RE-EXAMINING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHING XENOPHOBIA IN POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIA

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Abstract: *In this paper I re-examine a theoretical framework developed for researching xenophobia in Romania's post-communist contexts. I begin by emphasizing several relevant anthropological considerations regarding the fear of the Other. Subsequently, I review the conceptualization of the Other in the anthropology of the past century. Next, I emphasize the analytic potential of three ternary grammars of identity/alterity, developed by Gerd Baumann and André Gingrich. Lastly, I present Johannes Fabian's theses regarding the Other and their significance. Instead of treating xenophobia intrinsically, I advocate a 'weak' interpretation of it from a logical standpoint. Thus, I suggest approaching xenophobia as part of a* "*conceptual constellation*".

Key words: *xenophobia, xenophilia, Other, Self, identity/otherness.*

1. Introduction

As an expression of collective fear, xenophobia is arguably a factor for both constructing and maintaining cultural boundaries. It entails the misrecognition of the Otherness of various cultures. Xenophobia can manifest itself in diverse situations as the fear, contempt and/or hatred of the Other. In a broader sense, xenophobia refers also "to attitudes, prejudices, and behaviour that reject, exclude, and vilify its targets based on the belief that they are perpetual outsiders", who cannot be assimilated or deemed trustworthy (Canefe, 2008, p. 159). As any type of fear, xenophobia is projected on a "target" or multiple "targets": the various exponents of the Other. It is important to emphasize that the perceived threat varies with context. Accordingly, the manifestations of xenophobia depend on particular contexts that are variable in time and space.

In Romania, xenophobia was epitomized in a slogan that spread rapidly in the 1990s: "We do not sell our country!" The slogan expressed a state of confusion and anxiety present among certain groups from Romanian society, after the fall of the communist regime. In an interval of almost fifty years, the Romanians living behind the Iron Curtain were influenced via education and mass media into believing that everything that comes from abroad in ways uncontrolled by official censorship was threatening the Romanian values, and in a broader sense, the Romanian society. More than twenty years later, many

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Romanians are looking for jobs abroad. Thus, it can be said that those leaving their country are affected to a certain degree by the opposite of xenophobia: xenophilia.

Xenophilia, by contrast, as the attraction towards the various expressions of the Other, was less studied in anthropology. Xenophilia entails one's fascination towards a foreign group, a foreign culture or certain aspects of it. I suggest that understanding this concept requires a 'weak meaning' in the use of the concepts of identity and otherness/alterity. Weak interpretations of identity and otherness allow alternative approaches of xenophobia and xenophilia. Explicitly, an exordium into the various modalities of selfing/othering is a prerequisite for the contextual analysis of both xenophobia and xenophilia, by relativizing them according to historical situations.

In my paper, I have reviewed the perspectives concerning the Other and its associated fear that I've deemed to be the most relevant, in order to sketch a theoretical framework for researching xenophobia in post-communist Romania. This article represents the first part of a broader research, which was presented in 2012, at the *European Association of Social Anthropologists Conference: Uncertainty and disquiet* in Paris.

2. Preliminary Considerations: The Other and Xenophobia

This chapter is framed around an intellectual problem, and not necessarily around a scientific gap. As I attempted to focus on a particular type of fear, and find explanations for it, it became obvious that instead of 'charting' new ground, I am assembling a non-obvious puzzle. However, the steps I take for solving this puzzle are simple. First, I consider that it is obviously necessary to take a closer look at the anthropological literature dedicated to the fear of the Other. It is important to stress that speaking of the Other in anthropology was initially implicit (Fabian, 2006, p. 139–140). To a certain extent, it could be argued that the fear of the Other was also implied. It is also relevant to emphasize the concurrent apparition of the Other and the fear of the Other in anthropological texts from the middle of the twentieth century.

Xenophobia is a concept characterized by ambiguity. It was formed by putting together the Greek words xenos (i.e. gr. ξένος) which means "stranger" and phobos (i.e. gr. φόβος), meaning 'fear'. Xenophobia's ambiguity results from the different ways in which various scholars have attempted to conceptualize it. For example, Francis Nyamnjoh defines it as the "intense dislike, hatred or fear of Others" (Nyamnjoh, 2006, p. 5). Mabel Berezin considers xenophobia to be the "fear of difference embodied in persons or groups" (Berezin, 2006, p. 273). In certain cases, xenophobia has been characterized as the "hostility towards strangers and all that is foreign" (Stolcke, 1999, p. 28). Notably, in certain scientific texts, xenophobia is designated by an enumeration of terms such as prejudices, attitudes and behaviours of hatred, exclusion and discrimination, which are derived from their perceived "otherness".

Although the fear of the Other had been already amply discussed in other disciplines and only in the second half of the twentieth century did this particular type of fear truly enter mainstream anthropology as a relevant theme. Accordingly, I think it is important to highlight several approaches that were significant for the development of these concepts. I argue that in the past half century the Other was developed mainly as a diachronic concept, which entailed multiple hypostases that varied according to context. In his attempt to throw a "glance" at the concept's beginnings in anthropology, Johannes Fabian states "the Other, the term and presumably a concept behind it, began its career in Anglo-

American anthropology rather inconspicuously […] As a designation of anthropology's object (adjective or noun, capitalized or not, singular or plural, with or without quotation marks) did not seem to require more than a common-sense understanding […]" (Fabian, 2006, p. 140). Fabian's description illustrates the ambiguity implied by the first uses of the Other in anthropology.

From a semiotic point of view, the usefulness of the term was a result of its vagueness. In a certain sense, the Other masked a series of expressions that "had become unsavoury" after the decolonization process: tribal peoples, primitives, savages (Fabian, 2006, p. 140). By using the Other, the anthropologists were able to avoid these terms and yet debate a wide array of topics. As the use of the Other proliferated in various anthropological writings, it became clear that there was a certain inflation of its meanings. This endangered the conceptualization of the Other. At the same time, this [ab]use of the term disguised the multifaceted relations between the Self and the various images of the Other: stranger, wanderer, marginal [wo]man, newcomer, god, enemy etc. However, what was considered almost a constant in the various representations of the Other, was the threat that it posed, either latent or manifest. Even though it was a somewhat vague term, the Other was often associated with the representations of evil.

In defining and/or conceptualising the Other, the anthropologists were influenced to varying degrees by philosophy, literature, psychology and sociology. The first anthropological approaches to the Other were heavily indebted to the writings of Kant, Husserl, Heidegger, Freud, Simmel and, to mention only a few more recently – Levinas, Derrida, Ricoeur, Napier and Bauman. Due to their different sources of theoretical inspiration, the anthropologists that used the Other in their writings emphasized facets or dimensions of the concept that did not necessarily overlap. This hinders any attempt to determine the origin of the Other in anthropology, because the conceptualization of the Other did not evolve linearly. Different images of the Other were brought into scientific attention, either simultaneously or successively by anthropologists belonging to various schools of thought. These anthropologists often had dissimilar or even opposing perspectives about the Other. In consequence, as Fabian admitted at the middle of the last decade, it was difficult to determine the first approaches of the Other/Others as a concept in anthropology (Fabian, 2006, p. 141). To a certain degree, it still is.

3. The Development of the other in Twentieth Century Anthropology

A number of anthropological works are noteworthy for the development of the Other as a concept. I think that the best way to illustrate the most important contributions to the conceptualization of the Other and xenophobia in anthropology is by presenting their development along a few lines of thought. Thus, between 1964 and 1983, several anthropologists approached and developed the Other from a common-sense term to an anthropological concept. One of the first approaches was done by John Beattie in his book *Other Cultures* (1964). He examined, among other things, a number of contributions that social anthropology made until the mid-1960s to the understanding of other cultures. Actually, judging by the last part of his book, I think it is safe to assert that Beattie was already analysing the various understandings the anthropologists had previously accumulated and documented about the cultures of the Other. Nine years later, Edmund Leach astutely observed that understanding the wide implications of the term is a problem "of translation" (Leach, 1973, p. 772). Indeed, whether it was written with a capital letter

or not, the Other had an "all-purpose meaning" that indicated more likely an anthropologists' "awareness of a wider intellectual trend" (Fabian, 2006, p. 140).

The end of the 1970s marked an important development in conceptualizing the Other. In his book, entitled *Orientalism* (1978), the literary critic Edward Said argued that the so called 'Oriental Studies' was not necessarily a corpus of objective knowledge, bereft of any passion. Instead, it contained a set of fantastic projections and demeaning distortions. Their main purpose was not to understand the inhabitants of the Middle East, India or China, but to justify and encourage the European conquest, oppression and exploitation of the 'orientalised' peoples. An analysis of Orientalism reveals that Said emphasized the ways in which Western writers, literary critics, scientists and politicians had portrayed the inhabitants of the Orient as "backward", "feminized", "weak" and "irrational" hypostases of the Other. In contrast, Said claimed that the westerners were depicted as "advanced", "masculine", "strong" and "rational". Basically, both the West and the Orient are reified and locked in a dialogical relation. According to Said, the Orient has "helped" in multiple ways to define the West "as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (Said, 1979, p. 1–2). What is relevant for my argument is the way Said understands and equates, to a certain degree, the Orient with the Other. The Orient "is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (Said, 1979, p. 1). The Other in Said's book is not only the image of an oriental, but also an image of place and time. What Said has argued, and later Fabian has confirmed, is the fact that both place and time are relative in the interaction between 'us' and 'them', between the Self and the Other. As such, his book contains a "weak" account of the Other, as contextually negotiated. More interestingly, Said does mention xenophobia in two instances in his book. A text analysis reveals that Said tends towards a "strong" account of xenophobia, from a logical standpoint (Said, 1979, p. 193, 257). Thus, xenophobia would represent both the fear and the hostility of the Other, imagined in the Orient and its inhabitants (Said, 1979, p. 237, 290–291).

In the last decade of the twentieth century, a number of anthropologists criticized Said's argument, claiming that his theses are only partially correct. In the volume *Occidentalism* (1995), edited by James Carrier, several anthropologists discussed the notion of 'the West'. The majority of them argued that the biased visions about the Other are not the 'monopoly' of the 'westerners'. The people from various regions of the Orient may just as well have biased perceptions of the West. While Said demonstrates that the Orient "is essentialized", Carrier turns around his demonstration and emphasizes the critics' argument that "conventional anthropology presupposes and presents its own orientalisms", which are basically ways to essentialize groups or regions (Carrier, 1995, p. 2). He uses in his argument the objections of anthropologists like Johannes Fabian (1983) and James Clifford (1988). They direct their criticisms towards finding orientalist (i.e. essentialist) assumptions in various descriptions produced by anthropologists. It is important to mention that both Fabian and Clifford, and later on Carrier, have not approached the Other as a 'disguise' for other terms. Unlike Said, they tend to go a step further than textual analysis, as they focus on the "product of orientalism in anthropological representation, rather than the process of orientalization" (Carrier, 1995, p. 2). This so called 'product of orientalism' is actually a broad term that implies an array of consequences generated by essentializing the Other. As Said indirectly suggests and Carrier openly states, some anthropologists' "orientalisms" are matched by others'

"occidentalisms". Both designate a plethora of ways to essentialize the Other, and both have many potential 'products' in anthropological representation. For example, two such 'products' are the "fear of the Other" (i.e. fr. "peur des autres") and the "denial of coevalness" (Jeudy Ballini & Voisenat, 2004; Fabian, 1983).

The Orient gained meaning in Oriental Studies only by mirroring it with the Occident. Basically, both Orient and Occident are dialectically defined: in the process of defining the Other, each also defines itself. Following one of Kenneth Burke (1969) thesis, Carrier goes on and states that the definitions of the Orient and Occident vary according to context, and as such, the thing described "becomes fluid" (Carrier, 1995, p. 2–3). This so called fluidity of the Other, which is represented either by the Orient or the Occident, is often modelled by "political circumstance" (Carrier, 1995, p. 26). Consequently, the difference between the Self and the Other, represented either by the oriental or by the occidental/westerner, is relative. According to Carrier, this difference is determined by the segmentary opposition, which is considered by Michael Herzfeld to be recurrent in European thought (Herzfeld, 1987, p. 156–166). Thus, the Other could be defined in a broad sense as the non-human, or it could be defined narrowly, as the poor people in Bucharest or the hooligans in Liverpool. Interestingly, Carrier borrows the concept of "segmentary opposition" from Herzfeld, in order to better explain the fluidity of defining various images of the Other (e.g. the alien).

4. Three Grammars of Identity/Alterity

The thesis of segmentary opposition was further developed as a "segmentary grammar" of identification/alterification by Gerd Baumann and André Gingrich in the book *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach* (2004). The two anthropologists based their model on the segmentary lineage system suggested by Edward E. Evans-Pritchard in *The Nuer* (1940). Admittedly, even though their adaptation of Evans-Pritchard theses is a very 'liberal' one, it certainly has theoretical value. Thus, they discuss the process of selfing/othering according to the logic of fission or rivalry at the inferior levels of segmentation and to the logic of fusion at the superior levels of segmentation. The segmentary grammar was considered to determine contextually the identity and/or alterity of any given individual or group: "While in the context of a lineage-level blood feud a Nuer must other an implicated neighbour to the point of threatening a revenge killing, the same neighbour is an ally in the context of a clan-level conflict or, as in Evans-Pritchard's days, a threat of colonial conquest" (Baumann, 2004, p. 21). The segmentary grammar ultimately amounts in Baumann and Gingrich's view into a pyramidal frame of potential relations.

Unlike the binary structures used by structuralists at the middle of the twentieth century, this segmentary grammar has an obvious advantage: it is a ternary structure (i.e. it entails three components). Baumann and Gingrich included segmentation in a theoretical framework that included other two ternary grammars of identity/alterity:

a) The grammar of orientalization is inspired by Said's *Orientalism* (1978). This grammar is more than a description of the binary opposition that could be found in Said's text. It could be used as a 'guide' to describe how the Self and the Other can be reciprocally essentialised. Instead of an opposition of "us = good" and "them = bad", this structure is a reversal of "what is good in us is [still] bad in them, but what got twisted in us [still] remains straight in them" (Baumann, 2004, p. 20). However, this "reversal" is

not explicitly described in Said's work. It is considered to be implicit the recognition of the fact that the occidentals made out of what we call "oriental" the subject not only of fear, contempt and denigration, but also the subject of desire. Certain oppositions entailed by the orientalist grammar "are not between good and bad in any simple sense" (Baumann, 2004, p. 20). Baumann offers a few examples in this regard: society versus community, rationality versus mysticism, calculation versus spontaneity. Therefore, this grammar is not only a simple reversal, as it can implicate self-critique, even though the Other can be self-invented, as in the case of the noble savage. Interestingly, Baumann's astute observation brings an innovative perspective regarding the "excesses of cultural self-seeking" (Baumann, 2004, p. 20). He claims that "the xenophiliac who searches for some special wisdom in Tibetan monks or rainforest Amerindians […] is no less orientalist than the xenophobe who sees the West as democratic, reasonable and secularist and the Orient as despotic, fanatic, and fundamentalist" (Baumann, 2004, p. 20). This fragment is interesting, because Baumann puts xenophobia and the xenophilia on the same level, which means that he has a 'weak' interpretation of both concepts.

b) The grammar of encompassment is based on Louis Dumont's analysis of the Indian system of caste. This grammar is used to emphasize the way 'otherness' is included as a form of 'sameness'. Baumann and Gingrich have built this grammar of identity/alterity upon Dumont's "formal operation of encompassment" (Baumann, 2004, p. 25). As an act of selfing by appropriating certain types of the Other, encompassment is based on distinguishing levels, similarly to the segmentary grammar. However, the grammar of encompassment works only on two levels, instead of "contextualizing difference by recognizing a multitude of levels" (Baumann, 2004, p. 25). At the lower level of cognition, the differences between the Self and the Other are recognized. At the higher level, that which is different is actually subsumed under an encompassing category. This is somewhat similar to including a species into a genus. In this grammar, the subordinate category is "subsumed" into the identity defined and "owned by those who do the encompassing" (Baumann, 2004, p. 25). Thus, the so-called higher cast needs to encompass the lower one in order to talk about applying this grammar.

The three grammars were used with varying degrees of success by the authors of the volume edited by Baumann and Gingrich. The usefulness of introducing these grammars of selfing/othering resides in their analytic potential. This potential is given by their ternary character. Baumann and Gingrich proved that the grammars are each in its own way ternary. The orientalist grammar is ternary because it entails the use of the translation technique in the process of selfing/othering, inspired from Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* (1957). The ternary character of the segmentary grammar is given by the 'apical point' that creates the third component: a "them" that has no part in the dialogue between 'us' and 'you' (Bauman, 2004, p. 38). Similarly, the grammar of encompassment is ternary because each hierarchical inclusion entails at least a category of people that cannot be encompassed in the group of those who are carrying the selfing/othering. Baumann and Gingrich divide the words of "selfing/othering" only by a slash because "they describe two faces of the same process" (Baumann, 2004, p. 19). Thus, the process of assuming the Self is inseparable from the process of ascribing the Other. Baumann and Gringrich's perspective about the Self and the Other is from a logical point of view a "weak" one. Actually, their claim, that there is a "dialogical relationship between sameness and differing, belonging and othering, identity/alterity", is borrowed from Charles Taylor's theses (Gingrich, 2004, p. 6). Taylor argued that "my discovering my own identity

doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others […] My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others" (Taylor, 1994, p. 34).

The working definition of personal and collective identities used by Baumann and Gingrich is based on a subject-centred perspective. It simultaneously includes sameness and differing. Their definition entails a non-binary, "weak" (i.e. from a logical standpoint), fluid and multidimensional approach to identity/alterity. Accordingly, both Baumann and Gingrich, but also the rest of the volume's authors, attempt to "identify and specify certain classificatory schemata, structures or grammars of identity/alterity" (Gingrich, 2004, p. 16). Thus, they try to avoid Said and Carrier's reifications by "way of a multidimensional and non-essentialising approach" (Gingrich, 2004, p. 16). Baumann and Gingrich's grammars are not meant to describe the way social systems work. Instead, they are meant to be used as 'guides' to reveal the way various discourses order the relationship between the Self and the Other.

However, the fact that two of these models (i.e. segmentation and encompassment) are based on books that do not use the term "identity" raises questions about their usefulness and also about the effectiveness of identity for any type of analysis. Furthermore, as Christian Postert stated, the use of identity/otherness might entail a bias toward individualism (Postert, 2004, p. 101–111). Even though these critiques are justified to a certain extent, the thesis behind their development was never criticized. The advantages offered by using ternary structures outweigh the disadvantages listed. Also, they can be used as 'guides' in a greater array of scientific fields and research contexts than the binary structures proposed by structuralists like Claude Lévi-Strauss.

5. The other Reconsidered: Johannes Fabian's Perspective

A particularly relevant perspective regarding the conceptualization of the Other was developed by Johannes Fabian in his pivotal book *Time and the Other* (1983). In writing this book, Fabian admitted the influences of Marx's early writings, Husserl's idea of "der Andere" and the system-oriented, modernist paradigm of "Talcott Parsons tempered by Max Weber" (Fabian, 2006, p. 141). A first step towards the theses developed in the aforementioned book was made in the essay titled "History, Language and Anthropology" (1971), in which Fabian argued that anthropological field work was carried out through "communicative interaction mediated by language" (Fabian, 2006, p. 142). A second point emphasized by him is that the objectivity which is hoped to be attained must originate in intersubjectivity. These two theses were based on Wilhelm von Humboldt's philosophy of language, Dell Hymes' perspective about language-centred ethnography and Jürgen Habermas' critique of positivism in the social sciences.

Even though Fabian used the term "Other" only in a quotation from Humboldt, he assumed an epistemological position that allowed him to open a semantic space which was to be occupied by this term later. What was relevant for the subsequent development of the concept was that Fabian did not envisage the Other as generalized or exotic, but as an 'interlocutor'. This was the first step taken away from "a scientistic conception of anthropology as natural history *[sic!]*" (Fabian, 2006, p. 142). Because it proposed a type of alterity that is implicit in any theory of intersubjectivity, it contained a phenomenological element that brought Fabian under scrutiny and critique.

The next step anticipated by Fabian, was facing alterity as it historically developed in what he called the "discursive practices of representing anthropological knowledge" (Fabian, 2006, p. 142). The representation of anthropology as the "provider of contrastive otherness" was brought into Fabian's attention, when he was invited to write a paper in a special issue of the journal *Social Research* (Fabian, 2006, p. 142). In the essay that he wrote for this issue, entitled "How Others die – Reflections on the anthropology of Death", Fabian emphasized the "epistemological conception of "the Other"" (Fabian, 1991, p. 177–178). This essay was basically an exordium for *Time and the Other*.

An analysis of *Time and the Other* confirms Fabian's claim, that he did not intend to create a theoretical concept of the Other. He also did not aim to construct a methodological device out of this term. However, the theses presented in this book became extremely relevant for the next anthropological approaches of the Other. Fabian astutely observed that anthropology is marked by a contradiction. Its empirical foundation resides in ethnographic field work, which is carried out as communicative interaction even by the "hard-nosed practitioners" (Fabian, 2006, p. 143). This interaction requires the researcher and the researched to share time together. This in turn implies that anthropologists must acknowledge the coevalness of the people they study. The contradiction is revealed when the same anthropologists express their knowledge in writing and/or teaching. Fabian noted that anthropologists represent their knowledge in terms of a discourse in which they constantly put the people they talk about in a "time other than" their own (Fabian, 1983, p. 52). The effect of differentiating between the time of the anthropologist and the time of the Other has been termed the 'denial of coevalness'. In other words, it represents the refutation of the fact that the anthropologist and the people he studies share the same time. The resulting anthropologist's discourse is called allochronic. This contradiction is concisely presented by Fabian, in the "Preface" of the book: "The Other's empirical presence turns into his theoretical absence, a conjuring trick which is worked with an array of devices that have the common intent and function to keep the Other outside the time of anthropology" (Fabian, 1983, p. xi).

Besides emphasizing the allochronic discourse that was predominant in the anthropological texts from the second half of the twentieth century, Fabian has the merit of establishing an epistemological conception of the Other. He also emphasized that the "construction" of the Other was performed in terms of spatial and temporal distance. Fabian's theses about the "denial of coevalness" had a profound impact on later anthropological texts regarding the Other and xenophobia. Despite the author's later statement that his aim was not to create a theoretical concept of the Other, Fabian's book represented a stimulating work for the subsequent attempts to approach the Other as a concept. An interesting application of the "denial of coevalness" is represented by the attempts made in the last decade of the twentieth century to extend Fabian's assertions regarding the allochronic discourse beyond anthropology.

In terms of the "historic specificity" of conceptualising the Other, Fabian argues that an important difference between earlier philosophical approaches of the Other and those developed in social sciences, cultural studies and so on, reside in the "historicization-cum-politicization of the Other" (Fabian, 2006, p. 146). This is a relevant thesis for my article because he explicitly mentions two images of the Other to which he assigns this label: the colony and the oriental. Unlike Said, Fabian states that these images of the Other are not opposed to a Self. Actually, his remarks do not contradict the idea of a dialogical relation between the Self and the Other. Instead, he opposes the assumption that all the discourses regarding the Other are ultimately discourses about the Self. In

Fabian's perspective, accepting this assumption would require a radical rethinking of otherness, which in turn would lead to misrepresenting the acts of identity affirmation.

The fact that anthropologists started in the 1980s to change their perspectives about the Other is attested by a book which, for all intents and purposes, was considered to be "a milestone" in the development of postmodern anthropology (Fabian, 2006, p. 140). This book is *Writing Culture* (1986), edited by James Clifford and George Marcus. In its eleven chapters, it included several relevant entries on otherness and the Other. In its introduction, Clifford highlights the way ethnographers transformed the Other, from a 'disguise' for a plethora of unsavoury terms into a concept that was an integral part of a philosophical problem. The Other was formerly clearly defined "as primitive, or tribal, or non-Western, or pre-literate, or nonhistorical" (Clifford, 1986, p. 23). In the middle of the eighties, Clifford has stated that: "Now ethnography encounters others in relation to itself, while seeing itself as other […] It has become clear that every version of an "Other", wherever found, is also the construction of a 'Self'" (Clifford, 1986, p. 22–23). This statement was echoed in George Marcus' essay from the same volume, and was later interpreted by Fabian (2006). Besides emphasizing the obsolescence of the terms disguised by the Other, they argued that anthropologists had to abandon what Fabian would later call "the disguise itself" (Fabian, 2006, p. 140). Thus, the anthropologists would have to abandon their fascination with the exotic images of the Other.

6. Conclusions

In my article, I have reviewed four aspects pertaining to researching xenophobia in post-communist Romania. First, I presented several preliminary considerations regarding the anthropological literature dedicated to the fear of the Other. Afterwards, I reviewed the development of the Other as a concept in the anthropology of the twentieth century. Next, I showed that the three ternary grammars of identity/alterity, developed by Gerd Baumann and André Gingrich, have an analytic potential that can be useful for researching xenophobia. The three grammars could be used as 'guides' in various research contexts and in numerous fields. Besides anthropology, they can be used in politics, other social sciences and even aesthetics. Finally, I presented Johannes Fabian's theses regarding envisaging the Other not as being 'exotic', but as an 'interlocutor'. His perspective was instrumental in the anthropological conceptualization of the Other. Fabian's assertions regarding the "denial of coevalness" are indicative for the original epistemological position he assumed. This position allowed him to open a semantic space which was to be occupied by the Other in subsequent anthropological texts.

I consider that the theoretical framework developed for researching xenophobia in post-communist Romania should entail a dialogical relation between the Self and the Other. In accordance with Clifford's theses, I do consider that all the discourses about the Other are correlated with discourses about constructing the Self (Clifford, 1986, p. 22–23). Concurrently, the fear of the Other should not be essentialised. This would entail a non-binary, fluid and multidimensional approach to identity/otherness, very similar to the one employed by Baumann and Gingrich. 'Weak' interpretations of identity and otherness/alterity allow a plethora of alternative approaches of xenophobia and xenophilia. Accordingly, instead of a "strong" interpretation of xenophobia, I choose a "weak" one. As an alternative to treating xenophobia intrinsically, I suggest approaching it as part of a "conceptual constellation", which also includes xenophilia. This implies a contextualization not only of xenophobia but of an entire 'family' of concepts.

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