

## Spaces of Resonance and the Cultural Dialogue in Travelogues: A Case Study on Peter Hurley's *The Way of the Crosses*

Veronica-Alina BUCIUMAN, Éva SZÉKELY  
Faculty of Letters, University of Oradea, Romania

**Abstract:** *This paper applies German sociologist Hartmut Rosa's resonance theory to explore its possible epistemological benefits for the fields of cultural and literary studies. Focusing on Peter Hurley's *The Way of the Crosses*, which recounts an Irishman's pilgrimage in Romania, the study examines the axes of resonance and the adaptive transformations they bring about. By analysing how spaces of resonance are narrated, we aim to a better understanding of cultural dialogue and of the travel writing genre. In this travelogue, resonance spaces appear both as fictionalized and explicitly cited spaces (Solbach). The sociological, resonant perspective on the narrated space reveals that the subjective resonant experience of the traveller is difficult to convey to readers unless the narrator employs specific fictional techniques. Ultimately, the narrative construction of spaces of resonance supports the hypothesis that travel writing is a resonant experience, that contributes to the mechanisms of defining identity equally as any encounter with alterity, and that fosters cultural dialogue, even though the narrated experience may emerge as a reification of the authentic life depicted in the text.*

**Keywords:** *Spaces of resonance; adaptive transformation; cultural dialogue; travelogue; Peter Hurley; Hartmut Rosa;*

### Introduction

Travel has long been a powerful catalyst for cultural dialogue, offering unique opportunities for individuals to engage with diverse cultures. This immersion and interaction process broadens one's horizons and fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of different ways of life. Journaling and travel writing are essential tools in this transformative journey, allowing travellers to document their experiences, reflect on their encounters, and share their stories with a wider audience. Through writing, travellers capture the essence of their experiences, creating a resonant space where their personal narratives intersect with broader cultural themes.

This research paper delves into the intricate relationship between travel and the cultural dialogue in spaces of resonance, using Peter Hurley's travelogue *The Way of the Crosses* as case study. Published in 2012 in both English and Romanian, Hurley's travelogue narrates the journey of an Irish businessman through Romania, portraying the country as a space that generates social resonance. This study aims to analyse how Hurley's experiences in rural Romania align with the concept of resonance as defined by the German sociologist Hartmut Rosa.

We will explore resonance from cultural and literary perspectives, emphasizing the *axes of resonance* according to Hartmut Rosa and the dialogical aspects of resonant experiences. The chosen analytical framework is based on the premise that travel is particularly conducive to such resonant experiences (Rosa 362).<sup>1</sup> Cultural dialogue, understood as an exchange and transformative process, ideally functions similarly to the phenomenon of resonance, enhancing one's intrinsic set of values or inner vibration.

In physics and musicology, resonance occurs in three phases. Accordingly, from a cultural perspective, we can expect resonant interactions to shape human experiences through three phases: (1) the wondrous encounter (wave interaction), (2) the resonance itself, and (3) the transformation (amplification of the wave frequency) (Rosa 164-74). In the studied case, cultural dialogue as transformative resonant experience is exemplified by the traveller's decision to write a book about his journey in Romania. This act of writing confirms the transformative impact of the traveller's resonant experiences, showcasing how space shapes cultural interaction as resonant.

### **1. The Narratological Perspective on Travel Writing**

Travel writing, as described by Tim Youngs, consists of "predominantly factual, first-person prose accounts of travels undertaken by the author-narrator" (Youngs 3). This genre raises several inherently literary questions and considerations, particularly those related to power, knowledge, and identity arising from the formal elements of travel writing. Critical works in this field often focus on the subjective presence of the author(s) in knowledge-based texts, the reliability of narrative truth, the structural elements of narrative, and the rhetorical use of *facts*. Additionally, significant issues include the role of *identification* in reading, along with its social and political consequences, the representation of time etc. Also, Mary Baine Campbell notes that:

a text that generically proffers itself as 'true', as a representation of unaltered 'reality', makes a perfect test case for analytical work that tries to posit or explain the fundamental fictionality of all representation. (Campbell 263)

This offers the German comparatist, Ottmar Ette, ground to assert that "the travelogue is fundamentally this type of literary and scholarly writing, in which writing becomes perhaps the most conscious about its reference to space, its dynamics, and its need to move" (Ette 17).

The exploration of space in travel writing often involves references to real places, which are the main intentional acts of narration, and a memory-

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<sup>1</sup> For studies applying this theory to the literary studies also see Fuchs 2020.

based recounting of facts may hold the key to reading and interpreting travelogues. The discussion of resonant spaces in travelogues raises therefore questions about the mechanisms of fictionality. Narratologists have explored the distinction between fictional and non-fictional literature, fictional and dictional<sup>2</sup> literature, but the issue of narrative authority and its rhetorical construction of the journey-story leads to complex questions, turning clear genre classification almost impossible.

As representations of real spaces, travel narratives provide readers with access to culturally and socially pre-existing realities. However, through the narrative mode (description, account etc.), the narrator conducts a selection and combination process, rendering slices of reality from a subjective perspective. Thus, readers also gain insight into the intentionality of the narrating authority.

In analysing narrative selection modes, Andreas Solbach researches how individual spatial experiences in the Auschwitz concentration camps transform the space perception and memory through the narrating process. He uses the term "explicit spaces" to refer to referenced and represented spaces – those mentioned in the narration. In our case study, space includes also "cited spaces" – real topographies explicitly mentioned and described (Solbach 285-86). Similar to the citation process, the traveller-narrator slices and recomposes reality. The memory-based reconstruction of experiences is the first step in producing fictional texts. This approach differs from the cognitive narrative space of characters, as the narrator experiences the space without regard for existing typologies, rendering his own unique (non-pareil) space experience (Solbach 285-86).

The analysis of narrated spaces in travelogues benefits from this classification, as the notions of *explicit* and *cited* spaces consider both the narrator's and reader's perspectives, effectively representing the oscillation between fiction and fact in travelogues (Ette 31). Paul Ricoeur states, that "to understand a story is to understand both the language of 'doing something' and the cultural tradition from which proceeds the typology of plots". (Ricoeur 57) Therefore, narratological insights into the issue of space in travelogues should be combined with the cultural approach. In our case study, this combination aims to understand how the author-traveller's, and narrator's resonance experiences influence narrative selection and construction (Ricoeur 56; Nünning, 2009, 173-200; Nünning, 1995, 39).

Narratologically speaking, each travelogue presents visual models of understanding that unfold in their spatial-temporal dimensions, they are staged

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<sup>2</sup> Distinction made by Gerard Genette in *Fiction et diction* (1991) regarding the hybrid genres (autobiographical writing, diary, travel writing etc.) as fictional or non-fictional. Further such distinction is made by the German narratologist Otmar Ette, who proposes the concept of *frictional literature* for the hybrid genre of the travelogue (Ette 31).

models of experience based on the appropriation of perception modes of cultural elements, rather than on the elements themselves (Ette 19). These chrono-topological visual models of understanding are both subjective, due to perception, and objective, owing to the distance between the narrating and the narrated self or the time-space interval between the author's journey and the writing of the travelogue. The sociologist Hartmut Rosa refers to similar visual models when he writes:

We acquire and hoard their *potential*, seeking to make segments of world accessible so that *one day* they might speak to us. In practice, this is perhaps nowhere more clearly expressed than in the much-discussed and -analyzed passion for capturing sounds and images of "touching moments" – celebrations, trips, landscapes, encounters, life events, etc. – and preserving them *for later*. This is always connected with the hope that we will later be able to access the undepleted resonance potential of these moments – and we refuse to allow ourselves to be disabused of this notion despite the persistent, almost unvarying experience that these sounds and images no longer contain any such potential. (Rosa 290)

In other words, the author of a travelogue chooses the route and the places to which they draw the reader's attention. The narrated space evolves during reading as a mental map made up of individual spatial frames (A. Nünning, 1995, 38) that refer to the destinations chosen by the traveling author. The experience is later on filtered by the subjectivity of the narrating authority, who navigates a remembered and symbolically connoted space, rather than an empirically acknowledged place. This is also the difference between the so-called *explicit* and *cited spaces* (Solbach 285). Peter Hurley also states that he documented his experience by means of a notebook and a few photos.<sup>3</sup>

Spaces in travelogues can become resonant if they fulfil certain conditions: they are activated by an interaction and they amplify the frequency and vibration of the interacting elements. In this respect, *The Way of the Crosses* provides examples of *explicit cited resonant spaces* (Solbach 285-86). The encounter with the Romanian rural space enhances the traveller's vibrations and feelings, motivating him to publish a book about his experience as proof of his transformation. The travelogue can be decoded both as a documented journey functioning as a mediator of cultural knowledge, with a message for the real public, the Romanians, and as an autobiographical story of an Irishman trying to reconnect with his lost cultural heritage.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview conducted by Éva Székely, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2023.

The journey functions to some extent as a narrative device whereby the author's whole life may be brought into focus and it represents a stimulus to a new understanding of the traveller's life. Thus, the narrative becomes a record not just of a journey, but also of a metaphorical interior voyage. This is an autobiographical narrative template that has its origins in the Western tradition of spiritual autobiography beginning with Augustine's *Confessions* in the fourth century, yet it seems to have become more prominent in travel writing as a consequence of Romanticism (Thompson 114-15).

Considering that travel writing performs three different intentional acts: (1) reporting the world, (2) revealing the self, and (3) representing the other<sup>4</sup>, the threefold development of resonant experiences would be the following: the first step of the encounter translates into the interaction with and representation of the other; the revealing of the self can be seen as the peak of the vibration in the resonance; and the reporting of the world should be understood as the result of the transformative experience. All these elements create narrative fields or layers that, through their interaction, generate complex spaces of resonance or simultaneous vibration. Hartmut Rosa's theory distributes different social relations on the so-called *axes of resonance*. Thus, the space of resonance is to be understood as a geometrical plane defined by a vectorial axis. The problem with the term "axis" is that it suggests a linear distribution of social relations, whereas, as shown above, resonance requires an appropriate multidimensional space to occur.

## 2. Spaces of Resonance in travelogues

Resonance theory allows a relational definition of resonant spaces, as Hartmut Rosa sees resonance as solution against the highly accelerated rhythm of contemporary life, which he views as being the major disruptor of identity. While Rosa is concerned with what constitutes a good life and successful human relationships, he does not offer concrete solutions for conflictual situations. The slowing down of life's rhythm can be achieved through resonance because, in the moments preceding resonant vibration, similar *eigenfrequencies*<sup>5</sup> interfere until they reach the same resonant frequency.

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<sup>4</sup> Also see Thompson (2011).

<sup>5</sup> In Hartmut Rosa's theory of resonance, "eigenfrequencies" refer to the intrinsic frequencies or natural rhythms at which individuals or entities resonate with the world around them. These frequencies represent the unique ways in which a person or a social entity (such as a community or culture) experiences, perceives, and interacts with their environment and others. Rosa's concept of resonance involves a deep, responsive connection with the world, where individuals or groups are attuned to their surroundings in a meaningful and fulfilling way. Eigenfrequencies, therefore, are the specific patterns of resonance that align with an individual's or group's authentic self or identity. When one's actions and environment are in harmony with their eigenfrequencies, they experience a sense of resonance characterized by feelings of being alive, vibrant, and connected.

Rosa supports his thesis with laboratory experiments showing how empathic resonance is the first reaction when a person interacts with another individual expressing feelings. This empathic impulse is blocked or restricted as soon as the subject becomes aware of the differences and limitations of the other person. However, if the difference is not significant, resonance persists and transforms the subject. This transformation is possible through empathetic narratives that shift perspectives. Rosa refers to storytelling, as defined by Fritz Breithaupt in *Kulturen der Empathie*, as the process that creates the context for acceptance and adoption of another opinion (Rosa 183).<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, intersubjectivity produces cognition and transformation only if the resonant experience persists long enough to be expressed. Hartmut Rosa uses Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel character Werther, as an example to argue for empathetic resonance in fiction (Rosa 152).<sup>7</sup>

On a broader scale, the idea of slowing down the accelerated rhythm of life is also mentioned by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, known to Rosa. Gadamer speaks of overcoming contemporary life's haste through submergence into the aesthetic experience (Gadamer, *Kunst im Zeitalter der Technik*)<sup>8</sup>, and Rosa's examples from Goethe's characters should be understood in this context.

Approaching Peter Hurley's *The Way of the Crosses*, a contemporary travelogue interweaving memoir and identity narrative, we find that the report of the journey shows resonant experiences on all axes defined by Rosa's theory. Further philological questions regard the ways in which the narrative reveals its mechanisms in describing spaces of resonance as *axes of resonance*. According to Rosa's typology, social resonance can be traced on three levels of individual-society interactions, represented spatially: on the horizontal axis (individual to individual), on the vertical one (individual to a higher instance), and on the diagonal axis (individual to institutions).

Resonance denotes a mutually responsive relationship in which subjects not only can be touched but are also capable of touching, i.e., of attaining the world through one's action. Hence axes of resonance

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<sup>6</sup> "By *telling stories*, they establish the preconditions that allow the complex process of adopting other perspectives, thus engendering the intersubjective social phenomenon that Fritz Breithaupt calls 'narrative empathy' " (Breithaupt 39, quoted by Rosa, 111).

<sup>7</sup> "As poets have always known – just look at Goethe's *Werther* again from this perspective! – the state of being in love is initially distinguished by nothing so much as the intensification of the couple's sensitivity to resonance as mutually directed at each other" (Rosa, 108).

<sup>8</sup> Gadamer, H-G (1994): "Das Spannungsvolle kann dadurch bewältigt werden, wie wir in den Kontrasten und in den unlösbar scheinenden Aufgaben doch etwas vom Enthusiasmus des schöpferischen Geistes uns anweht" (Min. 38-42). In free translation: The tensions could be overcome, because we acknowledge the enthusiasm of the creative process amid contrast and unsolvable problems.

exist only where the world 'strikes a chord' in the subject and, vice versa, the subject is capable of 'striking a chord' in the world – or, in less flowery language: eliciting from the world an accommodating reaction or response. Subjects desire to generate and experience resonance in equal measure (Rosa 158).

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Resonant axes, however, can be said to exist only where a form of relationship that makes possible the recurrence or repetition of such experiences is established and stabilized between the subject and a segment of the world. It is along such axes of resonance that subjects are able to repeatedly affirm their resonant relationships (Rosa 172).

The working hypothesis is that the *explicit cited spaces* in the analysed travelogue trigger and sustain resonant experiences, mainly because the traveller undertakes his journey with the declared expectation of showing the Romanian public that everything authentic in this country deserves care and attention. The authorial intention is positively charged, influencing the rhetorical strategies.

### **3. Case Study: Peter Hurley's *The Way of the Crosses* (2013)**

Born in Dublin in 1968, Peter Hurley is an Irish expatriate who has lived in Bucharest since 1994. For fifteen years, Hurley worked in market research and consulting, and from 2000 to 2006, he served as Honorary Vice Consul of Ireland in Romania. Between 2009 and 2019, he dedicated himself to preserving and promoting Romania's authentic values by organizing the *The Long Road to the Merry Cemetery*, a festival of rural traditions in Săpânța, a village in the northern Romanian region of Maramureș, and by serving as president of the Intercultural Association for Traditions. In his in 2013 published travelogue, *The Way of the Crosses*, Hurley chronicles his 650-kilometer journey from Săpânța to Bucharest, undertaken mostly on foot in 2012.

Hurley's education in Ireland significantly impacted his perception of Romania and its people. During his formative years, Ireland experienced an economic downturn<sup>9</sup> that prompted businesses and government institutions to

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<sup>9</sup> The economic recession in Ireland in the 1980s was marked by high inflation, high public debt, and an over-reliance on low-tech exports. The government implemented austerity measures in response, which led to social unrest and emigration. The recession lasted for almost a decade, but the country eventually experienced a significant economic turnaround in the 1990s (Glynn 10-13).

draw inspiration from the Irish Revival<sup>10</sup>, an earlier nationalist movement aimed at creating unity within the country. The Irish countryside once again became the future of Ireland, representing the neo-traditional, Catholic values being lost in modernization.

*The Way of the Crosses* is not a mere account of a Western traveller awed by the traditional and undeveloped beauty of the Romanian countryside. Instead, Peter Hurley loves Romania because he loves Ireland:

When I had first met Mr. Căținean eight months previously, he said: 'There were Celts in our village you know. It's Called Ardan. There's a place in Ireland called Ardan, isn't there?!'

And he's right, there is a place in Ireland called Ardan. And in fact, *ardán* is the ancient Gaelic word for stage, a platform, and a high point. So, it's not at all a surprise for the village of Ardan to be nestled underneath a hillock which hosts a protective citadel, in the shadow of an impressive eight-hundred-meter-high hill also called the Hill of Ardan. It's also no surprise that the people of Ardan have really got it together when it comes to milk production. (Hurley, *Day 9 – Tuesday, 4 December 2012*. "Petru Cățineanu")

This supports our hypothesis, and that of Thompson's, that "the traveller's portrayal of another people or place is often ideologically motivated, seeking at some level to justify and encourage a particular policy or course of action towards those others" (Thompson 133). Walking the backroads and praying at the wayside crosses (troițe), visiting churches and functioning monasteries, Hurley feels as if he is walking through the space of medieval Ireland. Meeting farmers and traditional craftsmen, he is overwhelmed with regret for the decline of the Irish traditional country life. Essentially, he cherishes Romania because it represents a space where his Irish identity comes to life.

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<sup>10</sup> The Irish Revival, also known as the Celtic Revival, was a cultural and literary movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century in Ireland. It aimed to revive and celebrate Irish language, literature, history, and traditions. The movement was influenced by various factors, including the growing sense of Irish national identity and the cultural nationalism that was sweeping Europe at the time. Its leaders included writers and artists such as W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and John Millington Synge, who sought to create a distinctly Irish culture and literature.





other people, that there is a great resonance in Romania. And it's true, there is resonance in Romania, a kind of spirit or a vibration and it responds to people. You do things for it and it does things for you. Over the years, I had felt that I had thought about it. I've heard other people talking about things and I'm surrounded all the time by messages and discussions and things that people say and it's all about resonance in so many things I have been involved in. And this trip is about feeling the resonance. In front of me, stretched these great mountains, like a source of resonance, by their size and their unfathomable age. (Hurley, *Part III. Brașov to Bucharest*. "Romania's Resonance")

The traveller cannot directly demonstrate how the travelled and depicted space transmits resonance, as this phenomenon is rooted in individual subjectivity. Instead, true resonance occurs through interpersonal dialogue. The narrator embraces the belief in a theory of a resonant Romania, characterized by a blend of mysticism and patriotism, without distancing himself rhetorically from it. Encounters with nature and people create resonant spaces within the traveller. While recounting of facts and describing the landscapes the narrator tries to remain objective, but there is a time gap between the journey and its recounting. As the narrator reflects, "over the years, I had felt that I had thought about it. I've heard other people talking about things" (Hurley, *Part III. Brașov to Bucharest*. "Romania's Resonance").

### 3.1. Horizontal Resonances – Friendships

Hartmut Rosa's concept of horizontal resonance involves a sense of shared experience and mutual recognition among peers. In Peter Hurley's case, the most significant friendship is with a family from Săpânța, Maramureș. Hurley wishes to be accepted by the Romanian community, believing that the Irish and Romanian people share common cultural practices. He views the Irish history, especially the loss of traditional lifestyle, as a valuable lesson for Romanians to avoid similar mistakes. This friendship becomes an interpersonal sphere of resonance, reinforcing Hurley's conviction that the traditions and way of life he observes in Maramureș are worth maintaining.

An instance of this resonance is evident when Hurley communicates his journey plans to Maria Zapca, his friend from Maramureș:

"Maria, what would you say if I told you that I was thinking of walking from the Merry Cemetery in Săpânța to the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest? "

I remember her reaction more than her words. She wasn't shocked, surprised, or astonished. She didn't laugh it off. She seemed to understand exactly what I meant to say by proposing such a thing and

reacted in all seriousness. She didn't ask any questions. But I do remember her saying, in her wonderful poetic and innocent voice, that Maramureș didn't deserve such a sacrifice, and that she would help in any way she could. That was enough for me. There was at least one other dreamer in Săpânța. (Hurley, *Part I. Maramureș. Day 1- Monday, 26 November 2012. "Maria's House"*)

The dialogue between people as horizontal resonance is less spatially bound. Space is a mere container; gestures are the relevant expressions of such experiences. The fact that the individuals occupy the same space enhances the resonance of thought and belief. Initially, Hurley's enthusiasm for the journey does not match Maria's first reaction. However, when she offers her help, the resonance experience on the horizontal axis becomes successful, transforming Hurley's perspective from merely seeking a "miracle" to understanding and perceiving the reality of his journey.

### **3.2 Diagonal Resonances – Irish and Romanian Roadside Crosses**

According to Hartmut Rosa, diagonal resonance describes a type of social interaction where an individual or a group experiences resonance across different dimensions of life. Rosa identifies three such dimensions: the material world (resonance with tools or machines), the social world (resonance with other people), and the cultural world (resonance with values, beliefs, and symbols). Diagonal resonance occurs when people resonate across these spheres, although its distinction from horizontal resonance is not always clear-cut.

In Romania, roadside crosses represent the union of three Christian entities (Father, Son and the Holy Ghost). The Slavonic etymology refers to a territorial-administrative structure, but Romanian culture uses *troița* in a diminutive form for the religious field, denoting the unity of a trinity. The roadside crosses and the humorously painted crosses in the Merry Cemetery of Săpânța are objects situated between worlds, mediating dialogue and the need for resonance. Rosa explains that modern society distances itself from other spheres of living by cultivating reifying world relations,<sup>13</sup> separating and specializing life, causing individuals to lose perspective on life's purpose. These crosses at crossroads or in cemeteries enable communication channels, where the traveller finds his dormant eigenfrequency, reflecting on death or journey-related decisions: "This village cemetery – more than any other in Romania – epitomises the gateway, the connection between the village present

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<sup>13</sup> See Rosa 158 and also "modern culture has given rise to reifying relationships to the world along with a longing for and sensitivity to resonant modes of relation more or less in parallel, as I will demonstrate in greater detail in Part Three" (Rosa 160).

and the village past." (Hurley *Part I. Maramureș. Day 1 - Monday, 26 November 2012. "The Merry Cemetery"*)

Hurley prays at each wayside or crossroad cross during his walk. The Romanian wayside crosses remind him of the Celtic crosses and the high crosses of Ireland:

What we in Ireland refer to as Celtic Cross, the solar disc superimposed with the cross of Christ, can be found throughout Romania. While this may not signify an explicit Celtic heritage, and indeed it doesn't need to, what I think it does represent is a similar perspective on Christianity, in which Christ's message was a progression of an existing tradition that had, at least in the case of the Dacians, been monotheistic. Christ's message was the stone that had further sharpened the already evolved spiritual spear of the Dacians. (Hurley, *Part II. Bistrița to Brașov. Day 9 – Tuesday, 4 December 2012. "The Celtic Connection"*)

Further evidence of Hurley's penchant to look at Romanian realities through Irish lenses can be seen in the following fragment:

My perception had changed over the course of the walk. At the outset, and until then in my life, I had seen the crucifix, in its Catholic three-dimensional, statuesque representation, as a witness to Christ's suffering. But as the walk progressed, and I saw large numbers of Orthodox interpretations of the crucifix, I started to see them as a message of joy; not joy that Christ had suffered on the cross, but joy that He has risen, and that He has done this for us. There was something celebratory and commemorative about them. For the most part they were conceived, designed and erected by individuals, ... I had stopped and prayed at every single one I had seen. I had studied each one, some more and some less of course, as best I could in the time I had had, and under the light and weather conditions of the moment. Together they created a kind of awareness, and I had started to feel them collectively. In a way, they had started to carry me, like spiritual fountains on the route, lifting me along. (Hurley, *Part II. Bistrița to Brașov. Day 10 – Wednesday, 5 December 2012. "The Culture of the Crosses"*)

The crosses configure a spiritual route and create in the traveller's imagination the necessary space for further resonant experiences. The presence of these crosses maintains a certain state of mind, open to dialogue and discovery. The diagonal axis of resonance relies more on narrative and rhetorical construction than the horizontal axis, as it builds on cultural and epochal comparisons and introspection and not on direct interpersonal dialogue.

### 3.3 Vertical Resonance as Transformative Experience - The Prayers

Hartmut Rosa uses the concept of "vertical resonance" to describe the connection we feel to something transcending our immediate experience, such as a higher power. In Peter Hurley's travelogue, vertical resonance is exemplified through his prayers before roadside crosses. Although he sometimes feels exposed and ridiculed, he is never questioned or bullied for his actions. His first prayer at a roadside cross happens in Hoteni: a short prayer witnessed by no one. Hurley, out of breath, uses prayer not so much to connect to the divinity but more as an excuse to stop and take a short break. Gradually, his prayers gain a more communal significance as he starts praying not only for himself and the success of his journey but also for others: the family he left in Ireland, the people he met on the road, accident victims etc. His last prayer becomes an act of humility, the traveller uses his spiritual power for the benefit of others. For Rosa, this process of inner transformation is proof that verticality is functioning. The first prayer:

As I came to the crest of the hill, Hoteni abruptly finished. I was out of breath and there was a cross on the left, seemingly to mark the end of the climb or the start of the village for those arriving, or both. I was glad to have an excuse to kneel down on one knee. Shifting the weight of the rucksack forward eased the load temporarily, and for the first time I said a short prayer at a cross on the road. (Hurley, *Part I. Maramureș. Day 3 – Wednesday, 28 November 2012. "Hoteni – Botiza, Maramureș – 37 kilometres"*)

Another prayer somewhere in the middle of the journey:

I didn't want to wake up from this dream. I had stored pure energy on a massive scale. I had stored the energy of one million steps and felt them in me. And I don't want to tell you it was something that it wasn't. I was bursting with happiness, based on gratitude and humility. Pride had been scrubbed away. I felt cleansed and calm. I remember the words, painted in block capital, two metres tall, on the wall above the Târnava River, as it flows in front of the Romanian Orthodox Church, through the centre of Sighișoara: 'Viața este o condiție necesară pentru a exista, dar insuficientă pentru a fi. Fă-ți datoria și vei afla cine ești! - Life is a necessary condition for existing, but insufficient for being. Do your duty and you will find who you are!' I knelt down in the snow and said my last set of prayers for the journey, this time prayers of thanks. (Hurley *Part III. Brașov to Bucharest. "The National Museum of the Romanian Peasant"*)

The space narrative evolves along with the tone and rhetoric of Hurley's inner perspective. The context of the first prayer is described in rather objective, pragmatic terms – the cross signifies a border or a limit between two kinds of spatial experiences. By kneeling in front of the cross the traveller feels at ease after the hardship of the journey. In the second experience, the space description is made from the perspective of an energetically changed individual, who sees the church "above the Târnava River" as a corner of Paradise.

The resonant space shifts from being a mere landscape in the context of the first prayer to a symbolically transformed space in the second prayer. This transition from pragmatic to aesthetic rhetoric can be objectively explained by the traveller's resonant experience. The most important function of a resonant space on this vertical axis is to enhance the vibration of the resonant entities. The narrative does not consistently seek to act as a resonant voice, shifting from factual persuasion in the first cited prayer to a resonant expression in the sentence: "I knelt down in the snow and said my last set of prayers for the journey, this time prayers of thanks." (Hurley *Part III. Brașov to Bucharest*. "The National Museum of the Romanian Peasant").

### **3.4 Romania as a Space of Resonance**

Hurley uses the word "resonance" in his book synonymously with vibration, dialogue, and exchange. Analysing Hurley's understanding of this phenomenon, we conclude that it is a hybrid form of horizontal (friendships) and diagonal resonance (intersection of the material, social, and cultural aspects of life), to use Rosa's terminology. Thus, Hurley's hypothesis is that the landscapes and places of Romania transmit vibrations (diagonal resonance) to those who walk on it, transforming them into better, more profound individuals. The narrative about the vast spaces of Romania and the traveller's exposure to a wild-life contrasts with his urban experiences. He discovers unknown places within himself: "I'm surrounded all the time by messages and discussions and things that people say and it's all about resonance in so many things I have been involved in. And this trip is about feeling the resonance." (Hurley, *Part III. Brașov to Bucharest*. "Romania's Resonance")

Each encounter reminds the traveller of the Celtic tradition in Ireland. Each cross bears a message, creating a puzzle of messages and crosses that form a fictionalized, explicit, and cited space:

A small black metal plate was screwed to the cross, engraved: TĂUȘ  
PETRU EMANUEL N 19-08-1967 D 10-12-2009. I caught my breath.  
Petru Emanuel Tăuș had died on this spot on 10 December 2009, at the

age of forty-two. Today was also 10 December, exactly three years later. (Hurley, *Brașov*. "E60")

In Hurley's narrative, resonance occurs in the presence of social interaction because the traveller admires and wants to experience the natural person and worldview. The fact that he stops and kneels at each roadside cross helps him establish a meaningful connection with these places. The coherence of this puzzle of crosses evolves from their recurrent symbolism, but mostly from the traveller acknowledging their presence and meaning. The traveller's intention to demonstrate that Romania has resonance is only partially successful, on a personal level, and cannot be generalized. Although social encounters between different but similar cultures enhance the traveller's inner vibration, thus fulfilling the conditions for a resonant space, the traveller's journey ultimately demonstrates the opposite of his goal: the reification and decay of the authentic. The National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest, his destination, is a reification of the authentic rural life he finds in Maramureș, a still "merry cemetery" of ancestral life.

### **Concluding Arguments**

The narration of space and space in the narration are essential elements of travelogues. Therefore, the degree of fictionalization in travelogues should concern the literary research because, as shown above, the *explicit cited places* can generate a second layer of fictionalized space, making the positive experience of resonance possible. Narratological research on space in travelogues offers analytical instruments regarding the configuration of space as *explicit cited space*, but this approach alone cannot explain how resonance and empathetic encounters on journeys mediate similar experiences for the reader. The sociological perspective helps to better understand the cultural structure and its spatial and temporal layering. Hartmut Rosa's theory does not offer solutions to many social problems, but by defining the three *axes of resonance*, it provides an instrument for understanding the dynamics of writing and reception of travelogues.

The challenge of using this theory and the narratological approach lies in the diversity of the travelogue genre and the degree of fictionalization, making it difficult to differentiate between the space in the narration and the referred space of the journey. Andreas Solbach's categories of *explicit and cited spaces* serve as articulation between the envisioned models of the narrator and the actual geography of the journey. We established that in this travelogue the narrator uses visual maps, realistic rendering of facts, but also instruments specific to fiction – the symbolic and rhetorical construction of space, in order to construct a resonant voice, facilitating an "emotional, bodily, or in other

ways sensory connection between the text and the reader" (Meier, Wegener 193; Grafström, Jonsson 2020).

In *The Way of the Crosses*, the narrator sporadically succeeds in writing the "lived experience" – not just about it (Meier, Wegener 194). The resonant story is not a travel diary but a synthesis of memories about feelings, thoughts, and events, written one year after the journey. The narrative of space follows a tour, but the symbolic meaning of Romania as a remembered and constructed space is a map of hidden characteristics of the ancient Irish culture. The Romanian *troițe*, which evoke the Celtic crosses, make it possible to speak about a space of resonance on the vertical axis, constructed in the imagination and visual models of the narrator, not as a real touristic phenomenon. The resonant space in *The Way of the Crosses*, as a result of narrative construction, fulfils the threefold functions of travel writing, which can be interpreted as phases of the resonance experience: reporting the world – in resonance terms, seen as interaction with and representation of the other, revealing the self – as the peak of vibration in the resonance, and representing the other (Thompson 2011) – seen as the result of the transformative experience.

For the discussion of the literary genre the differentiation cannot be cleared exclusively within the narratological analysis and the resonant perspective shows that the subjective resonant experience of the traveller can be hardly conveyed to the readers, if the narrator does not choose to use the specific means of fictional construction.

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