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**SPACES IN ANDREI CODRESCU’S PROSE –  
BETWEEN REALITY AND IMAGINARY**

**PhD Thesis Abstract**

**PhD Coordinator:  
Prof. univ. dr. MIRCEA BRAGA**

**PhD Student:  
CRISTINA-MATILDA VĂNOAGĂ**

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**Key-words: Andrei Codrescu, spaces, imaginary, religious space, virtual space, photography, American conceptual metaphor, library.**

Returned in Romania during the first days of the fall of the communist regime in 1989, Andrei Codrescu brings in the country, in the period following the event, the literature he has created in the U.S.A. and which, in fact, debuted in Sibiu before his immigration. The poem published by the young Andrei Perlmutter in Romania under the names of Andrei Steiu and, later, Andrei Codrescu will grow in a different type of literature, returning in the native country of the author, in general through translations<sup>1</sup>. Inevitably, entering on the Romanian book market, the critical and literary interest for Andrei Codrescu's creation has grown, becoming subject to several critique works.

The present thesis, *Spaces in Andrei Codrescu's creation – between reality and imaginary*, tries to analyse and interpret the writer's creation in prose. Before presenting our work and its analytical intention, we propose a review of the most well known scientific analytical research works of Codrescu's creation, mentioning from the start that each of the following works is centred on the writer's identity in relation with his condition as immigrant.

Chronologically, a first work belongs to Damiana Bottaro, *Andrei Codrescu: An American Romanian or Romanian American writer*, and was published in 2005. At its origins, the volume is an MA dissertation to the University of Padua, approaching the problem of multiple autobiographies to Andrei Codrescu, starting from the moment of his expatriation together with his mother, first in Italy, in 1965, and later in the United States of America, in 1966. In her exegese, Damiana Bottaro considers necessary to present the originating space of the writer, Romania, to which she dedicates an entire chapter, familiarising the readers with the Romanian history and culture. Once established this reference space, Bottaro discusses the four autobiographies belonging to Andrei Codrescu, highlighting the existence of numerous contradictions from an autobiography to another and a high degree of fictionalisation. The space of the literary creation is considered a space of the exile, doubling the physical exile. Analysing the Romanian influence as well as the American influence on the creation, Damiana Bottaro reaches the conclusion that Andrei Codrescu is equally an American-Romanian writer and a Romanian-american writer.

In 2006, as an appendix to a PhD thesis, titled *Translating European identities into the American national narrative* and defended to the University of Maryland, Mihaela Moscaliuc

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<sup>1</sup> Until the present time, Andrei Codrescu signs only three volumes written in Romanian: the interview-book, with Robert Lazu, *Miracol și catastrofă*, the poetry volume *Instrumentul negru* and the poem-book written together with Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Submarinul tertat*.

brings into discussion the case of Andrei Codrescu, called in conclusions “A perfectly imperfect citizen of America that congregates transnational, hybrid, multicultural and multilingual identities that remain partially untranslatable yet fully engaged in the acts of translation and self-translation”<sup>2</sup>.

Andrei Codrescu is also a constant presence in the critical exegesis written by Rodica Grigore. We mention especially the volume *Lecturi în labirint*, published in 2007, where she analyses numerous characters from Andrei Codrescu’s novels and underlines the connection between Andrei Codrescu’s commentaries for National Public Radio, and his essays, short stories and novels.

2013 is the publishing year of another volume that situates Andrei Codrescu in the space of the physical and literary exile – *Exilul ca mod de existență. Andrei Codrescu în spațiul textual al dezrădăcinării*, belonging to Oana Strugaru, appealing to the postmodern theories of the exile and identity to decipher the personality of the writer returned to the Romanian culture after 1989.

Two of the most recent work centred on Andrei Codrescu also discuss the idea of exile. Anamaria Fălăuș makes a parallel analysis of the narration to Andrei Codrescu and Norman Manea, in the work published in 2014 under the title *Imagining home: Exilic Reconstructions in Norman Manea and Andrei Codrescu’s diasporic narratives*, highlighting especially two of Codrescu’s autobiographies, *An involuntary Genius in America’s shoes (and what happened afterwards)* and *Hole in the flag*, starting from the premise that “through a continuous re-writing of the self, the past and history, and also the present, Norman Manea and Andrei Codrescu re-create, re-define, re-position and re-root themselves in a constant renewal of subjectivities, their books re-shaping or re-inventing the position of the migrant figure projected onto a background of cultural effusions”<sup>3</sup>. In 2018, in *Străin în țară străină. Literatura română și granița identitară în proza Hertei Müller și a lui Andrei Codrescu*, Andrei Codrescu is presented by Radu Pavel Gheo as representative for the exiled writers, in a contrastive analysis with Herta Müller’s case. Radu Pavel Gheo manages to underline the Romanian aspects in Codrescu’s work, and also the multiple identities he uses.

As observed in our brief review of the literary critique dedicated to Andrei Codrescu, the majority of the exegeses are based mainly on two major spaces: the Romanian space and the

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<sup>2</sup> Mihaela Moscaliuc, *Translating European identities into the American national narrative*, p. 237, available on <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/3717/umi-umd-3536.pdf;jsessionid=DDC804E573FE8B2F0872C68A92DD7605?sequence=1>, retrieved 10.02.2015.

<sup>3</sup> Anamaria Fălăuș, *Imagining home: Exilic reconstructions in Norman Manea and Andrei Codrescu’s diasporic narratives*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2014, p. vii..

American space, discussing, with few exceptions, mostly the autobiographical works written by Andrei Codrescu. Without a doubt, we cannot deny their importance in any analytical interpretation of the spaces from Andrei Codrescu's creation. On the other hand, the condition of the immigrant/exiled and the multiple identities are also approached in the present thesis as components of other spaces we identified in the prose, through an applied study on the narrative text, as detailed as follows.

A premise of our work refers to the relation between reality and imaginary. We meet a synthesis of this relation to Lucian Boia, who considers that there are two types of consecrated relation between reality and imaginary: "the resistance to 'reality' and the dialogue with the 'reality'"<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, we observed in Andrei Codrescu's prose the intertwining of these two relations. The resistance to "reality" in the analysed prose is in accordance to what Lucian Boia calls "a reverse of the significations" of the evidences. The dialogue consists of the fictional disguise of some real episodes and people or in their direct presentation in the essays. Many times, we will observe to Andrei Codrescu a dialogue with the "reality" on an autobiographical line or through the characters that populate the spaces of his prose.

A second premise in our analytical approach is the continuity of the spaces we identified, starting from essays, short stories and sometimes from Andrei Codrescu's commentaries for National Public Radio, and than from the novels. Each space identified by us presents such continuity and we tried to respect it in our analysis.

A last premise is the insertion of the autobiographical elements, directly or disguised, and the confession of the process in interviews, especially in the book-interview *Miracol și catastrofă*, used as guide in our interpretation. In our opinion, this volume cannot be omitted from any type of critical approach of Andrei Codrescu's prose and we believe that the confessional opening of the writer, who is usually playfully-cryptical and ironic in front of the literary interpretations and critique is owed to the fact that the book was published a little after the return of the writer in the Romanian space and to the desire to permit the access of the readers to the world of the western ideas and experiences after a long period of cultural censorship and hermetism.

The spaces we discuss in our work are: the sacred space, the virtual space, the photo studio, the American space described in conceptual metaphors and the library. There is no unitary grid for the analysis of the spaces, each of them benefitting of its own analytical key, depending on its features. We consider as common feature of our analysis the interdisciplinary

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<sup>4</sup> Lucian Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului*, traducere din franceză de Tatiana Mochi, București, Editura Humanitas, 2006, p. 25: "rezistența la 'real' și dialogul cu 'realul'".



approach, using terminology and techniques belonging to religion, theories of virtual spaces, photographic art, architecture, film-making, linguistics etc.

As far as we know, the analysis of the sacred space and of the virtual space are novelty for the analysis of Andrei Codrescu's prose. Related to the American space, the novelty element is in our analysis the idea of the conceptual metaphors defining America and which are reversed by the writer. The analysis of the library beyond its architecture and its cultural significance, brings as novelty the analysis of recent novels, two of them untranslated in Romanian: *Whatever gets you through the night. A story of Sheherezade and the Arabian entertainments* and *Bibliodeath. My archives with life in footnotes*, an approach we consider as necessary, on one hand, for the illustration of the idea man-library and, on the other hand, in order to follow the manner in which Codrescu relates himself to library during time. The chapter dedicated to the photo studio also brings several unedited elements through the research on the writer's family from Alba Iulia, the highlighting of the importance of the space for the multiple identities, the use of a specialised software for the literary analysis, and the use of the techniques for the analyses of the photos in the analysis of the literary text, in a literary experiment, inspired by Andrei Codrescu's words in the essay *Against photography*: "I am a camera".

The content of the thesis is structured on five chapters, each corresponding to an analysed space: **Chapter 1: *The religious space***; **Chapter 2: *The virtual space***; **Chapter 3: *The photo studio***; **Chapter 4: *The American space – from "metaphors we live by" to "metaphors we don't live by"*** and **Chapter 5: *The library***.

*The religious space* is the first space analysed by us and we depict the fact that this space is presented by Andrei Codrescu outside the religious canons, as architecture and alive in its reflection in the characters that populate it and also in the elements of the religious discourse. A first proof for the lack of canons in this space is generated by the manner in which the writer perceives the appearance of the revelation, on two coordinates: Eros and Chaos, which are also the coordinates on which is structured Andrei Codrescu's entire creation. Related to the architectural and physical space of the revelation, many times accompanied by sexuality, we identified in Andrei Codrescu's prose spaces that are religiously consecrated, as the Monastery of the Ursulines and the Church, and also atypical space, as the bar, the virtual space and the underground territory, which we called "the land of the Devil".

The characters populating the religious space are as atypical as the manner in which the author perceives the appearance of revelation and are most of the time built nominally as ideal typology, and, in the same time, as reverse of the ideal typology in their features. We classified these characters on several categories, human and non-human, including: the chosen man, a

gallery of exclusively feminine portraits – Felicity Le Jeune, Andrea Isbik, Elisabeth Báthory, Ilona Harszy and Messiah – formed through the union of several feminine and masculine characters; the servant of God - Reverend Mullin, the guests of the Monastery St. Hildegard and the teachers of Countess și Bathory; the devil and the angels.

From the perspective of the religious discourse, we referred to the interpretation of the biblical commandments and to the conformation to them. We also highlighted the correspondence between the Hebrew letters from the Gal Gal Hamazal wheel in a TV show described in the novel *Messi@h* and the reaction of the people in the TV studio, the public of the fortune game. Also in the field of the Judeo-Christian religious discourse, we discussed the idea of Apocalypse and its fictional representation in *Messi@h*.

The last section of the first chapter is dedicated to the religious life in the American space, as discovered by Andrei Codrescu as traveller and described in the autobiographical volume *Road Scholar*, an occasion for the writer to present the multitude of religions on the territory of the USA, a phenomenon caused by the immigrants and also by the *new age* alternative therapies.

**Chapter 2: *The virtual space*** is concentrated on the effect of the virtual space on the writer Andrei Codrescu and on his creation. This chapter uses a series of studies and articles we developed as initial research on the theme. The analytical incipit is dedicated to a brief history of the terms ‘virtual’ and ‘virtuality’. We intended to show that, although not in the contemporary form and meaning, they existed since the oldest times. We also bring an explanation of the terminology to which we relate, underlining that the term ‘virtual’ includes not just the internet, but also the television.

The next step in our analysis is the relation between Andrei Codrescu and the virtual space, presented from two perspectives: firstly, as communication environment with other writers (Ruxandra Cesereanu and Robert Lazu) and literary text available for the online readers, and, secondly, observing the writer in relation with his readers on the social network, as well as Andrei Codrescu’s conception on the virtual space and on the impact of the internet on creation.

Television as virtuality is approached in our exegesis under the name the ‘miracles box’, as depicted from the novels *Messi@h* and *The Blood Countess*: the televangelisation, the pact of the viewer with the television in TV fortune games as Gal Gal Hamazal, and the influence of the television on the human mind, the invasion of the human life, which we considered to be an immersion of the virtuality in the human. The internet is also in our range of interest and we approach it in our analyse through two different types of informal history: a history of the

internet as perceived by Andrei Codrescu through his experience, and a history of the internet in a Dada approach, as presented in *The Posthuman Dada Guide*.

The last part of this chapter discuss the problem of the body in the virtual space, starting from theories presented by Lucia Simona Dinescu in *Corpul în imaginarul virtual (The body in the virtual imaginary)*, identified as fictional characters in Andrei Codrescu's prose: cyborgisation – the character Wakefield from the homonymous novel; the virtual avatar, and also the cyberfeminist avatar – Felicity in the novel *Messi@h*; the intellectual avatar as a reinterpretation of the classical motif of the twin, as personally experienced by the writer; and the theory of the purely mental connection in the virtual space, issued by Roy Ascott and identified in the novel *Messi@h*.

**Chapter 3: *The photo studio*** discusses mostly aspects from Andrei Codrescu's biography. Our interpretation starts from the essay *Against photography*, revealing a series of photo studios that influenced the development of the the child Andrei Perlmutter, later known as Andrei Codrescu. The most important studio is Baby Studio, belonging to the writer's mother, until their emigration. We show that this space was the most important influencer for the formation of the Self during the writer's childhood, generating the later identity multiplicity, and also for the relation with the Others.

Another photo studio we discuss in our research belongs to the Andrei Codrescu's uncle (from the mother's side), Iosef Steinberger, in Alba Iulia. Starting from here, we developed our research on the writer's relative from Alba Iulia, trying to find out as many data as possible. We identified a direct witness, a person close to the Steinberger family and obtained detailed data about the architectural space of the photo studio and also about the family members. We develop our research following the traces of Richard Drăghicescu, Andrei Codrescu's uncle, a former officer in the Romanian army, an imposing person in spite of the communist prosecution, who is mentioned in *Miracol și catastrofă* and *Hole in the flag*. We managed to gather data on the period before Richard Drăghicescu lived in Alba Iulia and his penal records from the period of Richard Drăghicescu's political detention. An important part of our research in the field led to the identification of the tomb belonging to Andrei Codrescu's grandfather, in the Jewish Cemetery from Alba Iulia, an emotional moment for the writer and his emigrated family, who no longer had any knowledge on the remains of their relatives.

Other sequences of the chapter titled ***The photo studio*** present the relation of the writer with the photographs, illustrated on two directions: the use of photos in Andrei Codrescu's books, as *Road Scholar* and *Ay, Cuba!*, and the text written by Andrei Codrescu for several photo volumes. We also discuss briefly the transformation of the text *Road Scholar* in movie, a

documentary that was successful. The third chapter of our thesis ends with a literary experiment, where we used elements from the analysis of the photo for the analysis of the literary text.

Another novelty element for this chapter is the use of software specialised in analysing individual texts and also corpora. The software *Tropes* is used in our research for the confirmation of our interpretation related to the relevance of the essay *Against photography* for the space of the photo studio.

*The American space – from “metaphors we live by” to “metaphors we don’t live by”* is the fourth chapter of our work and depicts the way Andrei Codrescu relates to the traditional metaphors characterising this space. Thus, we observed that each conceptual metaphor defining America can be found in its reversed meaning in the writer’s prose or illustrated in elements that lead to its practical deconstruction. In our opinion, the writer observes the difference of mentality between America’s founding metaphors and the contradictory reality that becomes more and more obvious to the American contemporary individual. The chapter debuts with terminological explanations related to conceptual metaphor and analyses the following conceptual metaphors: “America is a melting pot”; “America is a salad bowl” – occasioning the ideatic meeting with other creations related to the condition of the immigrant and exile to Andrei Codrescu; the American Dream – illustrated by two characters, Wakefield and Joszef Barat, two real spaces, Las Vegas and Hollywood, and a fictional space – Typical Town; America is “the land of all possibilities” – with Ivan Zamyatin from *Wakefield*, as representative character, and “America is a journey” – a metaphor interpreted by us through Andrei Codrescu’s travel literature and its relation with America’s “car god”.

**Chapter 5: *The library*** reviews some of the hypostases of this space in Andrei Codrescu’s prose, formally, as architectural space, and informally, through the metaphor man-library. We identify the importance of the spaces of the library type for Andrei Codrescu in the conversation with Robert Lazu, in *Miracol și catastrofă*, and in *Bibliodeath*, where we meet the idea of the disappearance of the library as deposit of information. We included in the category of man-library representative characters as Casanova, the teacher from the autobiographic novel *The poetry lesson* and Sheherezade, disguised in a library with nocturne hypnotic stories, able to save not just her life, but also the life of a possible long line of victims to the sultan’s revenge acts for the conjugal infidelity. Our analysis also presents another informal type of library, which we called “the ancestors’ library” and which represents the cumule of experiences transmitted from one generation to another, as understood by us from the novel *The poetry lesson*. A final sequence of this chapter presents the possible meanings of the library as space in the novel

*Casanova*: the library as exile/prison, the library as (erotic) memory, the library as education and evolution, the library as democratic space and the library as space of creation.

**The conclusions** of our thesis follow two directions: the functions of the imaginary in the representation of the spaces in Andrei Codrescu's prose, using a grid proposed by Jean-Jaques Wunenburger in *Imaginarul (The imaginary)*, and our own response to the question of including Andrei Codrescu in a singular national literature, Romanian or American, or primarily in one of these national literatures.

Related to the functions of the imaginary, we discuss the functions proposed by Jean-Jaques Wunenburger: the aesthetical-playful function, the cognitive function and the practical-institutive function<sup>5</sup>.

The aesthetical-playful function is differentiated on the coordinates of the play, entertainment and arts. Related to play, we consider that Andrei Codrescu's prose has, first of all, a therapeutical value through the game it establishes with the author's self, which we called the multiplicity of the writer's self, reflected in the autobiographical works. Secondly, it is a play with the reader, who, through an offered key of lecture, is attracted on the interpretative territory of the real elements disguised by fiction. Sometimes, the affirmations meant to "unlock" the text are multiple and different as meaning, in a hide-and-seek game with the reader, who is provoked to find the real key of the text.

Related to entertainment, approaching the virtual space of the television, Codrescu's prose manages to use "all four types of playful activities established by R. Callois: *mimesis*, *agon*, *ilinx*, and *alea*"<sup>6</sup>. The Gal Gal Hamazal game from the novel *Messi@h* and the narrative intrigue around it is an appropriate example for the first three types of playful activities. Thus, *mimesis* is achieved through the TV narration of the news connected to the disappearance of the TV show host. *Agon*, centred on competition, the fight without social violence, becomes materialised in the competition for the position of TV host, desired by many young women wanting to prove their qualities of new "sensual symbols" in the TV world. *Alea*, or the satisfaction of the winning desire, is represented by the TV fortune game that is intended for three different categories: the game participants, the public in the TV studio and the public in front of the TV sets, through the participative pact of the TV live shows. *Ilinx* combines dizziness, excess, possession and all forms of regression and expansion of the Self<sup>7</sup>; Jean-

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<sup>5</sup> Jean-Jaques Wunenburger, *Imaginarul*, traducere de Dorin Ciontescu-Samfireag, ediție îngrijită de Ionel Bușe, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 2009, pp. 45-56.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 47: "cele patru tipuri de activități ludice stabilite de R. Caillois: *mimesis*, *agon*, *ilinx*, *alea*" (our translation).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 48: "asociază amețeala, excesul, posesia, toate formele de regresivitate și dilatare a Eu-lui" (our translation).

Jaques Wunenburger considers that this function is rarely activated. Still, we find it to Andrei Codrescu in the novel *The blood countess*, an episode presented by us as immersion of the virtuality in the human, in the chapter *The Virtual space*, where we approached the issue of the TV effects on the human mind.

Arts are meant to structure the cultural universe, a dimension to which Andrei Codrescu fully contributes through the referentiality of his prose, and also through the aesthetic representation of the geographical spaces in his literary documented travels and in the travels through the spaces of the novels.

A second function of the imaginary, the cognitive function, can be explained as follows: “the imaginary provides techniques for the symbolic and analogic thinking (myth, symbol, metaphor and drawing) interfering in various degrees with the cognitive processes”<sup>8</sup>. We believe that, related to this function of the imaginary, we meet to Andrei Codrescu two ways of fulfilling it: the alternatives to the canonical interpretation of myths, symbols and metaphors – identified in the religious space, the virtual space and the American space, and the enrichment of the myths, symbols and metaphors using a special “drawing”: the photo produced by the photo camera and the photo produced by the eyes of the narrator, on the principle “I am a camera”.

A last function of the imaginary in our conclusion is the practical-institutive function, uses for the “endowment of the people with memory, providing them with stories synthesizing and rebuilding the past and justifying the present”<sup>9</sup>. In our opinion, Andrei Codrescu uses a type of imaginary with an institutive function that is alternative to the norms from the collective mentality, finding pleasure in deconstructing and presenting the vices of the norms, traditions, and biases, no matter the phenomena they found. This function is best reflected in the approach of the American social-political imaginary, concretised in the conceptual metaphors defining America, as presented in the fourth chapter of our thesis.

Jean-Jaques Wunenburger also identifies four specific myths in the imaginary of the American people: the inheritance from the Founding Fathers for the white colonists; the exile of the Europeans, who emancipate once reaching the American space through the access to a free space; the fusion of the community, based on equality between the members of a messianic nation, and the money culture. All these aspects are reversed in their presentation in Andrei Codrescu’s prose, because the writer proposes with subtlety a new analysis of the mythology generated by the American imaginary.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 51: “imaginele furnizează, așadar, tehnici de gândire simbolică și analogică (mit, simbol, metaforă, desen) ce interferează în grade diferite cu procesele cognitive” (our translation).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53: “înzestrarea cu memorie a oamenilor, furnizându-le acestora narațiuni care sintetizează și reconstruiesc trecutul justificând prezentul” (our translation).

A second direction of our conclusion is related to the inclusion of the writer Andrei Codrescu in a national literature. We present as follows the most well-known hypotheses and their arguments.

Thus, a first possibility of classification is that of writer belonging to the American literature, most of the times an American author with Romanian origins, usually also described together with his appurtenance to the Judaism. This classification takes in consideration the long period in which the writer was not present in the Romanian literary landscape, due to the cultural hermetism and prohibition during the communist regime in Romania before 1989. In the same time, Andrei Codrescu's literary affirmation is that of English language writer and one of the most appreciated American writers.

A second possibility of classification is as writer belonging to the Romanian literature, due to the origins of the writer and to his ardent desire to return to his native country even from the first hours of the events from December 1989, a travel described in the volume *Hole in the flag*, which was yet published in English. Other reasons for this classification are the volumes published first in Romanian, after 1989: the poetry book *Scrinul negru*, the interview-book *Miracol și catastrofă* and the poem volume written with Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Submarinul iertat*. The studies related to Andrei Codrescu's condition as emigrant in the American space are sometimes based on the Romanian aspects that are present in the autobiographical books of the writer and on the use of the Romanian spaces in the narration. Another argument was brought by the name of Andrei Codrescu's sons, Lucian and Tristan, inspired by the names Lucian Blaga and Tristan Tzara.

A third possibility is proposed by Damiana Bottaro and refers to an equal appurtenance of the writer to the Romanian literature and to the American literature.

Andrei Codrescu's opinion on his inclusion in one literature or another is expressed in various interviews. Thus, a first self-definition is met in an interview for Damiana Bottaro: "I am an American writer of Romanian-Jewish origin. I was once and am, occasionally, a Romanian writer (even in English), but my subjects now come from the American context. On the other hand, stripped of their contexts, are hopefully universal. I give license to anyone who wants to claim me, provided that they do so with affection"<sup>10</sup>. A second self-definition appears as response to a question we addressed to Andrei Codrescu for the literary magazine „Steaua” (Annex 1): "I consider Andrei Codrescu an American citizen who, as almost all Americans, has fed himself from various cultures (...) I hope that, by saying 'Andrei Codrescu', you mean the

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<sup>10</sup> Damiana Bottaro, *Interview to Andrei Codrescu*, în volumul *Andrei Codrescu: An American Romanian or Romanian American writer?*, p. 144.

creation. The man and the writer juxtapose, but they are more different than these simple nation expressions, ‘Romanian’, ‘American’ etc. – they are from Sibiu, Transylvanians, educated in the Habsburg manner, inhabitants of New York, California, Baltimore, New Orleans, Ozark and other places”<sup>11</sup>. Ioana Avădani, on the other hand, characterizes Andrei Codrescu as “a Transylvanian American” (Annex 2), also starting from the way in which she understood the relation between Andrei Codrescu and any geographical space.

We observed during the preliminary research of our thesis the repetitive existence of some specific geographical spaces in Andrei Codrescu’s novels: New Orleans, New York, Sibiu and, in general, the East-European space. We were tempted to define these spaces as obsessive metaphors. New Orleans and New York would have become predilect obsessive metaphors of the American space. Still, we preferred not to direct our analysis to the canons of the geographical spaces, considering as necessary to highlight a different type of spaces, which, in our opinion, present a universal valid theme and can relate socially and culturally beyond Romania and America: the religious space, the virtual space and the library. Even the space of the photo studio, so intimately connected in our vision with Andrei Codrescu’s becoming, is a space that generates a syntagm that can be applied to the universal postmodernism – the perception of the others as photos and the mental developing of the images by the viewer who is “a photographer with the eyes”.

We consider that an inclusion in one literature or another is limitative for the horizon of the thematic opening of Andrei Codrescu’s prose. Limiting the interpretation of the creation to the geographic spaces and the continuous reference to the condition of immigrant/exiled person, even if these are necessary approaches, we risk to lose a palette of themes and intentions coming from Andrei Codrescu and to reduce the literary text to a canonical classification.

The **annexes** of our work contain an interview with Andrei Codrescu on the theme of literary spaces, an interview with Ioana Avădani, translator in Romanian of Andrei Codrescu’s novel published in the last two decades to the publishing houses Polirom și Curtea Veche, and Richard Drăghicescu’s “penal record”, who is a character in *Hole in the flag* and has a special place in the autobiographical works of Andrei Codrescu.

Our bibliography belongs mostly to the English language critique, due to the characteristics of the spaces we identified and analysed in our thesis. We consulted well-known works from interdisciplinary domains that were necessary to our interpretations, as well as works from the last decade, in Romanian or English. After this process, we remark that the translations of important works related to religion and its relation with other sciences, the theories of the

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<sup>11</sup> Cristina Vănoagă Pop, *De la est la vest. O mie și una de jocuri dada și revelații cu Andrei Codrescu*, p. 58.



virtual space and the photographic art are completely inexistent on the Romanian book market. We also highlight the importance of virtual space for accessing works that are not of large use and can be identified with difficulty or cannot be found in the Romanian libraries. Thus, any research becomes difficult in these condition due to a difficult access to information, leading – possible in our case, too – to the impossibility to cover all the acceptations on a specific subject.

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