "environmental transformation" in the foreground along with the humane stories such as the father's quest for his daughter (White, 2017, p. 182) in *Lost Girl*.

Considering the monumental, unstoppable, and devastating changes on Earth that leave human beings powerless, decentred, and helpless in the human age, the Anthropocene, *Lost Girl* accentuates the approaching extinction of the humankind several times. While it seems to grant infinite power to the humankind as a geological force, the Anthropocene indeed recalls the entanglement of the humankind with the nonhuman environment which indeed makes them vulnerable "within broader geological and ecological processes" (Parkins and Adkins, 2018, p. 5) such as catastrophes and diseases. With this, in *Lost Girl* people discuss the sixth extinction, the end of the world, and more significantly, the Industrial Revolution that commenced the permanent anthropogenic transformation of the nonhuman nature in the early nineteenth century. Considered to be the official origin of the Anthropocene (Crutzen, 2002, p. 23), industrialisation "with the accompanying mechanization of life in that period caused a lot of adverse changes" (Kaya, 2020, p. 30), which explains the gravity of the matter for the twenty-first-century humankind who experience the devastating impact

of the anthropogenic changes in nature³. With the older man whom the father meets in a pub, the human part in the natural devastation and the doom and gloom theories about the humankind are all called up:

‘The planet’s been more than patient. It was around for over four billion years before we set the first fires to clear the land. But it only took ten thousand years in this inter-glacial period for us to spread like a virus. We were the mad shepherds who didn’t even finish a shift before we poisoned the farm and set fire to the barn. We’ve overheated the earth and dried it out. So it’s time for us to leave, I think. Don’t you? *We are already deep into the sixth great extinction*, right now, this very minute.’ (234-235 *emphasis mine*).

Likewise, ironically, the “Exodus” of climate refugees starts in the south-east of England “to the place [London] that had started the Industrial Revolution, with its heavy reliance on coal-burning” (2). Thus, advancing for centuries after the Industrial Revolution, the humankind simultaneously triggered the destructive changes in nature that have become irreversible and fatal for their lives. Similarly, the British civilisation, buildings, and cities “that the Victorians had erected” in the nineteenth century are collapsing in the 2050s, “two centuries after the coal furnaces and fires of the Industrial Revolution belched” (107). In this respect, the Anthropocene is called an “archaic” and emptied term by some scholars (Oreskes and Conway, 2014, p. 53) for countless scientists and climatologists talk about worst-case scenarios that are likely to happen by the end of this century encompassing the extinction and mass destruction of the human species along with the end of civilisation.

Nevertheless, unable to cope with the enormity of natural disasters and despairing for survival, states come up with various methods to slow down the malignant transformations in *Lost Girl*. Among them are “[w]ind farms, biofuels, zero-point energy, carbon capture and sequestration [...] the space mirror plans [...] cold fusion [...] [and] geo-engineering with

³ The common notion about the Anthropocene as proposed by Earth scientists is that it develops in three phases: the first phase is from its emergence with the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth century to 1945, the end of World War II, the second phase from 1945 to 2015 with the post-war period and the Age of Affluence, and the third phase is from 2015 onwards with the high leap of technology, and the unprecedented environmental and societal transformation in the twenty-first century (Steffen et al., 2007, p. 618).

sulphur” (232). The final one, the sulphur method, is doomed to fail as the older man explains, for it will destroy the surviving crops and the world population will surely die of hunger. In the same manner, humans repeat their mistakes over again by interfering even more with the already delicate balance of nature. For instance, New Zealanders block the sun with extreme smoke since they have “pyrocumulonimbus” which are “[t]hunderstorms made from smoke” (230) and Chinese and Indians are planning to do the same to trigger an ice age in their region sending the smoke to the stratosphere “to turn the place into winter” (231). At this point, blocking the sun is a contemporary matter discussed and supported by geoengineering corporations in the twenty-first century. There is a project on “solar radiation management (SRM)” that includes “saturating Earth’s atmosphere with sulphur-laden aerosols to reflect solar light back into space, cooling the planet in the process” and the theory seems to be inspired by volcanic activity in Mexico (1982) and the Philippines (1991), after which the temperatures dropped by “0.6 degrees Celsius following [the release of] millions of tons of sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere” (Turrentine, 2018). The success of the method in the future is vague as are its consequences for the nonhuman flora and fauna, which indeed elucidates how profound the human impact on nature is and will be in the future. In this respect, the humankind tends to turn a blind eye to human-induced natural changes and overexploitation of nature through arrogance and complacency for the sake of civilisation, advancement, capitalisation, and urbanisation:

‘[...] We deforested the land to cultivate livestock, we allowed our numbers to burgeon without limit. And we still burned the coal. We are still burning coal. Two hundred and fifty years, give or take a few, of intensively burning coal for this? What were we expecting? [...] We’ve known what was happening for close to a century. But we kept burning the black stuff. And now we have those feedbacks everywhere. This storm [hurricane] is because of the coal we burned twenty years ago.’ (234).

In the same line, regardless of their tremendous part in the current state of the desolate world, the *anthropos* of *Lost Girl*, the rich and influential individuals and capitalist corporations, are solely guided by Eurocentrism, anthropocentrism and their endless desire for longevity to preserve their existence as the self-chosen representatives of the human species. They intentionally play around the tension zones among and within states to eliminate them from the world population. They take the opportunity of the

SARS virus to ignore the tragedy of millions of people who are suffering and dying, and even taking joy from watching other people die because it would solve the refugee and population problems, food and water shortages all at once (387). Richard, Karen's husband, and Penny's adoptive father, since when Karen got her kidnapped from her home, confronts Father. Father loathes him instantly for his selfishness, cruelty, and greed for he seems to be the epitome of the *anthropos* carrying "his pride in being British" and representing "the Western technological, economic and military" power of his nation (Erdem Ayyıldız, 2018, p. 25):

The more he spoke, the more the man reminded the father of those distant, wine-fuelled executives from food distribution who held forth at parties, their baritones rising to the ceilings of the rooms they quickly came to dominate; people who had drifted into the executive level of agriculture, construction, nuclear power, the emergency government, water management and resettlement planning, after their opportunities in finance diminished as the world's markets began to collapse; men who considered anyone unlike themselves as without worth. (379-380).

He calls Britain a "lifeboat" and the British "the lucky ones" along with "the Kiwis" (New Zealanders) who have managed to block the sun (381). Thus, he announces the fate of nations around the world confidently: "[t]he British and French, Canadians, Scandinavians, Polish, Russians, Japanese and Koreans" are going to survive the catastrophes while "Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, every single country but France that borders the Med, India, Pakistan and the Middle East, are all on their way to final collapse because of water [shortage]" (385). Additionally, he assures he will be among the survivors as one of the few representatives of the human race while he intimidates other human beings who most likely will not survive in the end. Nevertheless, soon after this display of arrogance and pride, he dies a painful death (like Karen) in Father's hands and joins the ranks of the dead people with whom he previously made fun of. Hence, as a prominent member of the *anthropos*, Richard cannot get beyond "the long history of human exceptionalism" (Ohrem, 2017, p. 12), racism and superiority for which he is doomed to be perished in the novel.

In this respect, as Nevill himself also underlines, *Lost Girl* bears messages about the Anthropocene and underlines the vitality of decisive human action to slow down its destructive effects, if not completely stop it. Likewise,

as a counteraction for centuries-long human ignorance and multifaceted negative impacts, Paul Crutzen reminds of various positive developments during the Anthropocene, which can only be achieved through constructive human interference:

Hopefully, in the future, the "Anthropocene" will not only be characterised by continued human plundering of Earth's resources and dumping of excessive amounts of waste products in the environment, but also by vastly improved technology and management, wise use of Earth's resources, control of human and domestic animal population, and overall careful manipulation and restoration of the natural environment. (2006, p. 17).

Hence, as Crutzen anticipates, it is possible to turn the negative human impact on nature into a positive one by finding out the accurate methods and using adequate tools. Likewise, as a literary work and a climate change novel, *Lost Girl* conjures up awareness in the Anthropocene societies and governments about the urgency of taking action at once since the mindset of the majority of the humankind seems to be still rooted in the Holocene tradition, which has proved to be *anthropocentric* and short-sighted. To that purpose, Holocene societies are expected to comprehend that they have already morphed into Anthropocene societies especially after the enormous acceleration in the late twentieth-century and to build a fruitful correlation between their changed "insight and action" (Palsson et al., 2013, p. 7). Likewise, the negative transformation of the environment that encompasses the climate change has become both a public and private issue calling forth all human beings whether in an organised community or as individuals through "[e]nhancing the public's climate literacy" (Liu et al., 2014, p. 37). Therefore, it is vital to publicise the understanding of current environmental transformations to create a guided awareness and to initiate collaborative action in the humankind.

Nevertheless, despite the enduring threat of death and devastating natural disasters and new strains of illnesses, the humane aspect is not forfeited in *Lost Girl*. It is indeed a story of love displaying the endless love and sacrifice of a father for his daughter. When Penny is taken away from the father, his normal life ends, and he becomes a vigilante, a criminal, step by step to get closer to her. Then, risking his own life along with his wife's and those of his anonymous accomplices, he reflects his dilemmas and conflicts as a father and a human being risking all for Penny (Fryer, 2015). Hence,

despite the horrible and dystopian foreground of the novel, it appears to be “overall a story about the limits of love” and endurance of a human being (Morgan P., 2017). At the end of the novel, when he gets Penny back and shields her from the dangers of the world with his wife, the father feels a natural relief that can be observed in all human beings who have someone in their lives they dread to lose. Thus, the human touch and happy ending of the novel bring out hope and enthusiasm in human beings to counteract the obstacles originating from the negative transformation of the nonhuman nature, and the dangers other human beings pose (such as a nuclear threat) for the loved ones in such crazy times:

Eventually the father extended one arm out and over the waists of his daughter and his wife, and carefully placed his chest against Penny’s back. The smell of her hair engulfed him, and their three hearts beat together. The blood of the parents warmed the little one in the middle./ He made a vow. Unto death he’d never let them go, and if death were to divide him from them, he’d go first. But before he left, he would find a place for them to be safe, and he would fill their hearts with so much love, it would glow within them long after the last reactor died. (435).

Conclusion

To sum up, *Lost Girl* by the British horror novelist, Adam Nevill, stands out as a pre-apocalyptic climate change novel with horror qualities narrating the formidable quest of a father in the horrible atmosphere of the deranged near-future world. The novel conveys messages encouraging the humankind into adopting a constructive green philosophy and turning it into action at once by demonstrating the realities of the twenty-first century, the coronavirus pandemic, the climate change, and other horrendous transformations in human beings and the nonhuman environment alike. The emotional story involving a little girl who is taken from her parents and who reconciles with them only through her father’s unspeakable methods gives hope after all, with Nevill’s personal touch, that the anthropocentric tendency towards complacency and arrogance could be replaced.

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Hookah and B&H Youth: Towards a Subculture?

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Abstract: The basic role of this paper is the representation of the new emerging subculture among the Bosnian youth population, and that is hookah bars. This paper presents some theoretical depictions of hookahs in popular culture, definitions of subcultural trends and the connections formulated between hookahs and subcultures, but this paper also relied on a descriptive research, a survey which analyzed the notion of whether or not hookah bars are the new subculture in Bosnia. The paper concludes that hookahs can be perceived as a phenomenon heading towards a subculture, as well as the idea that hookah bars remain a fashionable part of young people's lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: hookah, subculture, B&H, auto-tune rapping

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Introduction

Every day various lifestyle modifications, activities and trends change the manner in which we perceive our surroundings on the (sub)cultural level. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new trend is emerging – the trend of smoking hookahs. Numerous club-owners adjust their cafes in order to better satisfy the trend of shisha smoking, whereas various club-goers can be noticed relaxing, listening to music, chatting and simply enjoying the water-pipe experience throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As hookah bars started gradually appearing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it became evident that shishas were not the only elements giving color to such environments. Rather, some standards of musical taste changed, the general special design of such cafes was adapted, as well as the overall trend of using hookahs began to grow. The oriental features of hookah bars slowly transformed when music is taken into account. From oriental music styles to auto-tune, folk, and pop music and thereby such alterations definitely impacted our understanding of the hookah lounge environment. However, it should be noted that the ‘ritual’ of using shishas was not merely reserved for the twenty-first century, because the motif of hookah had been present even earlier. For example, in Disney’s cartoon adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*, the Caterpillar is seen enjoying his shisha while speaking with the heroine, and also, in the Star Wars franchise, Jabba the Hutt is also depicted smoking a hookah filled with a greenish liquid². Certain forums (“Smokers; A subculture”, “Among the Rich, Sexy, Chic, and Even Gangsta – Hookah is a Common Ritual”) discussed the idea of hookah turning to a newly-formed subcultural trend, or even a new ritual.

Therefore, the basic aim of this paper is to examine the idea of hookah smoking as a new subcultural trend in Bosnia and Herzegovina visible in the lives of many (young) people. The notion of using shishas is also closely followed by a keen interest in a new musical taste marked by the previously-mentioned auto-tune rapping, but also by a change in fashion and clothing among hookah smokers. The role of this paper will be to observe whether such popular trends hold any merit for the subcultural sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Prior to discussing the hookah subculture in B&H, it is important to make a basic outline of the concept ‘subculture’, which is the topic of the next section.

² For more pieces of information, see Disney’s adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* from 1951, and Lucas’s motion picture “Star Wars Episode 6”.

Literature Overview

The term ‘subculture’ is usually applied to smaller groups of people who share the same lifestyle, mainly musical and sartorial, which is at great odds with the mainstream society and its culture. As suggested by Ken Gelder (2005), although the term has risen to prominence in the 1940s, the concept of subculture is not neoteric if one thinks of various movements throughout history in music and literature associated with particular behavioral pattern and clothing style (pp. 1-3). The subcultural theory is traced to the early 1920s and the Chicago School which examined immigrant and ethnic groups as well as the working class with the aim of ascertaining the liability of the groups to crime. The Chicago School also established overviews of the groups’ “non-normative, (i.e., *deviant*) collective behavior”. For example, African-Americans and Italians were seen as strike-breaker subculture that argued for their rights in a non-standardized way. It can be inferred that the understanding of subculture is related to ethnic background, behavioral patterns, and class (Williams, 2011, n.p.). In the same vein, Milton M. Gordon described subculture in 1946 as a:

subdivision of a national culture, composed of a combination of factorable social situations such as class status, ethnic background, regional and rural or urban residence, and religious affiliation, but *forming in their combination a functioning unity which has an integrated impact on the participating individual*. (Gelder, 2005, Chapter 3, p. 46)

The definition above shows that subculture formation is influenced by a range of factors including ethnic, social, and religious ones. Studies conducted by scholars from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), founded in 1964, at the University of Birmingham argued that youth subcultures emerged as reactions to standardized mass culture (Gelder, 2005, p. 67). In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) Dick Hebdige analyzes British post-war youth subcultures (beats, teddy boys, mods, skinheads, and punks) in the light of CCCS’s arguments as subcultures that emerged to subvert parental and institutional control evident in the deviant behavior that some of the groups displayed. Nevertheless, the post-subcultural thought maintains that subcultures need not be deviant and need not share the same social class or ethnic belonging which puts forward that one’s background does not influence their subcultural identity. Hebdige scrutinizes the above-mentioned groups’ mannerisms, argot, sartorial and musical tastes with their influence on mass consummation and industry

(pp. 94-96), and other aspects of the subcultures' collective identity.

It follows that subculture is a complex concept with various taxonomies and their subtaxonomies. For example, John Irwin proposed that a subculture can be classified as: a social world, an explicit lifestyle, and an action system (Gelder, 2005, pp. 73-77). The complexity of the definition is also reflected in its prefix 'sub' which summarizes the above-mentioned interpretations of subculture. Gordon explains that 'sub' refers to a subdivision of a culture (46), while Sarah Thornton sees 'sub' as denotative of a subterranean or subaltern culture in comparison to the mainstream culture. Furthermore, Hebdige postulates the problematic of defining culture itself (1979, pp. 5-19), showing the difficulty in arriving at a precise definition of subculture due to the fluidity of 'culture'. The aim of the present research is not to challenge any of the definitions above or to take rigid stances. The paper aims to investigate the hookah goers in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a subculture in accordance with the essence of the literature overview. The methodology section that follows will provide a more in-depth presentation of the research conducted.

Methodology

In order to identify hookah as a subculture among Bosnians and Herzegovinians, we carried out an online research via Google Forms. We opted for a descriptive research and its methods to avoid any bias in analyzing hookah as a subculture. According to Stephen Tripodi and Kimberly Bender, descriptive research is used to describe "characteristics of a sample and relationships between phenomena, situations, and events" (Thyer, 2010, p. 120), especially local social phenomena that are new by answering the questions "who, what, when, where, how" (p. 120). Tripodi and Bender further propose that descriptive research is rooted in ethnography yet does not aim at describing causal relationships of a phenomenon observed (Thyer, 2010, p. 120). This correlates favourably with our research since our aim is not to reach conclusions on neither the impact of hookah subculture nor the repercussions of consuming hookah but to investigate hookah as a subculture in B&H with its main traits. As explained by Tripodi and Bender, there is a number of descriptive research methods, one of them being questionnaire surveys (Thyer, 2010, p. 209) with random sampling (Thyer, 2010, p. 207).

In line with Tripodi and Bender's explanation, our research was conducted online via Google Forms and included a total of a hundred random and anonymous respondents, all hookah consumers and goers, between the ages of 18-40 from Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Srpska, and Brčko District. The respondents did not receive any kind of payment for completing the questionnaire, thus more honest and trustworthy answers were expected. The questionnaire was conducted in B/C/S for the sake of clarity. All the statements were translated into English upon the completion and closing of the questionnaire. The total number of questionnaire items is eighteen. However, the items were grouped for easier analysis of the respondents' affiliation with the hookah subculture and the existence of the hookah subculture in B&H in general.

The questionnaire was tailored to consist of five introductory or placement questions related to the respondents' age, gender, residence, income, and hookah visiting frequency, which would determine whether subculture belonging depends on such determinants. The rest of the questionnaire included three groups of statements, each group consisting of four statements. The groups were organized according to the subcultural traits outlined in Literature Overview: sartorial and music tastes, and identity or subculture belonging, as presented in the table below.

1. Style of Dress	<p>1.1. I would describe my fashion style as: a) casual, b) elegant, c) sport-like, d) boho, e) other</p> <p>1.2. I connect hookah bars with a certain fashion style.</p> <p>1.3. I most frequently dress in the manner of the music which I listen to.</p> <p>1.4. On the streets I can easily recognize if someone is visiting hookah bars on the basis of their fashion style.</p>
1. Music	<p>2. 1. I more easily and quickly connect with people who listen to the same music type as myself.</p> <p>2. 2. When it comes to music, I mostly listen to: a) pop, b) foreign (all genres), c) folk, d) autotune rap (Jala, Buba, Rasta, Senidah, etc.), e) other</p> <p>2. 3. The type of music I usually listen to is the same music you can hear in hookah bars.</p> <p>2. 4. I connect hookah bars with the type of music which can be heard inside of them.</p>
3. Identity & Belonging	<p>3.1. I am more relaxed in hookah bars than in other cafes/bars.</p> <p>3. 2. I believe that people who visit shisha bars are often stigmatized as unwanted in other types of bars.</p> <p>3. 3. I mostly hang out with people who visit hookah bars.</p> <p>3. 4. I consider hookah an integral part of my life.</p>

Table III. 1. Groups and items used in the questionnaire.

The assessment and analysis of the statements was a combination of descriptive research and Likert's scale. This unidimensional scale of measurement usually consists of a set of items, i.e. statements, to which the respondents express their (dis)agreement on a five-point continuum: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. We used this continuum for measuring the respondents' attitudes to their potential hookah subcultural identity and belonging. Furthermore, it was important to measure how often our respondents visit hookah bars to determine whether the frequency of visits influences the membership in hookah subculture or not. For the aforementioned purpose, we also used Likert's five-point frequency scale: very often, often, occasionally, rarely, and very rarely. In addition, as visible from Table 1, we have used single-answer multiple choice, also with a five-continuum range, for one statement pertaining to style of dress and two pertaining to music tastes. The aforementioned was done in order to avoid any imposition and stereotyping on our part. The next section of the paper shows that the questionnaire results are organized into four subsections mentioned earlier in this section: Placement, Style of Dress, Music, and Identity & Belonging.

The restricted use of individual responses could account for certain inconsistencies appearing within the survey; however, such restrictions do not impede the research from reaching its needed goal. Individual opinions, subjective perspectives could provide a better overview concerning the relationship which may be formulated between subcultures and industries. Such detailed replies could explain the reasons why the subculture of hookahs could be perceived as an industry, but they could additionally give more insight into the connection between hookah bars, clothing styles, music preferences, all of which may be adapted into a new, rising hookah industry. Additionally, any detailed individual elaborations provided by the non-hookah goers could also explain why certain individuals want to dissociate themselves from the new trend, or why in general they refuse to be perceived as members of the new subculture, regardless of their age, sex or residence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Discussion of the Results

IV.1. Placement

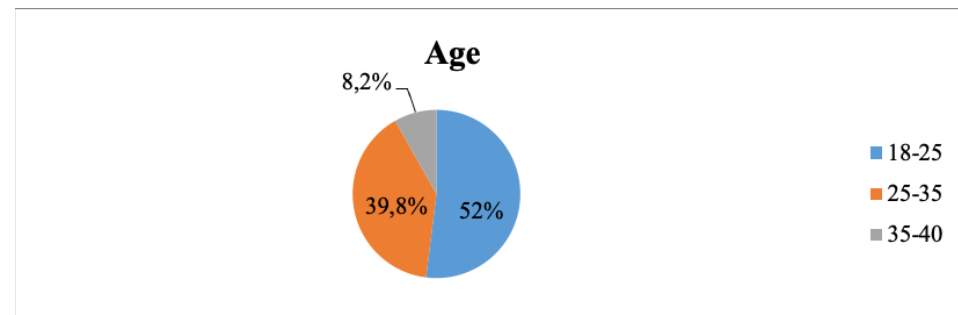


Table IV. 1. 1.

The first placement question of our research focused on the age group of our respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 52% belong to the age group between 18 and 25 years, 39.8% belong to the age group of 25-35, while 8.2% fall in the age group of 35-40. The results in this case created a positive correlation between the B&H youth and the subcultural notions regarding hookahs. Although the 8.2 % show that hookah subculture may include individuals outside the “youth” scale, it is important to note that the subcultural context in this paper is focused predominantly on the Bosnian youth.

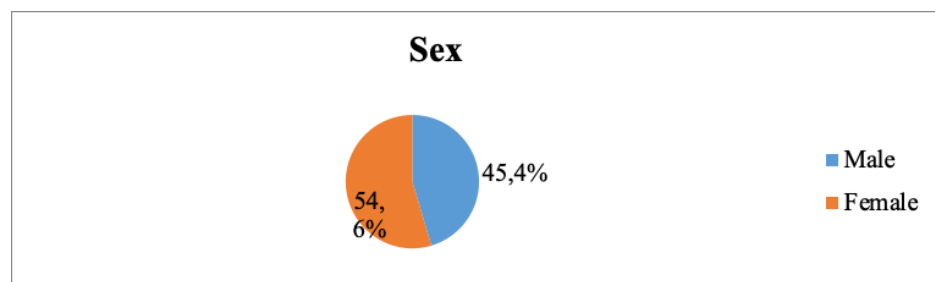


Table IV. 1. 2.

The second question focused on the gender of the participants, and the results obtained showed that 54.6% of the participants were women, while 45.4% were men, implying that there is not much difference in gender when it comes to membership in the B&H hookah subcultural scene.

Residence



Table IV. 1. 3.

The third question determined the place of residence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the gathered results showed that the majority of the examinees come from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 87.9%, while 7.1% come from the Republic of Srpska and 5.1% come from Brčko District. Although the percentage scale in this case is lower for both the Republic of Srpska and Brčko District, our research substantiates the idea that hookahs are present in all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, therefore the presence of the hookah subculture is evident at the level of the entire country.

Monthly Income

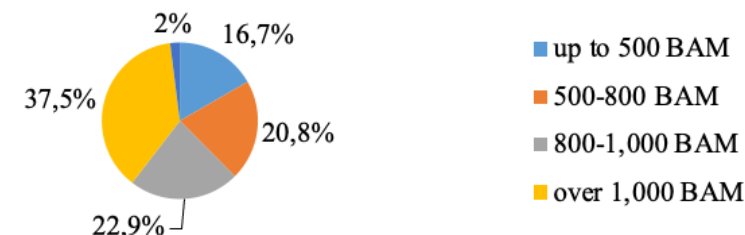


Table IV. 1. 5.

The next question of the survey focused on the monthly revenue of our examinees. 37.5% participants said they have monthly revenues higher than 1,000 BAM, 22.9% have monthly income on the scale between 800 and 1,000 BAM, 20.8% between 500 and 800 BAM, 16.7% respondents to 500 BAM, while 2% named other amounts. Although the gap between the rich and the poor is wide, the overall B&H community is not clearly defined and grouped into various social strata, which suggests that the hookah subculture is not solely formed within the working-class community as was the

case with most subculture around the world. Such results corroborate the post-subcultural thought mentioned in Literature Overview which argues that members of contemporary subcultures need not share the same racial, ethnic, and class affiliation. Therefore, based on the results above, it can be concluded that hookah subculture in B&H comprises different social echelons.

Hookah visit/consumption frequency



Table IV. 1. 6.

In response to hookah visit/consummation frequency question, 22.2% of those surveyed answered they do it very often, 24.2% often, 35.4% do so occasionally, while 8.1% and 10.1% said they go there/consume hookah rarely and very rarely. The overall response to this question points to a positive rise in hookah's popularity due to the fact that the majority of the respondents said that they visit hookah bars. Furthermore, it indicates that one does not necessarily have to visit hookah bars very often in order to belong to a particular subcultural group or trend, but rather occasional visits and flexible timing may also situate a person within a subcultural sphere.

IV.2. Style of Dress

I would describe my style as



Table IV.2.1.

Table IV. 2. 1. shows that the majority of 38.1% said they dress casually, 32% elegantly and 22.7% sport-like, while other 3.1% opted for different styles, such as sporty elegant style. The results in this case present the idea that the clientele of hookah bars dress mostly casually, however people who enjoy going to hookah bars also prefer elegant or sport-like attires. Hence, the hookah subculture then may have several taxonomies or sub-subcultures in terms of clothing styles, which refutes our argument that sport-like attires are the usual types of fashion recognizable inside hookah bars and hookah subculture in B&H.

I connect hookah bars with a certain fashion style.



Table IV. 2. 2.

The statement in the table above aimed at finding the connection between hookah bars and a particular style of fashion. 16.2% of those questioned said that they completely agree, 33.3% said they agree with the statement, 29.3% said that they do not agree, 10.1% said they completely disagree, while 11.1% were undecided. The results are ambiguous since, according to those who agreed with the statement, a particular correlation can be

formed between hookah bars and fashion designs. This further substantiates the idea that the hookah subculture, like other types of subcultures, can be expressed through fashion and be recognizable. On the other hand, the percentage of those who disagreed confirms the results of Table IV.2.1. and the conclusion that hookah subculture has sub-subcultures and cannot be recognized solely by sport-like fashion.

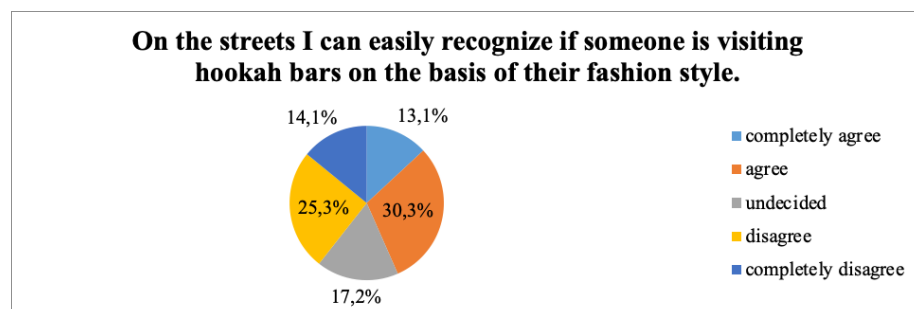


Table IV. 2. 3.

The statement above shows that 13.1% of the respondents completely agree, 30.3% agree, 25.3% disagree, 14.1% disagree completely, while 17.2% were undecided. Results of this item are inconsistent with the results obtained in Table IV. 2. 2. where the majority of subjects expressed their disagreement with hookah bars being associated with a particular style. This inconsistency exemplifies some drawbacks of this type of a survey; however, such responses indicate that certain members of the hookah subculture may not be easily recognizable outside hookah bars.

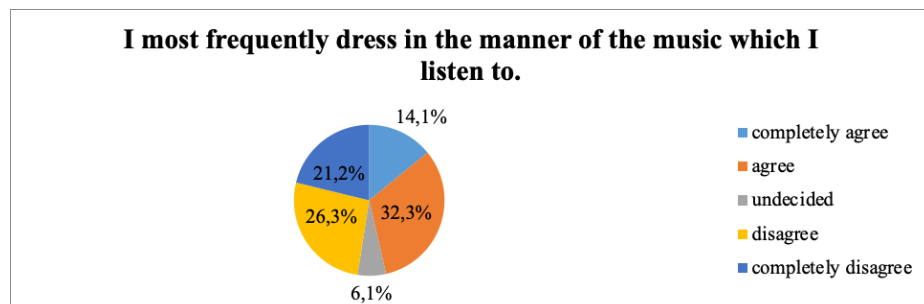


Table IV. 2. 4.

The item above relates to the previous item in the questionnaire and in this part, 32.3% replied that they agree, 26.3% that they disagree, 21.2% that they completely disagree, 14.1% that they completely agree and 6.1% were undecided. This indicates that sometimes, in everyday practice, it may be very difficult to discern which person prefers/listens to a particular music style on the basis of their clothing.

IV. 3. Music

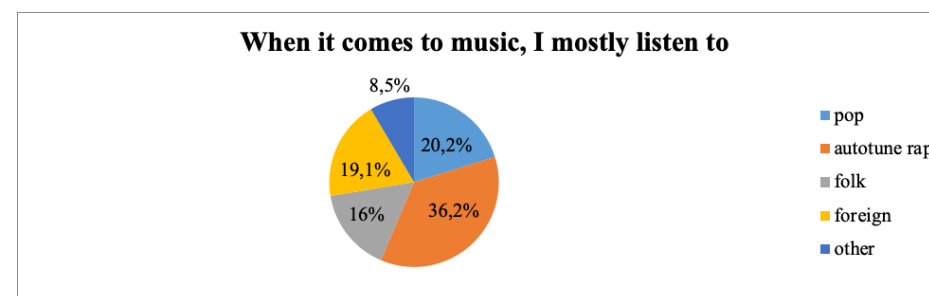


Table IV. 3. 1.

The majority expressed their liking for the auto-tune music trends, 20.2% for pop music, 19.1% for music outside the Bosnian language sphere, 16% for folk music, and the rest prefer either all of the mentioned or some other music genre. There is a satisfactory agreement with the idea of how music contributes to hookah bars' popularity since this survey indicates a clear-cut bound between the young listeners of auto-tune (Buba, Jala, etc.) in Bosnia and local bars which serve shishas. Evidently, certain subcultural trends such as hookah are entwined with fashion and music tastes which mark their popularity in the current day and age. The previously mentioned connection is endorsed with the results of the next item.

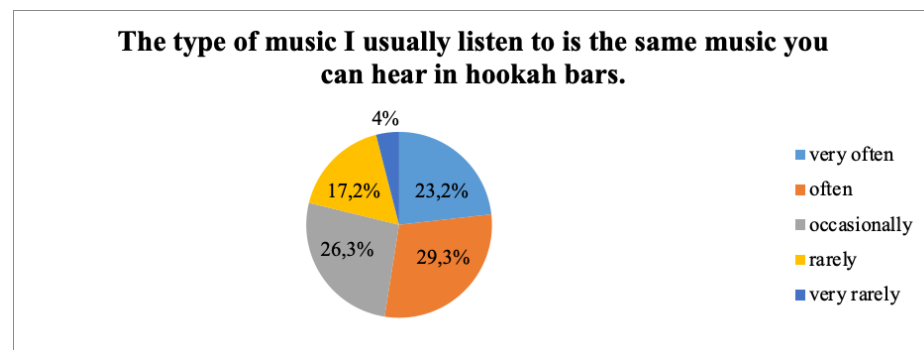


Table. IV. 3. 2.

29.3% participants said that music is often the same, 23.2% said very often, 26.3% said occasionally, 17.2% said rarely, 4% said very rarely. Taking into consideration the popularity of auto-tune rapping, the connection between hookah bars and the rising interest in auto-tune becomes obvious. Furthermore, if results from Table IV. 3. 1. are taken into consideration, it follows that the type of music hookah goers listen to in private life is not necessarily the same as the one played in hookah bars. Nevertheless, this does not jeopardize their membership in the hookah subculture.

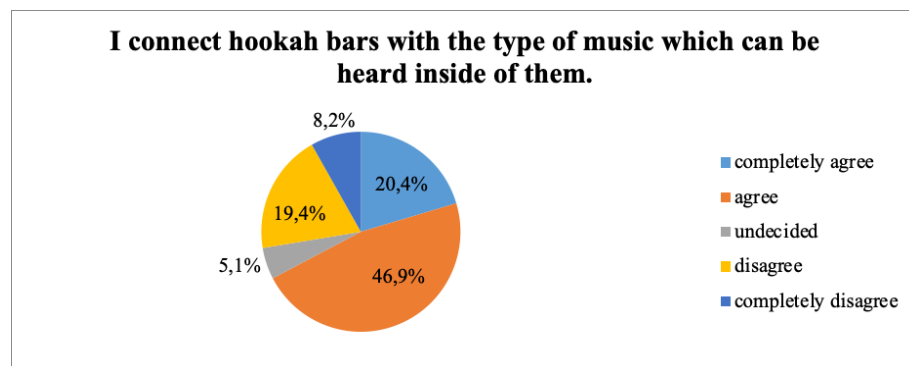


Table. IV. 3. 3.

A bit more than two-thirds of the participants expressed their agreement (67.3%), while 19.4% and 8.2% expressed their disagreement and complete

disagreement, while 5.1% remained undecided. Such results offer compelling evidence that music, for example auto-tune, is tied closely with shisha bars and that hookah subculture does have recognizable music tastes.

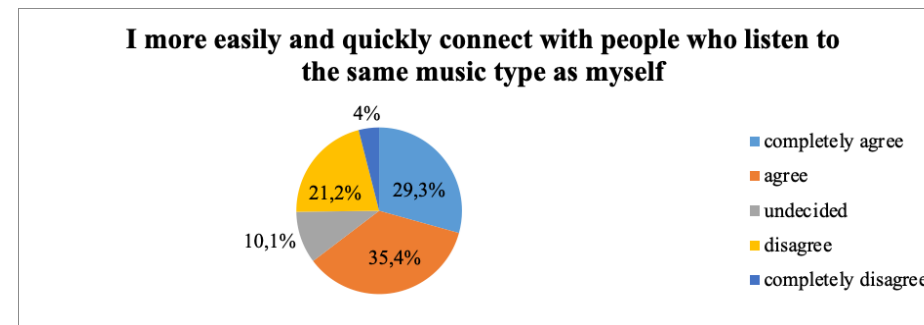


Table IV. 3. 4.

When asked about bonding along the lines of music tastes, the majority of 35.4% said that they agree about bonding more easily with people who listen to the same music type, 29.3% completely agree, 21.2% disagree, 10.1% undecided, while very few participants 4% disagree completely. These results support the notion that people who enjoy certain types of music styles easily connect with others of the same view, and this moreover indicates that certain subcultural groups more freely 'flock together' if their taste in music is similar/identical. The most striking resemblance is the tripartite link which exists between the hookah subculture, fashion and musical tastes which formulate a rising popularity between the Bosnian youth and contemporary trends.

IV. 4. Identity & Belonging

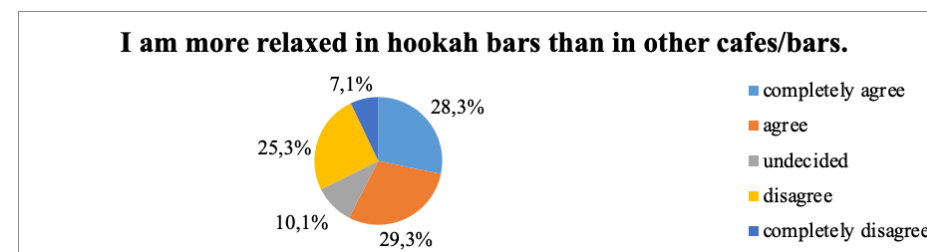


Table IV. 4. 1.

As visible from the chart above, the response rate to the statement above is the following: 29.3% said that they agree, 28.3% replied that they completely agree, 25.3% disagree, 10.1% are undecided and 7.1% completely disagree. As a very subjective statement, this result further explains that the definite majority of respondents opted for the positive replies in which they praise shisha bars as environments where they feel more at ease.

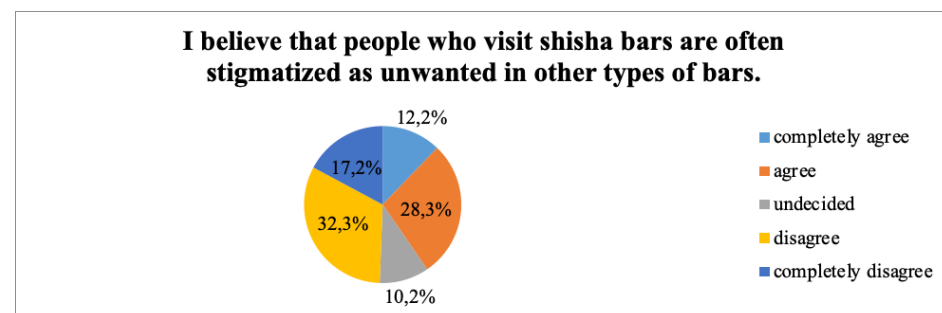


Table IV. 4. 2.

The responses to the statement indicated that 32.3% of the respondents disagree with the statement, 28.3% agree, 17.2% completely disagree, 12.1% completely agree, while 10.1% are undecided. Although the results differ only slightly, it should be noted that the majority still disagree with this statement and that persons frequenting hookah bars are not stigmatised as was the case with some subculture over the world, e.g. teddy boys in UK. It should be taken into consideration that the results numerically do not differ vividly.

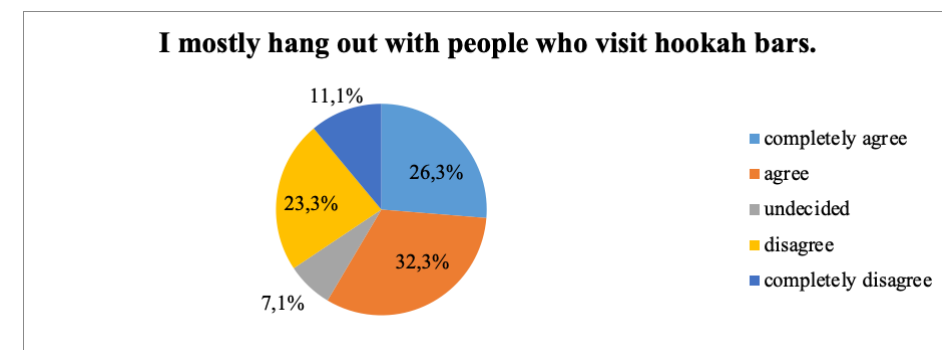


Table IV. 4. 3.

In response to the statement above, 32.3% said that they agree, 26.3% that they completely agree, 23.2% that they disagree, 11.1% that they completely disagree, 7.1% were left undecided. This perpetuates an important element because the majority of the answers indicate that the examinees meet with people who are in one way or another clients of various hookah bars, further establishing the notion of the popularity among the Bosnian youth, but also of the identity, a collective identity especially.

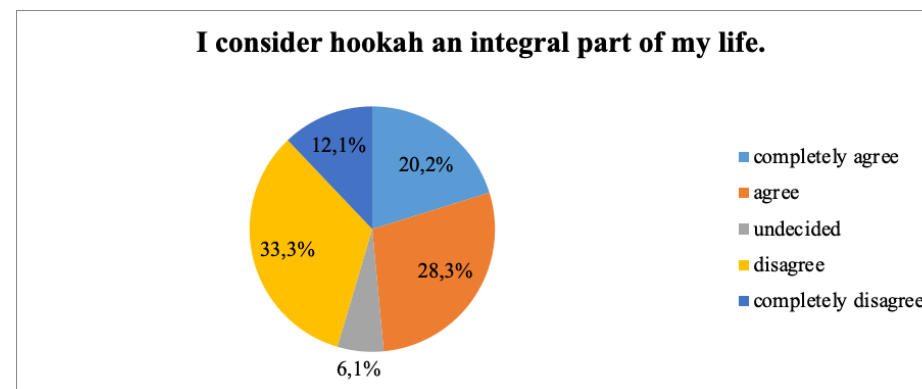


Table IV. 4. 4.

The survey question from Table IV. 4. 4. presented an interesting contrast where 33.3% said they disagree, 28.3% agree, 20.2% agree completely, 12.1% disagree completely and 6.1% were undecided. The ratio between the two opposing views is nearly identical which indicates that smoking hookahs or going to hookah bars can, but may not necessarily, be the integral part of the mainly young people's subculture in B&H. Such results indicate that the examinees are not necessarily 'immersed' within the hookah subcultural trend utterly, albeit the subcultural trend remains highly prominent on a general scale.

Conclusion

This paper presented the idea of a new rising subcultural trend realized in the form of hookahs. It should be noted that particular shortcomings always exist in descriptive researches. In this regard, descriptive research was not suitable for finding out the manner in which hookahs are able to

influence industry or rather if hookah bars are the new, emerging, industry. Nonetheless, in our paper we discovered the following: the age group, sex, residence, and monthly income of our participants, but also the style of dressing which correlates to the hookah subculture, musical preferences and the issue of identity-belonging within the subcultural context. We discovered that sub-subcultural elements realized through dressing and music can also be integrated within the overall sphere of the hookah subculture. In other words, the hookah subculture consists of additional sub-subcultural taxonomies, such as elegant, casual and sport-like attires, as well as auto-tune rapping songs. This paper showed that people who visit hookah bars or generally associate themselves with the hookah subculture are not stigmatized or unwanted in other types of locales, even though certain members of any subculture may be perceived thus by a larger community. Further research could be developed in terms of hookah as a new subculture, especially in regards to how subcultures affect industry as a whole. In order to explore relations between industry and hookah subculture, interviewing hookah-goers could also be useful because such a research would grant better insight into the subjective ideas of the hookah clientele. Moreover, even non-hookah goers could be interviewed in order to gather more diverse opinions in regards to one topic. Individual responses could be analyzed in order to see if there are any logical fallacies and/or inconsistencies when a particular issue is presented from various sides and viewpoints. By granting more space for the examinees to openly express and describe their opinions in detail, future research could find logical inconsistencies and resolve any setbacks in discovering what a subculture is or is not, within the perception of wider audience. The survey was done on the basis of male-female sex division, but future surveys of similar type may encompass more diverse responses in terms of the examinees' sex. This paper showed that even though hookah may be a new rising trend, it is not exclusive or reserved solely for one gender group, but rather that it remains open for various members. Although we discovered that not all members of the hookah bar clientele perceive themselves as fully immersed into the hookah subculture, it is safe to conclude that hookah can be observed as a new subcultural trend, encompassing different sub-subcultural elements, or at least as a rising subculture in the twenty-first century Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, as the very title implies, hookah can be classified as a phenomenon heading towards a new, prominent subcultural trend, albeit there will always be some inconsistencies as explored in the previous segments of this paper. Hookahs may or may not be an exclusive part of the

Bosnian youth and their lifestyle; however they still remain a fashionable part of the community.

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BRIEF REPORT: PREVENTING LATE-LIFE DEPRESSION IN LOW – AND MIDDLE – INCOME COUNTRIES (LMICS)

Mirsad Serdarević

Abstract: As the number of older adults in low- and middle- income (LMIC) countries is expected to grow substantially over the next several decades, it is important to develop programs for the prevention of major depression in later life. These programs should be flexible enough to be adjusted to the needs of poorly resourced LMICs. The current report provides an overview of a “depression in later life” (DIL) study in Goa, India, as a promising and effective mental health prevention program, with the potential for implementation in other LMICs. DIL study uses unspecialized physicians and lay health counselors (LHCs) to deliver both scalable psychological intervention and low-intensity intervention, consistent with Institute of Medicine’s (IOM, 1994) indicated prevention approach. DIL intervention led to reduced incidence of Major Depressive Disorder in DIL-randomized participants and as such it is important in meeting the 2016-2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages.”

Keywords: Depression, Psychogeriatrics, Developing country, Primary care, Geriatrics

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Introduction

Globally, depression is the most common mental health disorder. According to the Global Burden of Disease (GDS) study (GDS, 2015), there are currently 322 million people around the world living with depression. Nearly one third of individuals living with depression live in Southeast Asia. India has the highest rate of depressive disorders in Southeast Asia, with over 56 million reported cases, or 4.5% of India’s total population. Reynolds et al. (2018) examines strategies for the prevention of depression in older adults, also referred to as “depression in later life” or DIL, among older adults living in Goa, India. In this way, DIL serves as an example of what the Institute of Medicine (IOM, 1994) termed an “indicated prevention.” Indicated prevention focuses on patients with subsyndromal or mild symptoms of depression who are thereby at risk of for transitioning to a major clinical depression. It is a form of early intervention, or treatment and management of mild symptoms, with a goal of reducing symptoms, improving quality of life, and preventing onset of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

DIL Feasibility Study

Reynolds et al.’s study (2018) consisted of assessing the impact of two interventions, Problem Solving Therapy for Primary Care (PST – PC) and Brief Behavioral Treatment for Insomnia (BBTI), on preventing both incident and recurrent episodes of MDD later in life. In addition to these interventions, participants also received two additional components: education in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and chronic disease self-management, and were provided with case worker assistance to navigate social and economic resources. Given the dearth of human resources for mental health in India and lack of specialized personnel a key feature of the DIL intervention is that it is delivered by non-specialist physicians and lay health counselors (LHCs) in a non-health care or primary care setting. Combination of PST-PC and BBTI were delivered over 5-8 sessions, each approximately 30 minutes in length, by non-specialist physicians and four LHCs. It is argued that behavioral activation is intertwined through all four components and as such it integrates them into one whole (Reynolds et al., 2018). It is important to acknowledge the substantial body of work in western mental health and clinical literature relating to low - intensity preventative and treatment programmes and stepped – care paradigms (e.g., Williams, &

Martinez, 2008; Williams et al., 2013) which informed the DIL study.

Four (4) LHCs were trained on site by an on-site psychologist and via tele-conference call by a geropsychologist at the University of Pittsburgh over the course of 4 weeks in workshops on problem solving therapy and brief behavioral therapy for insomnia, and they each treated two pilot subjects to ensure adherence to protocol (C. Reynolds, personal communication, August 13, 2018). In addition, each LHC had booster training sessions at 7 months and at 10 months, to encourage practice and learning within the framework of behavioral activation.

The DIL intervention included a sample size of 21 participants in DIL's formative pilot study and enrolled 181 participants into a randomized indicated prevention trial. Participants were aged 60 years or older and met criteria for subsyndromal symptoms of depression and anxiety as indicated by a score of 4 or greater on the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ).

The study participants ranged in age from 60 to 85 with an average age of 69.64. While it was difficult to capture specific Socioeconomic Status (SES) demographic characteristics of participants, it was noted that most of the participants had very limited formal education and many were illiterate. During the formative phase of the DIL intervention, in order to better engage participants with limited or no literacy, pictorial flip charts, with large images for elders to relate to and understand, were introduced (Dias et al., 2017). Examples of illustrative teaching tools included figures such as "Upward Spiral," "Mood Rating Scale," and Early Warning Signs of Diabetes" (Reynolds et al. 2018).

The study used both Global Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) and the Hindi version of Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), both of which were validated for international use and used in previous trials in Goa (i.e., Singla et al., 2014; Smit et al., 2006). The GHQ-12 assesses for anxiety and depression, where scores of 4 or greater indicate presence of anxiety and depression. DIL participants' baseline mean score of 5.3 on GHQ-12 was statistically significantly reduced, 6 to 8 weeks later, to 3.3 score on the postintervention GHQ-12 ($p < .05$) (Reynolds et al., 2018). No significant changes occurred in the MMSE scores.

Does DIL Work?

Overall, the DIL Feasibility Study resulted in high levels of retention, with participants qualitatively endorsing sessions as "enjoyable" (Reynolds, et al., 2018). Phase II of the DIL study demonstrated acceptable recruitment feasibility with fewer than 20% of 181 participants refusing randomization. The Pilot Feasibility Study found that DIL intervention is successful. Further, Phase II of DIL showed that there has been reduced incidence of MDD episode in DIL-randomized participants relative to care as usual (CAU). DIL prevented onset of MDD episodes to a greater extent than did care as usual (CAU).

DIL is a novel approach to depression prevention in a low-resource country. It is a novel approach in a sense that it is the first implementation of a depression *indicated prevention* strategy by LHCs in LMIC countries with older adults. While the components of the intervention are not novel in and of themselves, they were modified to meet unique needs and the context of Goa, India.

The DIL was comprised of the following three components:

- The main theoretical framework was provided by Problem-Solving Therapy (PST)
- Participants were provided with help in navigating available resources through social casework.
- Participants were provided with education on self-management of common medical illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and painful osteoarthritis (Dias et al., 2017).

Over the course of one year participants were provided with 6 to 7 hours of face to face time with the LHC who used Problem-Solving Therapy (PST) consisting of the following key components: identifying the problem; noting down a realistic achievable goal; searching for possible solutions; probing through the pros and cons of each solution; identifying a preferred solution(s); run with it (action plan); evaluating the outcome (Dias et al., 2017). To help with concerns on finances, food and personal care participants were provided with social casework which provided them with information on social resources for senior citizens by the Government of Goa.

Finally, to address the most commonly reported source of anxiety, the bur-

den of chronic disease, participants were provided with education on and self-management of most common chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and painful osteoporosis. This education was delivered by the lay health counselors who were provided with training on the topic. Specifically, the LHCs were trained to educate participants on the nature of these diseases and basic non pharmaceutical self-management (Dias et al., 2017). In addition to the above listed components of the study, the LHCs provided participants with basic sleep hygiene information and educated them on monitoring their wake and sleep patterns, strategies from Brief Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (BBTI) shown to reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms and to improve the quality of sleep.

Conclusions

Key aspects of DIL's translational impact include:

- A novel approach to the prevention of and intervention in mental health disorders in LMICs.
- The utilization of LHCs in primary care and non-healthcare settings as a prevention strategy.
- The use of an integrated approach encompassing education, and brief behavioral and problem-solving treatments.

It is anticipated (Reynolds, et al., 2018) that the DIL study will translate to the prevention of common mental health disorders in later life in LMICs. This will benefit many LMIC countries with limited resources and with professional staff shortages, as trained LHCs can provide basic educational and brief behavioral interventions, as well as serve as problem-solving facilitators for patients' financial and social needs. The DIL study demonstrated that depression is preventable in older at-risk adults in LMICs. Another implication for policy is evidence that lay health counsellors can effectively and safely deliver a simple behavioral activation grounded in problem solving therapy to prevent major depression in older adults living with mild, subsyndromal symptoms.

The evidence from the DIL study suggests that policy responses should direct resources to the following:

- The development of indicated prevention strategies.
- The development of lay helper LHC network as a cost-effective, community-based, culturally - informed and scalable approach for health interventions (e.g., Patel et al., 2010).
- Building the workforce capability and skills of the lay health counsellor LHC workforce.
- Health system strategy reform to develop an agile and capable workforce that integrates the formal (specialist) and informal (e.g. LHC) sectors.

In sum, DIL is likely to have implications for the prevention of depression in older adults in other low- and middle - income (LMIC) countries. The DIL model is expected to be scalable, at affordable cost, in LMICs. The prevention of major depression in later life is especially important in LMICs because the total number of older adults is expected to grow substantially in the next several decades.

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BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS AS PREDICTORS OF MINDFULNESS: A STUDY ON A BOSNIAN SAMPLE

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Abstract: The goal of present study was to examine the relationship between mindfulness and Big five personality traits on Bosnian sample. We used the following instruments: Sociodemographic scale, Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and The Big Five Inventory. According to the results, there is a moderate and inverse correlation between mindfulness and Neuroticism, and small to moderate positive correlations with other Big five personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Extraversion). The results of multiple regression analysis showed that Big five personality traits explain the significant proportion of the variance for the criterion variable mindfulness and that the significant predictors for mindfulness were Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Openness. More research is needed to explore this multi-faceted nature of both Big five personality traits and mindfulness.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness

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Introduction

Since the early 2000s, research on mindfulness has been expanding rapidly. Mindfulness can be defined as the degree of awareness that is achieved by purposefully paying attention to the present moment, without judging it (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). The main aspects of mindfulness, awareness and nonjudgmental acceptance of one's moment-to-moment experience, are regarded as potentially effective antidotes against common forms of psychological distress—rumination, anxiety, worry, fear, anger, and so on—many of which involve the maladaptive tendencies to avoid, suppress, or over-engage with one's distressing thoughts and emotions (Hayes & Feldman, 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Numerous studies have shown the positive effects of increased mindfulness on life-satisfaction, vitality, self-esteem, empathy, optimism, integrity, or positive affect – and its contribution to reducing the difficulties with emotional dysregulation, depression, neuroticism, rumination, social anxiety, and wandering thoughts (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Dekeyser, Raes, Leijssen, Leysen, & Dewulf, 2008; Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011; Rasmussen & Pidgeon, 2011; Thompson & Waltz, 2007).

Many types of research also examine how personality traits can be related to mindfulness. One of the most empirically researched models of personality in this field is the Big five model which consists of five personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to experience. Neurotic individuals are prone to anxiety, depression and irritation (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). Individuals who score high on Neuroticism are insecure and prone to mood swings, whereas emotionally stable individuals are calmer, more relaxed and more stable (Larsen & Buss, 2008). Individuals high on Extraversion are sociable, open to others, assertive and usually have high levels of energy (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). On the other hand, there are individuals who are introverted and they are usually shy, quiet and withdrawn. Agreeableness means that individual is cooperative, pleasant and friendly. Low scorers on Agreeableness are unkind, often rude, and sometimes even cruel (Larsen & Buss, 2008). Conscientious individuals are characterized by tidiness, responsibility and reliability. They are also goal-oriented, task-oriented, as well as reliable and punctual (Larsen & Buss, 2008). High scorers on Openness are original, curious, have a variety of interests and a refined taste in art and beauty (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). They are also creative, imaginative, and since they have a wide array of interests, they love to explore the unknown.

Giluk (2009) performed a meta-analysis where he found that mindfulness is positively correlated with Conscientiousness and inversely related to Neuroticism. West (2008) made research on adolescents, where she found that the strongest correlations where mindfulness inversely correlated to Neuroticism and between mindfulness and Openness. Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney (2006) observed positive correlation between mindfulness and Openness, and inverse relationship between Neuroticism and mindfulness.

The relationship between these constructs has not been the subject of empirical research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, therefore the goal of the present study is to examine such relationship on the Bosnian sample. Since past research has shown that some personality traits like Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Openness are in correlation with mindfulness (Giluk, 2009; West, 2008; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006) our prediction is that we will also have similar results on our sample.

Method

Participants and Design

Our sample consisted of 441 participants from the Bosnian general population (213 men and 228 women), from twelve cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The age range of participants was from 18 to 65 years, and the average age was $M = 39.9$ ($SD = 13.33$).

Instruments

The sociodemographic *scale* was developed by the authors of this research and it consisted from a several questions about the gender and age of participants.

Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) was developed by Baer, Smith, Lykins, et al. (2008). FFMQ measures five components of mindfulness: observing (“I notice the aromas of things”), describing (“I am good at finding words to describe my feelings”), acting with awareness (“I find myself doing things without paying attention”), nonjudging of inner experience (“I think some of my emotions are bad and or inappropriate and I should not feel them”), and nonreactivity to inner experience (“I perceive

my feelings and emotions without having to react to them”). The participants answered 39 (questions) items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very rarely or never true) to 5 (very often or always true). Alpha coefficients for Bosnian version of FFMQ that we have used in this study are ranging from .68 to .84. (Hasanbegović-Anić, Alispahić, Tuce, & Čolić, 2016).

The Big five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999) which is based on the Big five model, was used to assess personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience. BFI consists of 44 items and uses a five-point scale of agreement. Alpha coefficients in this study range from .75 to .82.

Procedure

For the purpose of data collection, a snowball technique was used. The technique is based on the initial selection of a narrow circle of people who spread the sample themselves, referring the researcher to persons who could also be examined. During the data collection, ethical principles and standards related to psychological research were met. The participation in the research was defined on a voluntary basis, and the data collected in the research were used exclusively for scientific research purposes. The survey was anonymous, and participants had the option to refuse to participate in the survey if they wished, for no apparent reason. Participants, together with the questionnaires, were given a clear instruction with the stated purpose of the research, and the completed questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes.

Results

The distribution of results on all measured variables varies significantly from normal to mild asymmetry (Table 1). However, given that the descriptive statistical parameters of all the variables were tested on a large sample of participants, the established values on the above measures could be explained by the size of the sample. Namely, according to Field (2009), small standard errors are typical for large samples, which result in significant values on normality and symmetry measures, even in the case of very small deviations. Accordingly, when it comes to large sample participants (200 or more), the basic recommendation is the visual inspection of the

distribution form and the value of the symmetricity and flattening index instead of testing their significance (Field, 2009). In accordance with the above recommendation, in the next step, we analyzed the graphic representations of the QQ plot, which established that the deviations from the average values are not so significant. Accordingly, all variables were introduced in the form of a gross result in further analysis.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics for Big five personality traits and mindfulness*

Scale	N	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	K-S Z ^a
Mindfulness	428	129.63	14.77	.03	-.04	.05**
Neuroticism	434	25.57	6.32	.43	.20	.08**
Extraversion	435	37.09	6.92	-.47	-.11	.06**
Agreeableness	435	43.41	5.11	-1.01	1.24	.11**
Conscientiousness	435	41.76	5.80	-.84	.64	.11**
Openness	426	37.73	6.18	-.36	.14	.07*

^aOne-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test; ** Significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results of the correlation analysis between Big five personality traits and mindfulness are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Correlations between Big five personality traits and mindfulness*

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Neuroticism	-	-.34**	-.43**	-.41**	-.36**	-.41**
2. Extraversion		-	.30**	.21**	.43**	.23**
3. Agreeableness			-	.62**	.34**	.21**
4. Conscientiousness				-	.46**	.40**
5. Openness					-	.41**
6. Mindfulness						-

** Significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results of the correlation analysis indicate that the intercorrelations between mindfulness and all Big five personality traits are statistically significant. There is a moderate and inverse correlation between mindfulness and Neuroticism ($r = -.41$; $p < .01$), moderate and positive with Openness ($r = .41$; $p < .01$) and Conscientiousness ($r = .40$; $p < .01$), and small and positive with Agreeableness ($r = .27$; $p < .01$) and Extraversion ($r = .23$; $p < .01$). Since intercorrelations between predictor variables are significant, we have tested multicollinearity. The acceptable values of the VIF test ($VIF \leq 2$) were determined, indicating that the data is suitable for the implementation of regression analysis (Field, 2009).

In determining the significance of the predictors for mindfulness, we conducted multiple regression analysis. The predictor variables were the Big five personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness), and the criterion variable was the total result on mindfulness scale. The main results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Results of the multiple regression analyses with mindfulness as criterion variable*

Predictors	r	Beta (β) ^a
Neuroticism	-.41**	-.25**
Extraversion	.23**	.02
Agreeableness	.21**	.06
Conscientiousness	.40**	.22**
Openness	.41**	.22**
R=.523		
R ² =.273		
F=30.68		

^a Standardized Coefficient; ** Significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Big five personality traits explain 27,3% of the variance for the criterion variable mindfulness ($R^2=.273$). The significant predictors for mindfulness are Neuroticism ($\beta=-.25$, $p<.01$), Conscientiousness ($\beta=.22$, $p<.01$), and Openness ($\beta=.22$, $p<.01$). These results suggest that individuals who scored higher on Neuroticism have lower results on mindfulness, and individuals with higher results on Conscientiousness and Openness also have higher results on mindfulness.

Discussion

The goal of this research was to examine the relationship between mindfulness and Big five personality traits. According to the results, there is moderate and inverse correlation between mindfulness and Neuroticism, and small to moderate positive correlations with other Big five personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Extraversion).

Results of multiple regression analysis showed that Big five personality traits explain a significant proportion of the variance for the criterion variable mindfulness. The significant predictors for mindfulness were Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Openness. Our results are generally in accordance with previous research (Giluk, 2009; West, 2008; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). The significant correlation between Neuroticism and mindfulness can be explained with the interpretation that individuals low on Neuroticism are more anxious and therefore more oriented on the future and not on "here and now". Since FFMQ measures five components of mindfulness: observing, describing, acting with awareness, nonjudging of inner experience and nonreactivity to inner experience, many of these components could be related to these Big five personality traits. For example, emotional stability includes aspects related to the control of the tension and the ability to maintain control over own behavior. A high score on this dimension of personality is achieved by individuals who are less anxious, sensitive, impulsive and impatient, and generally less irritable (Barbaranelli et al., 2003). Neuroticism is also a general tendency to experience negative emotions such as sadness, fear, agitation, anger, guilt, etc. The tendency to experience such emotions is a general vulnerability and disrupts adaptation. Such people react irrationally, they have weak control of impulses, and have less capacity to overcome stressful situations (McCrae and Costa, 1992; Knežević et al., 2004). They also

have a tendency to use more non efficient strategies for coping (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Conscientiousness is also a significant predictor of mindfulness. This could be explained by the idea that mindfulness is conscious and intentional awareness, not just passive or habitual (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). Conscientiousness implies that the person acts with awareness and within the Big five model it is conceptualized as the ability of self-control in the sense of disciplined aspirations to goals and strict adherence to own principles. It is bursting with the processes of planning, organization, performance of duties and obligations. Conscientious people are strong-willed, goal-oriented, scrupulous, accurate and reliable. Also, high Conscientiousness is often associated with academic and professional success and more successful behavioral regulation (Knežević et al., 2004). Experience of Openness implies aesthetic sensuality, intellectual curiosity, preference of diversity, the need for change and independence of thought. Such persons are open minded towards inner experiences and curious towards the outside, and more intensively they perceive both positive and negative emotions (Knežević et al., 2004). The relation between mindfulness and Openness could be explained with the idea that both are connected with curiosity, attention and receptivity. Individuals who are more open to new experiences are more willing to try new strategies and explore the inner world (Giluk, 2009).

Conclusion

The results of this research confirm previous findings suggesting that Big five personality traits are related to mindfulness. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that Big five personality traits explain 27% proportion of the variance for the criterion variable mindfulness and the significant predictors were Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Openness. This study was the preliminary research about the correlation between Big five personality traits and mindfulness in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so we hope that it will be only the beginning of empirical research about this topic. We also hope that these results will provide inspiration for more extensive future research about mindfulness and correlated constructs.

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EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF METACOGNITION AND SOCIAL COGNITION IN ALCOHOL USE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

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Abstract: Since harmful alcohol consumption among university students still presents a significant problem, our team of researchers has conducted this study to add and contribute to the current research findings regarding this social issue. The study, conducted at universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), included 200 students aged 18 to 65. The research used a quasi-experimental design, employing an assessable study technique to evaluate data and generalize findings from the sample of the target population. Furthermore, quantitative research was used to determine the correlation between the variables. The correlation of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET and MCQ-30 subscales was found according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. As predicted by our hypothesis, the investigation of the link between alcohol use, metacognition, and social cognition showed that alcohol drinkers had lower social cognition than non-alcohol ones. Moreover, according to the results, alcohol consumption is linked to impairments in social cognition and metacognition.

Keywords: *Alcohol, Alcohol Use, Metacognition, Social Cognition, Students, Theory of Mind, University*

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Introduction

Across the world, people have been drinking alcohol for at least 13,000 years (BBC, 2018). Egyptians consumed wine ever since 4000 BC, and by 2700 BC Babylonians have enjoyed drinking beer so much that they introduced adoring a goddess to oversee their beer consumption into their religious practices (Mark, 2017). Drinking alcohol, the most commonly consumed psychotropic substance, is common at social gatherings in many areas of the world (WHO, 2010).

Alcohol consumption, which has shown a rising trend in recent years, especially in developing countries, can have a strong effect on one's mood and mental state. Alcohol is an extensively consumed substance among youth within the U.S. (CDC, 2015). Countless issues in young people have been attributed to alcohol use including the causing of major injuries, increased suicide and homicide rates, risks of sexual and physical abuse, abnormal brain development, impaired judgment, educational, social, and legal problems (e.g., effecting school dropout behavior and juvenile delinquency) (Kaminer & Winters, 2011; NIAAA, 2015). Additionally, an early onset of alcohol use is related to unintentional injuries, truancy, unprotected sex, driving under the influence of alcohol, traffic crashes, as well as to dependence on various substances harmful to health, and subsequent drug use in late adolescence and young adulthood years. (Bradshaw et al., 2013; Corte & Szalacha, 2010; Komro et al., 2010). Additionally, underage alcohol intake is accountable for 4,400 deaths annually, including suicides (CDC, 2013).

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is best described by consuming a large amount of alcohol regardless of the negative consequences in the individual (Ron & Barak, 2016). Levola et al. (2014) stated that social impairment is among the most hazardous features of AUD. Approximately 240 million people throughout the world are affected by alcohol consumption (Gowing et al., 2014). Heavy drinking among university students persists to be a public health hazard for universities and colleges (Johnston et al., 2011). Alcohol use has been reported to affect university students' mental health in which, it features an increase of depressive symptoms that are accompanied by drinking to cope (Bravo et al., 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2011), suicide attempts, self-harm behaviours (Peltzer et al., 2016; Toprak et al., 2011) in addition to aggressive behaviours (Ali, et al., 2013).

Metacognition relates to a psychological process that hypothetically plays a major role in how well people comprehend and respond to the social and psychological problems caused by psychiatric disorders (Lysaker et al., 2013a). Essentially, metacognition is a cognitive process or knowledge involved in reviewing, controlling and evaluating cognition (Sadeghi, 2011).

Social cognition is assessed through the use of social perception, judgment measures, recognition and stimulation of appropriate elements of emotional regulation, including memory (Holdnack et al., 2011; Kandalaft et al., 2012).

Alcohol-related defects have been identified in the cross-modal integration of empathetic skills, decoding of effective states, social cognitive data, and the theory of mind (Thoma et al., 2013). Maurage et al. (2009) reported widespread impairment in difficulties of understanding facial expressions and emotional decoding, as well as body postures that ranged across emotional valences in heavy alcohol consumers. In addition, excessive alcohol drinkers showed an elevated level of alexithymia, an emotional processing deficiency characterised by difficulty in expressing, identifying, and distinguishing emotions (Stasiewicz et al., 2012).

Bosco et al. (2013) argue that brain injury caused by alcohol abuse could lead to mental impairment. *Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test* (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001) has been used to evaluate the theory of mind and has been shown to be influenced by demographic variables that contain cultural distinctions (Provost et al., 2014) and verbal intelligence quotients (Peterson & Miller, 2012). ToM is stated to be a multi-dimensional structure with both cognitive and emotional components. (Sebastian et al., 2013; Shamay-Tsoory & Shamay-Tsoory et al., 2010).

This research can help us gain an insight into how people's different backgrounds affect their dealing with or assessing their alcohol use. Moreover, we have conducted it to gain a more accurate and deeper understanding of the executive cognitive function, its relationship with alcohol, and to raise awareness regarding this issue. The results of this study will contribute to an inadequately chartered area of psychology, raise awareness about it and develop our understanding of the topic. Finally, the intention of the research is to broaden the investigation of metacognition and alcohol consumption, especially in youth and university students.

Materials and Methods

This study has a quasi-experimental design. This type of design is either descriptive or experimental. The descriptive method has been used in this survey by employing five scientific scales; Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test, Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test, Socio-demographic Questionnaire, Michigan Alcohol Screening Test, and Metacognition Questionnaire. An assessable investigation method was used in order to quantify data and generalize findings from a sample of the targeted populace. Finally, quantitative research was undertaken for this study to determine the correlation among the variables.

Participants

This research took place at two university campuses, Near East University and the American University of Cyprus. The study was conducted with university students, the sample consisting of 200 undergraduate, graduate, and Ph.D. students aged 18 to 65. The research has been conducted in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to local citizens, Turkish and international ethnicities. The original or translated versions of instruments were used in the study.

Instruments

Socio-demographic Questionnaire

Socio-demographics questionnaires show nothing more than some general characteristics of the participants. We use them when we want to know more about the background and history of the participants, such as their age, gender, education level, occupation, income, and location.

Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT)

AUDIT is a 10 item monitoring tool established by World Health Organization (WHO) to evaluate alcohol use, drinking habits, and alcohol-induced problems. AUDIT has been used on a wide range of racial and ethnic groups. It is suited to be used in primary care (health care) settings. Since alcohol consumption is linked to a high rate of mortality and morbidity in the United States, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force advises clinicians to screen all adults and give short counseling treatments

to those who are at risk (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST)

The Michigan Alcohol Screening Test was developed by Selzer (1971) in the United States of America and it originally consisted of 25 questions. The MAST is a very popular alcoholism detection questionnaire that evaluates selected adverse medical and psychosocial consequences of excessive drinking. Two additional types of the MAST test were created later; the 10-item Brief MAST (B-mast: Pokorny et al., 1972) and the 13-item Short MAST (Smast: Seltzer et al., 1975).

Metacognition Questionnaire (MCQ-30)

Wells & Cartwright-Hatton (2004) advanced a 30-item version of the MCQ; known as MCQ-30. As the other MCQ items have been employed, The MCQ-30 items are assessed using a 4 pointed ordered-category scale ranging from 1 (do not agree) to 4 (agree very much). There are 5 subscales of the test; 1-positive beliefs about worry, 2- negative beliefs about thoughts concerning uncontrollability and danger, 3- cognitive confidence, 4-negative beliefs concerning the consequences of not controlling thoughts, and 5- cognitive self-consciousness.

Reading the Mind in the Eyes

The “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” test is a complex yet advanced test, particularly important in the field of social cognition. It was created in 2001 by Baron-Cohen S, Wheelwright S, Hill J, Raste Y, and Plumb I. One of the downgrades of alcohol dependence is emotional impairment, including evaluating the emotional facial expressions of others. For this study to obtain a relatively accurate evaluation “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” test was used to detect perception of emotions in alcohol dependence. This test consists of 36 images of male and female eyes in various emotional states. Participants are asked to select the emotional state that best characterizes the eyes in each image from a list of four options.

Data Analysis

This research used several tests and methods for the analysis of the collected data. First, we performed a Pearson correlation to explore the relationship amongst clinical variables. Following this, various descriptive and frequency tests were used. The Mann-Whitney U test was employed to compare differences between two independent groups, whereas The Kruskal Wallis was conducted to compare two or more independent samples of equal or different sample sizes. Finally, the Regression Analysis has been performed, allowing us to analyse the relationship among two or more interest variables. The statistical significance criterion (p) was set at 0.05 and all analyses were conducted using commercially accessible statistical analysis software. The collected data were entered into and analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). (IBM Corp. Armonk. NY. SPSS Statistics 21.01).

	Number(n)	Percentage(%)
Gender		
Female	84	42.0
Male	116	58.0
Marital status		
Married	33	16.6
Not married in a relationship	57	28.6
Not married not in a relationship	109	54.8
Country		
TRNC	86	43.0
Turkish	107	53.5
Other	7	3.5
Level of Education		
University	148	74.0
Masters	36	18.0
PHD	16	8.0
Profession		
Freelancer	31	25.8
Regular Job	89	74.2
Financial Status		
Bad	16	8.0
Moderate	137	68.5
Good	47	23.5
Place you live		
Not town center	44	22.1
Town center	155	77.9
Habitudes		
None	44	22.0
Cigarettes	12	6.0
Alcohol	55	27.5
Cigarettes & Alcohol	89	44.5
Psychiatric treatment		
None	175	87.5
Antidepressants	14	7.0
Psychotherapies	3	1.5
Combination Therapies	8	4.0
Psychiatric treatment before		
None	172	86.0
Antidepressants	3	1.5
Anxiolytics	1	0.5
Antipsychotics	2	1.0
Psychotherapies	11	5.5
Combination Therapies	11	5.5

Results

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 1.

The distribution of the participants according to socio-demographic characteristics was examined with a frequency table. 84 (42.0%) female students and 116 (58.0%) male students were included in this study. 33 (16.6%) of the participants were married, 57 (28.6%) were not married and in a relationship, 109 (54.8%) were not married and not in a relationship. In the research 86 (43.0%) were TRNC citizens, 107 (53.5%) were Turkish citizens and 7 (3.5%) were citizens of other countries. When the education level variable was examined, 148 (74.0%) participants were at the undergraduate level, 36 (18.0%) participants were at the master level, and 16 (8.0%) participants were at the Ph.D. level. 31 (25.8%) of these participants worked in a freelance job and 89 (74.2%) in a regular job. When examining where they lived it was determined that 44 participants (22.1%) did not live in the city center whereas 155 (77.9%) did. 44 (22.0%) participants didn't have any habit, 12 (6.0%) were smoking, 55 (27.5%) were consuming alcohol, 89 (44.5%) were both smoking and consuming alcohol. When the psychiatric treatments of the participants were examined, there were 175 (87.5%) participants who did not receive any treatment. 14 participants (7.0%) were using antidepressants, 3 participants were (1.5%) receiving psychotherapy, and 8 of them were (4.0%) receiving combined treatment. When the previous psychiatric treatments were examined, 172 (86.0%) participants did not receive any treatment, 3 were (1.5%) using antidepressants, 1 was (0.5%) using anxiolytic, 2 were (1.0%) using antipsychotics, 11 were (5.5%) receiving psychotherapy, and 11 participants were receiving combination treatment (5.5%). When the age variable was examined, the standard deviation of the participants in the 18-56 age range has been identified as 26.07 ± 7.17 .

Comparison of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET & MCQ-30 Sub-scales According to the Gender of the Participants

The Mann Whitney U analysis is employed to compare AUDIT, MAST, Read the Mind in the Eyes Test, and MCQ-30 sub-scales according to the gender of the participants. Male participants had a higher AUDIT rate than female participants, and a significant difference was found between the

gender variable and AUDIT ($p < 0.05$).

Comparison of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET & MCQ-30 Sub-scales According to the Occupations of the Participants

The Mann Whitney U analysis is once again used to compare AUDIT, MAST, Read the Mind in the Eyes Test, and MCQ-30 sub-scales according to the occupations of the participants. The level of MAST was found to be higher in participants who *worked in an irregular job* compared to those who worked in a regular job. Furthermore, a noticeable difference between the occupation variable and MAST can be seen. ($p < 0.05$).

Correlation of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET & MCQ-30 Sub-scales According to the Marital Status of the Participants

Kruskal Wallis analysis was used to compare AUDIT, MAST, R-MET, and MCQ-30 sub-scales according to the marital status of the participants. AUDIT and MAST levels were found to be higher in *not married in a relationship* participants than the other participants and in marital status variable a significant difference was found between AUDIT and MAST ($p < 0.05$).

Correlation of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET & MCQ-30 Sub-scales According to the Educational Background of the Participants

Kruskal Wallis analysis was used to compare AUDIT, MAST, R-MET, and MCQ-30 sub-scales according to the educational background of the participants. MAST scores of *undergraduate* participants were higher than those of other participants and a significant difference was found between the education level variable and MAST ($p < 0.05$).

Correlation of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET & MCQ-30 Sub-scales According to the Income Level of the Participants

Kruskal Wallis analysis was used to compare AUDIT, MAST, R-MET, and MCQ-30 sub-scales according to the *financial status* of the participants. Participants with good income were found to have higher levels of *cognitive self-consciousness* (MCQ-CSC) from the MCQ-30 sub-scale than the other participants, and a significant difference was found between *financial status* and *cognitive self-consciousness* (MCQ-CSC) ($p < 0.05$).

Correlation of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET & MCQ-30 Sub-scales According to the Habitudes of the Participants

	Habitudes	N	Mean Rank	X ²	df	p
AUDIT	None	44	52,17	58.89	3	.000**
	Cigarettes	12	47,67			
	Alcohol	55	110,81			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	125,15			
MAST	None	44	77,62	18.05	3	.000**
	Cigarettes	12	61,92			
	Alcohol	55	104,83			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	114,34			
R-MET	None	44	115,33	11.20	3	.010*
	Cigarettes	12	91,88			
	Alcohol	55	85,45			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	87,37			
Beliefs about uncontrollability & danger	None	44	88,67	2.75	3	.431
	Cigarettes	11	95,45			
	Alcohol	54	107,62			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	100,43			
Cognitive Confidence	None	44	102,28	3.74	3	.291
	Cigarettes	12	74,29			
	Alcohol	54	108,14			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	97,40			
Beliefs about need to control thoughts	None	44	80,52	12.84	3	.005*
	Cigarettes	11	87,50			
	Alcohol	54	120,67			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	97,52			
Cognitive Self-Consciousness	None	43	74,10	10.68	3	.014*
	Cigarettes	12	109,71			
	Alcohol	53	107,03			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	104,80			
Positive beliefs about worry	None	44	77.85	10.61	3	.014*
	Cigarettes	11	96.00			
	Alcohol	54	115.44			
	Cigarettes & alcohol	89	100.97			

Kruskal Wallis analysis was used to compare AUDIT, MAST, R-MET, and MCQ-30 subscales based on health-harmful habits of the participants. Participants who consumed both cigarettes and alcohol were found to have higher AUDIT and MAST levels compared to the others. Those without any health-harmful habits were found to have higher scores in R-MET. Individuals who consumed only alcohol were demonstrating higher levels of *beliefs about the need to control thoughts* (MCQ-NC) and *cognitive self-consciousness* (MCQ-CSC) than the other participants. A significant difference was found between AUDIT, MAST, *beliefs about the need to control thoughts* (MCQ-NC), and *cognitive self-consciousness* (MCQ-CSC) subscales, and the health-harmful habits.

Comparison of AUDIT, MAST, R-MET & MCQ-30 Sub-scales According to Where the Participants Live

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p	ΔR ²	Adjusted R ²	F
MAST	1,442	,104	,735	13,837	,000*	,720	,500	28,59
RMET	,070	,073	,050	,952	,343			
Beliefs about uncontrollability & danger	,016	,104	,009	,151	,880			
Cognitive Confidence	-,096	,074	-,073	-1,296	,197			
Beliefs about need to control thoughts	-,033	,088	-,023	-,373	,709			
Cognitive Self-Consciousness	,203	,102	,112	1,987	,048*			
Positive beliefs about worry	-,006	,071	-,005	-,083	,934			

As it can be seen, there are 7 predictors which are MAST, Read the Mind in the Eyes Test, and Metacognition's 5 subscales; *beliefs about uncontrollability & danger*, *cognitive confidence*, *need to control thoughts*, *cognitive self-consciousness*, and *positive beliefs about worry*. Two of them have been statistically predicted. Regression analysis was used to test if MAST, R-MET, and MCQ-30 subscales significantly predict the alcohol identification test in students. MAST's levels significantly predicted Alcohol Use Identification Test, $\beta=1.44$, $t=13.837$, $p<0.5$. The results of regression also showed that the Metacognition subscale; *cognitive self-consciousness* significantly predicted the Alcohol Use Identification Test, $\beta=.20$, $t=1.98$, $p<0.5$.

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P	ΔR^2	Adjusted R^2	F
RMET	-,055	,036	-,077	-1,527	,128	,740	,531	32 24
Beliefs about uncontrollability & danger	-,009	,051	-,010	-,169	,866			
Cognitive Confidence	,100	,036	,148	2,770	,006*			
Beliefs about need to control thoughts	,053	,043	,074	1,221	,223			
Cognitive Self-Consciousness	-,091	,050	-,099	-1,804	,073			
Positive beliefs about worry	,015	,035	,023	,434	,665			
AUDIT	,352	,025	,690	13,837	,000*			

We can see that there are 7 predictors which are AUDIT, Read the Mind in the Eyes Test, MCQ-30 subscales; *beliefs about uncontrollability & danger*, *cognitive confidence*, *need to control thoughts*, *cognitive self-consciousness*, and *positive beliefs about worry*; two of them have been statistically predicted. AUDIT's levels significantly predicted the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test, $\beta = .35$, $t = 13,837$, $p < 0.5$. The results of regression also showed that the metacognition subscale; *cognitive confidence* significantly predicted the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test, $\beta = .10$, $t = 2,77$, $p < 0.5$.

Discussion

Alcoholism is considered to be an important factor for disorders and loss of function, especially in developing countries (WHO, 2009 Rehm J et al., 2009). Having this habit particularly in youth and middle-aged individuals increases the likelihood of alcohol consumption to be destructive. Unfortunately, approximately 2.5 million people in the world die every year due to alcoholism (WHO, 2011). Nevertheless, the number of alcohol dependence is increasing despite all the actions taken. The frequency of alcohol consumption in Turkey's young population according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health was found to be 42.6%. In a study conducted with Ege University Science Faculty students, it was determined that 14% of the students had abused alcohol (Yiğit & Khorshid, 2006). High schools in Northern Cyprus studies show that smoking, alcohol, and psychoactive substance use trial age has decreased to 11 and that the age at

which students start using alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy, and heroin increased compared to 1996 (Eş A., 2015). Alcohol use rates were higher than other psychoactive substances when compared to previous high school studies in TRNC (Çakıcı M. & Çakıcı E. 2000). In a study, lifetime alcohol use rate in adults was found to be 72.1%. In a lifetime using alcohol for at least once was 82.1.34% (Çakıcı M. et al., 2003) in the 2003 study and 77.1.35% (Çakıcı M. et al., 2014) in the 2008 study. When these data are compared, it is seen that alcohol is used at high rates in TRNC.

When examining the data on alcohol in 2012 by Turkey Statistical Institute Health Survey, the table "Distribution of individuals' alcohol use by gender, age, location based on their marital status", the ratio of total alcohol use in Turkey is considered to be 10.4% (Akvardar, 2005). When the distribution according to gender variable is taken into consideration, the alcohol use rate is 17.2% male and 3.8% female. In the current research, AUDIT levels of male participants were found to be higher than female participants, and a significant difference was found among AUDIT and the gender variable.

In Mental Health Resources (MHR), university students with a low resistance to distress have a higher rate of alcohol addiction, alcohol abuse, and drug addiction. In another similar research, it was discovered that low distress tolerance was linked directly to alcohol intake, and inability to tolerate anxiety, sensitivity, and restlessness was associated with alcohol intake and mediator variables (Howell et al., 2010). Finally, Hearld et al. (2014) proved that the prevalence of panic disorder and alcohol use disorder was very high. Similarly, Márquez et al. have shown that alcohol abuse is a significant tool to decrease the seriousness and frequency of panic symptoms in patients with panic disorders (2003). In a study conducted by Beşirli (2007) with 288 students, only 1.3% of the students were drinking to get rid of their problems. Cox et al., (1998) demonstrated that one of the most important reasons for alcohol use was avoiding a negative result, coping with problems, and not being able to withstand distress. Buckner et al., (2006) found that alcohol abuse or addiction in adolescents stems from coping with problems and this behavior leads to depression. Studies researching the impacts of alcohol are prevalent in literature reviews and the causes and impacts of alcohol use have been discussed from the past to the present (Akvardar, 2005). In the current research, the effects of alcohol use on metacognition and social cognition were investigated.

The Self-Regulatory Theory developed by Wells and Matthews (1994) suggests that the metacognition factors play a huge role in causing persistent psychological disorders. One of the main reasons for using alcohol is to reduce feeling unwanted emotions (Kuntsche et al., 2006). People with low performance in using their metacognitive abilities may experience sadness, distress, anxiety and, etc. and their emotions are intense (Cartwright Hatton and Wells, 1997). As a result, the option of using alcohol to deal with issues created by the failure to use metacognition characteristics is one of the subjects lately investigated. There are many self-regulation theory based studies investigating a relationship between alcohol and metacognition. One of these studies was conducted by Spada and Wells (2005). They suggested that there may be a relationship between metacognition and alcohol use because metacognition factors may affect emotion and alcohol use directly or indirectly. There has not been much research on metacognitive skills (Anthonysamy et al., 2020). This study was the first to analyze the impacts of university students on metacognition and alcohol use in TRNC.

Alcohol consuming participants' MCQ-30 subscale *need to control thoughts* and *cognitive self-consciousness* levels were found to be the highest. In addition, it was found that *cognitive awareness*, which is the MCQ subscale, predicts alcohol use when the metacognition is thought to affect alcohol use in terms of AUDIT and MAST risk factors. The significant difference between metacognition and alcohol intake obtained in these research findings is that alcohol use affects metacognition in individuals and has similar characteristics with some research results (Spada et al, 2007; Ipek et al, 2015). The *cognitive confidence* (MCQ-CC) was found to be higher in students who did not reside in the city center whereas *cognitive self-consciousness* (MCQ-CSC) was higher in students that resided in the city. Also, it was found that participants without any health-harmful habits had high scores in R-MET. AUDIT and MAST levels were found to be higher than any variable. Majorly the numbers of participants that both consume and smoke cigarettes at the same time are found to be higher in MAST and AUDIT.

Various studies on cognitive functions include social cognition (Frith & Frith, 2007). In the study titled "Assessment of Social Cognitive Skills of Adolescents Diagnosed with Internet Addiction"; it was found that the internet addict participants had lower social cognition than the control

group (Saatçioğlu, 2016).

The relationship between alcohol use, metacognition, and social cognition was examined. Just like stated in the hypothesis, the social cognition of alcohol users was lower than the other participants. In the current study, the social cognition of individuals without alcohol and smoking habitudes was found to be the highest. To measure social cognition, R-MET was applied to the participants and there was a correlation between R-MET and alcohol intake. The results obtained are similar to the related literature review. This study aims to establish that students with different backgrounds have different metacognition and students with higher social cognition tend to consume less alcohol. According to the statistical findings, this study has reached its goal and supported the results with relevant research results in the literature.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Alcohol use disorders are one of the bio-psychosocial problems that have been encountered, which should be examined in every aspect. The rate of alcohol use among university students has been increasing day by day and has become a huge behavior risk. Risky alcohol consumption has become a huge public health problem affecting since it negatively affects the mental health of society individuals. The results of the research show that the impairment in social cognition and metacognition are related to alcohol use. The findings of this study support the literature of other studies. It was concluded that socio-demographic factors such as gender, age, and marital status, and income levels had an impact on alcohol intake.

The students who have high social cognition do not use alcohol and those who perform poorly in using their metacognitive abilities are exhibiting high alcohol consumption rates. When this research is examined, similar results are seen. The risk of alcohol use among the young population of university students is increasing, and there are not many studies investigating the underlying causes. Therefore, this study is intended to be a big contribution to the literature. It is hoped that future researches will give more evidence and insight in the relationship of alcohol consumption and cognitive impairment. It is extremely important to intervene by helping individuals with problematic alcohol intake behavior to timely prevent role cognitive impairments in that population.

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