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SYMBOLIC METAPHORS IN F. DURRENMATT'S "THE MINOTAUR" WITHIN MYTHOLOGICAL, POSTMODERN AND EXISTENTIALIST CONTEXTS

Метою дослідження є дослідження символічних метафор у баладі «Мінотавр» з огляду на спільне і відмінне у їхньому потрактуванні Дюрренматтом з міфологічною, постмодерністською та екзистенціально-філософською традиціями, що досягається через застосування методів інтертекстуального, структурно-семіотичного і герменевтичного методів літературознавчого аналізу у поєднанні з лінгвістичними методами концептуального блендінгу і інтерактивної теорії метафори. Символічні метафори в баладі Дюрренматта є полікомпонентними, оскільки в кожній з них один джерельний простір – лабіринту, дзеркал або Мінотавра – водночас координується з кількома цільовими просторами. Для метафори Лабіринту цільовими просторами є «притулок», «інший» і «самопізнання»; для метафори Дзеркал – «Всесвіт Мінотавра» та «поріг». Образ Мінотавра проектується в цільовий простір «самотності» та «дзеркало Людини».

Метафори є засобами герменевтичного кодування, що підтримується семантичним кодом конотацій і символічним кодом опозицій. Для метафор «лабіринту» метафорична периферія включає, залежно від цільового простору, значення «щастя», «гармонія», «дружелюбність», «взаємозв'язок» – і «розчарування», «недовіра», «нерозуміння»; для метафор «дзеркал» – конотації нескінченності, позачасовості, неосяжності, асоційовані з цільовим простором Всесвіту, та «небезпека», «жорстокість», «смерть», «страх», які інтенсифікують цільовий простір Поріг. Метафора «Мінотавр – самотність» підсилюється конотаціями «в'язниця», «неминучість», «зрада», «страх», «розчарування».

У символічному коді метафора «лабіринту» розгортається в опозиціях «довіра і зрада», «життя і смерть», «насолада і біль», «гармонія і хаос», нерозв'язність яких асоціюється з різноматичністю лабіринту. Метафора «Дзеркало-поріг» пов'язана з протиставленнями «я – інший», «людина – тварина» (з інверсією ролей: анімалістичний елемент у людині вчить тварину бути звіром), спільність – чужорідність. Символічний код, пов'язаний із метафорами «Мінотавр – самотність» і «Мінотавр – дзеркало людини» ґрунтується на опозиціях наївності, довіри, дружелюбності, доброти, які характеризують Мінотавра-тварину до зустрічі з людиною, та вбивства, жорстокості, підступності, що тварина переймає від людини. Опозиції кодують значення герменевтичного коду тексту: Мінотавр – заперечення тваринного елементу vs. Людина – заперечення людського елементу в Мінотаврі.

Переосмислені у баладі, метафори зберігають алюзивний зв'язок із міфологічними архетипами та моделями метафоричного символізму в постмодернізмі. У метафорі лабіринту перший рівень символічності тексту спирається на архетипний образ лабіринту як структури світобудови, кругообігу життя, ініціації, другий рівень – пов'язаний із постмодерністським переосмисленням лабіринту як метафори хаосу, втрати сенсу та дезорієнтації свідомості, із руйнуванням роз-

шифрованого лабіринту. У ракурсі екзистенціалізму, інтерпретація метафори лабіринту в баладі асоційована з ідеями щодо лабіринтової природи Я, зустрічі з самим собою, переходу від існування до сутності, з концептами тривоги, страху та відчаю, що супроводжують перехід. Метафора Дзеркала, згідно з постмодерністською традицією, поєднується в баладі з архетипним образом лабіринту як в атрибутивно-синтагматичних зв'язках в образі «дзеркального лабіринту», так і в подвійних символічних відношеннях усередині метафори: Дзеркало – Потойбіччя, Дзеркало – Лабіринт, що, як потойбічний світ, затуляє в лабіринт. Ремінісценціями до постмодернізму є образи лабіринтових дзеркал як метафор нескінченності і Всесвіту як дзеркальної ілюзії. Архетип Мінотавра алюзійно перетинається з його постмодерністською інтерпретацією як зіткнення людини зі своєю звіриною сутністю і з екзистенціалістськими концептами «Самість і Інший», «Інший і погляд», ідеєю «безвинної провини».

Ключові слова: символічна метафора, концептуальна інтеграція, постмодернізм, наративно-семіотичні коди, міф, екзистенціалізм.

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Introduction

The problem of reinterpreting ancient myths is one of the favourites in postmodern literature, and, accordingly, it serves as the focus of numerous philological studies from this perspective. The deconstruction and reconstruction of myths in postmodernism undermines the very essence of mythology – to offer a clear, stable, and comprehensive understanding of the world. Instead, in poststructuralist tradition, myth becomes one of the forms of signifying a new reality – using myth themes and structures to convey the chaos and absurdity of the world, the irrational element within individuals and humanity. The mythological mechanism of resolving oppositions between life and death, the eternal and the transient, fiction and truth, idea and illusion is often replaced by the disruption of these oppositions, blurring their boundaries, with the ambivalence of the very idea of oppositions, achieved through the means of deconstruction, transposition, play, and the carnivalization of mythological narratives.

Dürrenmatt's ballad "The Minotaur" is chosen for analysis for two reasons. First and foremost, it presents a unique reimagining of the myth in which a creature with emerging humanity is trapped in a mirrored labyrinth, communicating through dance, craving connection, and self-identifying only when encountering an actual human-monster. Dürrenmatt asks which of the two figures – the monster or the hero – possesses human potential, and which carries bestial cruelty within.

The second reason for delving into "The Minotaur" analysis is Dürrenmatt's reinterpretation of mythological archetypes, often engaged by the postmodern literary tradition. On the one hand, the ballad contains numerous intertextual reminiscences of postmodern reinterpretations of myths and archetypes, allusively intersecting in this sense with existential concepts of absurdity, the meaning of existence, etc. associated with such a reinterpretation. On the other hand, despite the implied references to postmodernism, the ballad does not "fit" into aesthetic principles and techniques commonly associated with postmodernism [Hassan, 1998; Lewis, 2001]. Dürrenmatt reinterprets the myth, not in a paratextual-parodic form, but by imbuing his interpretation with a humanistic meaning. He employs a myth-based fabulation, while adhering to realism and mimesis; he explores the chaos of the universe and temporal distortion, but avoids postmodern fragmentation and maintains a linear narrative by conveying the absence of structure and a disrupted chronotope through symbolic metaphors of the labyrinth and mirrors. The author employs a dual encoding, not in the postmodern sense of multiple interpretations aimed at differently prepared readers, but rather in terms of the polysemy of symbolic metaphors and archetypes, transparent across all levels of their meanings, influencing the narrative-semiotic codes of the text – hermeneutic, semantic, and symbolic.

In this context, the focal point of the article is the exploration of archetypal symbolic metaphors in Dürrenmatt's "The Minotaur" within the framework of postmodern and existential-philosophical reminiscences, through their interpretation within the semantic architecture of the ballad's text.

Theoretical Background

One of the theoretical premises of the article is the concept of a symbolic metaphor, first introduced by J.H. Wicksteed [1928, 23]. Such a metaphor possesses qualities of "repeatability and stability", which, according to René Wellek and Austin Warren, can be considered distinctive characteristics of a symbol: "an image may be invoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently recurs both as presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol" [Wellek, Warren, 1973, p. 189]. Symbolic metaphors are distinguished by their fixation on the central meaning (symbolic component) they signify, while retaining a connotative range, despite its potential variation in contexts.

It can be argued that there are at least three levels of postmodern metaphorical symbolization associated with ancient myths: the primary level involves the symbolism of mythological archetypes, the secondary level involves the interpretation of mythological symbols in postmodern literature, where they are used as signs to denote new concepts inherent to postmodernism, and the tertiary level involves the authorial symbolization within symbolic metaphors of a specific text. At the last two levels, connotative implications that are consistently linked to mythological archetypes are reinterpreted as the symbolic metaphors, creating a new symbol either within the literary tradition or within a specific text, contributing to its symbolic and hermeneutic codes.

The first level of symbolization corresponds with Jung's characterization of the archetype as a potential symbol – an image-like entity [Jung, 1959, pp. 3–41] and symbols as embodied archetypes, which serve as sources of all mythic representations. According to Jung, mythology is the primary way archetypes manifest, transforming into symbols that fill myths with meaning. In transdisciplinary studies, myth is understood as the universal language of human imagination, with the following characteristics highlighted: its archetypal foundation, symbolism, connection to the collective unconscious, and its function in addressing fundamental worldview problems, offering answers to the essential questions of human existence [Dardel, 1984; Keen, Valley-Fox, 1989]. Jung discerns the connection between myth and archetype in the way that archetypes shape reality and "create myths, religions, and philosophies that influence and characterize entire nations and historical epochs" to provide sacred answers to existential imperatives [Jung, 1964, p. 76]. This world-shaping function of archetypes, known as "archaic remnants" or "original patterns of primal human experience", is explained by Jung through their possession of a "specific energy" [ibid], intellectual and emotional significance that ordinary ideas lack. The function of archetypes as a subconscious adaptive tool for addressing social and biological issues is also highlighted by other researchers [Becker, Neuberg, 2019, pp. 59–75], with archetypes defined as hidden mythic causes [Segal, 2004].

One of the most crucial characteristics of myth is its symbolism. Jung speaks of myth as a collectively shared symbolic representation of a specific idea or concept, as representations of a powerful symbolic unconsciousness [Jung, 1959]. In a similar vein, R. Miller affirms that myth is a universal human phenomenon that seeks to express the highest reality through symbols (mythologemes) and points to a reality beyond itself [Miller, 2014, p. 539–561].

It is important to note that myths are a secondary expression of archetypes in archetypal images, which in Jungian terminology can be referred to as an "elaboration" that can lead to something entirely different from the original experience [Jung, 1959], with specific purposes – to solve particular worldview problems. In this context, within myths, all things are considered simultaneously in two aspects. On the one hand, they are temporal and immediate; on the other, they are eternal and transcendent [Sigal, 2004].

The property of myth to preserve the eternal and transcendent in modern interpretations, and the ability of mythological archetypes to manifest in images, is used

by postmodern metaphorical symbolism – the second of the types of symbolism mentioned above. The interpretation of mythological archetypes in postmodern literature represents a development that serves a dual purpose – through the reevaluation of a specific myth and the creation of symbolic metaphors based on it, postmodernism addresses existential and eschatological issues in the “absurd” world of finitude, mortality, imperfection, and the meaninglessness of human existence [Baker, 1996; Cox, 2018; Wendy, 1988; Weed, 2004]. The engagement of postmodernists with mythological archetypes can be explained by the fact that these archetypes, elaborated through myths, have acquired the status of universal symbols with their own symbolic grammar [Ellens, 2001]. Mythological characters, objects, and themes (such as journeys to the underworld, battles with monsters, and more) have become symbols recognizable across various linguistic and cultural contexts. As these symbols embody symbolic keys to truths about the human condition and the world [Stenudd, 2022], reinterpreting them allows for a challenge to these truths, casting doubt on them within the author’s own system of signs and symbols. As such, the reinterpretation of mythological images, which become the source space for new symbolic metaphors, allows postmodernists to question established narratives and perspectives, leading to new layers of meaning and interpretation.

In the ballad “Minotaur”, Dürrenmatt employs the third level of symbolization by utilizing the primary meanings of archetypal symbols within the source space of metaphors while adapting established symbolic correlates from postmodern literature to create new symbolic metaphors.

The research’s objective and its associated tasks involve the analysis of the specific construction of symbolic metaphors in the ballad “Minotaur” and their impact on the narrative-semiotic codes of the text, considering both the commonalities and differences in the interpretation of symbolic images within the contexts of mythological, postmodern, and existential-philosophical traditions.

Methods

The article uses a comprehensive approach with elements of intertextual, structural-semiotic, and hermeneutical methods of literary analysis. As the components of the symbolic metaphor are scattered throughout the entire text, influencing its narrative-semiotic codes, the study employs Roland Barthes’ structural-semiotic method, utilizing narrative coding [Barthes, 1974]. Barthes distinguishes (a) hermeneutic or enigmatic code, intertwined in the analyzed text with meanings encoded by symbolic metaphors; (b) semiotic code (semic code, according to Barthes), linked to the connotative meanings of the text; (c) symbolic code, unveiling a system of value oppositions; (d) actional or proairetic code, related to the narrative unfolding of the text, predicting characters’ actions and consequences; and (e) cultural code, encompassing historical, social, or literary references, specific constants of social mythology [Barthes, 1974, p. 17–20, 78, 117]. In “The Minotaur”, cultural code is grounded both in references to the ancient myth and its characters, as well as in the interplay between the text and concepts, characters, and motifs within the postmodern cultural tradition and existentialist concepts.

Therefore, the identification of cultural code relies on intertextual analysis, which allows for the interpretation of symbolic metaphors within the analyzed text through “explicit or implicit connections with other texts” [Genette, 1997, p. 1]. Such analysis involves the classification of types of intertextuality/trans-textuality according to G. Genette, among which the study utilizes: (a) Proper intertextuality, which concerns the “presence” of one text within another, (b) Paratextuality, which encompasses the connections between the text and its title, preface, epigraph, and so forth, (c) Metatextuality, which includes retellings and commentary on references to the pre-text [Genette, 1997, p. 1–7].

The hermeneutical method enables the identification of the role of symbolic metaphors of the text in interpreting its deep semantic structure. The study employs a hermeneutical interpretation of symbols, the model of which is proposed by Paul Ricoeur [1967; 1974] in the following stages of analysis: establishing a connection between the analyzed symbol and the broader world of symbols, particularly within the studied text

and in postmodern literature; disclosing the content of the symbol through immersion in the atmosphere of the corresponding symbolic world or in mythological conceptions; interpreting and determining the specific meaning of the symbol. In the application of the hermeneutical method to our research, it is important to distinguish between primary understanding or pre-understanding (Vorverstandnis) and secondary or philological understanding [Heidegger, 1963, p. 338]. In the context of the article, primary understanding involves the identification of meaning-generating symbolic metaphors. In contrast, their philological interpretation as secondary understanding involves the use of linguistic methods – conceptual blending and the method based on the interactive theory of metaphor.

The method of conceptual blending [Fauconnier, Turner, 2002] utilizes a basic structure of four spaces to reconstruct metaphors. The structure includes input source and target spaces, a generic space of their shared attributes, and a blend space into which selected shared characteristics are projected, which is further elaborated with the inclusion of background knowledge from the text and extratextual presuppositions.

In the model of analyzing symbolic metaphors, an approach is employed that treats such metaphors as structures, encompassing an invariant symbolic core and a connotative metaphorical periphery. In the process of interpreting such a metaphor, relationships are established between all the images in the text, revealing their metaphorical “interaction” [Black, 1962; pp. 25–47; 1977, pp. 431–457] within a comprehensive “associative complex”. Those elements of the holistic metaphorical image that are not explicitly stated in the text are reconstructed from the associative context of the symbolic metaphor.

Results and Discussion

The metaphorical symbolization of the Minotaur image

A component of the hermeneutic code of the text is the metaphorical reimagining of the Minotaur image as a symbolic metaphor of alienation and loneliness. The archetype of the Minotaur monster is allusively intersected not only with the ancient Greek myth but also with numerous depictions of the Minotaur in postmodern interpretation.

In Borges’ “The House of Asterion”, the story is told from the perspective of the Minotaur, who is lonely in his labyrinth, desiring the companionship of his reflection and suffering from solitude: *But of all the games, the one I like best is pretending that there is another Asterion. I pretend that he has come to visit me, and I show him around the house* [Borges, 2000, p. 52]. In Mark Z. Danielewski’s novel “House of Leaves”, the house is depicted as an infinite space with a labyrinth inside it and a Minotaur that doesn’t actually exist but is felt everywhere: *I’m afraid. It is hungry. It is immortal. Worse, it knows nothing of whim* [Danielewski, 2000, p. 79]. In Henry James’ story “The Jolly Corner”, [1945] the main character desperately searches for his doppelgänger, a meeting with his Minotaur, in order to achieve either a fragmentation or consolidation of his potential self. Similarly, Umberto Eco views the Minotaur as a quest for one’s own identity: *A maze does not need a Minotaur: it is its own Minotaur: in other words, the Minotaur is the visitor’s trial-and-error process* [Eco, 1984, p. 81]. The intertextual allusion to the labyrinth, Minotaur, Theseus, and Ariadne is one of the structuring elements in John Fowles’ “The Magus”, where the Minotaur is conceptualized as an internal monster that the protagonist must confront in his initiation: *let it all come, even the black minotaur, so long as it comes; so long as I may reach the center* [Fowles, 2004, p. 306].

Dürrenmatt’s interpretation of the Minotaur differs from the ancient Greek myth and only partially aligns with a postmodern interpretation of the image of the mythological creature as a metaphor for solitude and the search for one’s own identity. However, he interprets these metaphors in his own unique way. The ballad becomes imbued with a pervasive symbolic metaphor for the alienation and loneliness experienced by a creature striving for connection within an antagonistic world. The target space of the Minotaur symbolic metaphor, which is Loneliness, is schematically illustrated in Table 1, representing the nominations of this space characteristics (*The translation into English was carried out by the authors of the article – N.K., M.P.*).

Table 1

Components of the target space of the metaphor “Minotaur is Loneliness”

Nominations	The target space of the metaphor and its components
<i>es für ihn keine andere Welt gab — mottete doch nur ein vages Gefühl von Kuhwärme; es tanzte wie ein monströser Vater seiner selbst¹</i>	Lack of familial ties
<i>ohne zu wissen, daß es selber das Wesen war²</i>	Absence of connections with oneself
<i>er bis jetzt in einer Welt gelebt hatte, in der es nur Minotauren gab, jeder eingeschlossen in ein gläsernes Gefängnis³</i>	Solitude of an enclosed space – a mirrored prison
<i>wußte er doch nicht, was Leben war und was Tod, ohne daß er wußte, was Fluch, Geschick, Geburt und Tod war⁴</i>	Lack of connections with time and space
<i>weder Gott noch Mensch noch Tier, sondern nur Minotaurus zu sein⁵</i>	The sole representative of its kind
<i>Beleidigung der Götter und ein Fluch den Menschen, verdammt War; das Rad des Fluches, der auf ihm lastete; kam es dem Stiermenschen vor, die ganze Menschheit bräche über ihn herein, ihn zu vernichten⁶</i>	Cursed by the gods and rejected by humans
<i>fühlte sich der Minotaurus auch von den Minotauren im Stich gelassen und verraten⁷.</i>	A state of abandonment not only by humans but also by Minotaurs

The common characteristics of the target space, Loneliness, and the source space, Minotaur, encompass:

(1) Isolation, Misunderstanding, Alienation, and Inability to Connect with Others: Similar to the Minotaur in the labyrinth, a solitary person can feel as if he is trapped within their own labyrinth, unable to communicate and find common ground with others; (2) Hidden Fears and Internal Struggles: Just as loneliness is associated with internal conflicts and fears, the Minotaur in Greek mythology was created from fears and sins, constantly burdened by the curse of the gods and haunted by his fate; (3) Loss: Similar to how loneliness is often linked to a sense of loss, the Minotaur is deprived of familial connections, relationships with people, and connections with others of its kind.

At the level of the semantic periphery contributing to the semantic code of the text, the metaphor is intensified by contextual connotations such as “prison”: *eingeschlossen in ein gläsernes Gefängnis⁸*; curse: *Beleidigung der Götter und ein Fluch den Menschen, verdammt War⁹*; inevitability, and abandonment: *die Minotauren und die Mädchen ihn verlassen hatten; gelassen und verraten¹⁰*. Connotations are formed through the repetition of words, including in parallel constructions, which creates a foregrounding effect based on quantitative deviation, i.e., a departure from an expected frequency [Leech, Short, 2007, p. 38] and parallelism as “some form of linguistic repetition in two or more parts of the text” [Douthwaite, 2014, p. 96].

¹ For him, there was no other world — only a vague sense of cow warmth lingered; it danced like a monstrous father of itself.

² Without knowing that it was itself the creature.

³ He had lived until now in a world where there were only Minotaurs, each one enclosed in a glass prison.

⁴ Yet he did not know what life was and what death was, without knowing what curse, destiny, birth, and death were.

⁵ To be neither God nor human nor animal, but only to be a Minotaur.

⁶ An insult to the gods and a curse upon humans; the wheel of the curse that burdened him; it seemed to the bull-man that all of humanity would descend upon him to destroy him.

⁷ The Minotaur also felt abandoned and betrayed by the other Minotaurs.

⁸ Enclosed in a glass prison.

⁹ An insult to the gods and cursed by humans.

¹⁰ The Minotaurs and the girls had left him; left and betrayed.

The image of the *Minotaur-Stiermenschen*, as a half-human, half-beast combines human and animal qualities, with their mirrored inversion in the “noble-base” projection: human qualities such as naivety, trustfulness, childlike innocence, friendliness, and kindness characterize the Minotaur-animal, while the animal nature – the desire to kill, cruelty – awakens within the creature precisely through encounters with humans, their treachery, and betrayal.

Individuals awaken in the Minotaur the monster they themselves fear. At this stage of the Minotaur’s “initiation”, the hermeneutic code of the text is encoded in the complex metaphor “Man is the Minotaur, and the Minotaur is the Mirror of Man”. The blending of the characteristics of the target space “Man” and the source space “Minotaur” in the space of metaphor becomes possible thanks to (a) the dual nature of the Minotaur, embodying both human and animal elements, and the dual nature of Man with his capacity for good and evil; (b) the symbolism of the Minotaur figure in Greek mythology, representing primal, monstrous, and dark aspects of humanity; (c) the reflective quality of the mirror, which mirrors the dark aspect of humanity in the Minotaur. By becoming a mirror of humanity, the Minotaur starts to kill.

In the symbolic code of the novel, such a metamorphosis is encoded through oppositions of self – other, human – animal (with a role reversal: the animalistic element in humans teaches animals to be animals), being – otherness, life – death, trust – betrayal: *Der Minotaurus näherte sich ihm voll Wohlwollen; Er freute sich; Der Minotaurus umtanzte es, umklatschte und umstampfte es. Er tanzte seine Freude, nicht mehr allein zu sein; Er war nur noch Heiterkeit, Freundlichkeit, Leichtigkeit, Zärtlichkeit. – die ganze Menschheit bräche über ihn herein, ihn zu vernichten; Der Haß kam über ihn, den das Tier gegen den Menschen hegt, von dem das Tier gezähmt, mißbraucht, gejagt, geschlachtet, gefressen wird, der Urhaß, der in jedem Tier glimmt*¹¹.

Prominent are also oppositions such as (a) kindness – hatred, marked by recurring words on one hand, *Freude, Heiterkeit, Freundlichkeit* (joy, cheerfulness, friendliness), and on the other, *Haß, Wut* (hate, anger); (b) order – chaos: *rhythmischer Tanz* (rhythmic dance) – *wilden Ringelreigen* (wild wrestling dance); (c) lightness, tenderness (*Leichtigkeit, Zärtlichkeit*) – suspicion: *Er beobachtete sein Spiegelbild mißtrauisch, tat, als ob er es nicht beobachtete, er fühlte, daß es etwas zu sein schien, was es nicht war*¹²; (d) hope, dream: *Er träumte von Sprache, er träumte von Brüderlichkeit, er träumte von Freundschaft, er träumte von Geborgenheit, er träumte von Liebe, von Nähe, von Wärme*¹³ – disappointment and betrayal: *gelassen und verraten* (abandoned and betrayed).

The “Noble-base” oppositions, highlighted in the text through foregrounding mechanisms, contribute to the motif of the hermeneutic code of the text “Minotaur – negation of the beastly element” vs “Human – negation of the human element in the Minotaur”.

Humanity compels Minotaur to realize his solitude and doom, depriving him of blissful ignorance and sentencing him to suffering, thus, on a newer level of textual development, consolidating the original metaphor “Minotaur – Loneliness”, which in this case is associated with Kierkegaard’s idea of “the despair of being oneself” [Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 67].

The Minotaur reaches a higher level of consciousness, not as a human, but only at the moment when he learns to accept himself as the Minotaur: *er einem anderen Minotaurus oder dessen Spiegelbild gegenüberstand. Der Minotaurus schrie auf, wenn es auch mehr ein Brüllen war als ein Schreien, ein langgezogenes Aufheulen, Aufmuhen und Aufjaulen vor Freude darüber, daß er nicht mehr der Vereinzelte war, der zugleich Aus- und Eingeschlossene, daß es einen zweiten Minotaurus gab, nicht nur sein Ich, sondern auch ein Du*¹⁴.

¹¹ The Minotaur approached him with kindness; He was delighted; The Minotaur danced around it, clapping and stamping. He danced his joy, no longer being alone; He was nothing but cheerfulness, friendliness, lightness, tenderness. – all of humanity would descend upon him to destroy him; Hatred came over him, the hatred the animal holds against humans, the ones who tame, misuse, hunt, slaughter, and devour the animal, the primal hatred that smolders in every creature.

¹² He observed his reflection suspiciously, acted as if he wasn’t observing it, he felt that it seemed to be something it wasn’t.

¹³ He dreamed of language, he dreamed of brotherhood, he dreamed of friendship, he dreamed of security, he dreamed of love, of closeness, of warmth.

¹⁴ He stood facing another Minotaur or its reflection. The Minotaur let out a scream, more like a roar than a scream, a prolonged howl, a rebellion and a howling of joy because he was no longer the isolated one, both excluded and enclosed at the same time, that there was a second Minotaur, not just his self, but also a You.

In the hermeneutic code of the novel, the image of the Minotaur is connected with Kierkegaard's existentialist idea about the inevitability of conflict and guilt arising from the encounter of the Self with the Other [Kierkegaard, 1987, p. 144, 150]. Upon encountering the Other-Human, the innocent Minotaur becomes guilty solely because he exists, "*schuldlos und schuldig zugleich*"¹⁵.

The encounter of the Minotaur with himself is the result of realizing that the reflection in the mirrors is the "Other". Therefore, this encounter can be interpreted in connection with an existential concept such as the "Self" and the "Other", "The Other and the Look" [Sartre, 1992] – when one experiences oneself in the Other's Look, one doesn't experience oneself as nothing (no thing), but as something, as objectively existing subjectivity, with a "self-recovery of being which has been previously corrupted" [Sartre, 1992, p. 116].

The reinterpretation of the Minotaur's image by Dürrenmatt leads to a reevaluation of other mythological characters through the inversion of hero and monster roles, embodying good and evil. These roles are reversed, with Theseus donning a bull mask to deceive and treacherously kill the Minotaur, who was filled with "existential" enlightenment from encountering a being similar to himself. The image of Ariadne is also rethought by Dürrenmatt, since the role of Theseus' saviour, leading him out of the labyrinth, is replaced by the role of an accomplice in the murder. She, like Theseus, becomes a symbol of cunning, as she herself goes to the sleeping Minotaur and wraps his horns with a red thread, so that Theseus, entering the labyrinth, can quickly find and kill the Minotaur.

The metaphorical symbolization of the image of Mirrors

One of the central cultural archetypes in the ballade is the image of mirrors which serves as a recurring motif in postmodern literature, where, similar to Dürrenmatt, the mirror motif often pairs with the archetypal image of the labyrinth, both in attributive syntagmatic relationships such as "the mirror-maze" and in the relationships of double symbolic metaphor (a metaphor within a metaphor): Mirror – Otherworld, Mirror – Labyrinth, when the mirror serves as a metaphor for an alternate world that draws one into the labyrinth: "Mirrors to weave a labyrinth around" [Borges, 1964, p. 85]. In postmodern literary tradition, only Borges addresses the image of mirrors in at least six of his works – in "Labyrinths", "Funes the Memorious", "Three Versions of Judas", "The Immortal", "The Theologians", "Deutsches Requiem".

In Dürrenmatt's work, the labyrinth consists of multiple mirrors reflecting the image of a being with a projection into infinity: *verschachtelte Wände aus Glas waren; in Spiegelbildern von Spiegelbildern die anderen Spiegelbilder*.

The image of numerous labyrinthine mirrors that duplicate reality is reminiscently connected to the mirrors of the Benedictine abbey in Eco's "The Name of the Rose" [1983] and to the Borgesian mirrors in the house from "Death and the Compass", in which man is "infinitely reflected in opposing mirrors" [Borges, 1954, p. 259].

The archetypal image of the mirror in the ballad becomes a symbolic metaphor that evolves as the text unfolds, accumulating symbolic and semantic meanings and encoding a hermeneutic code. At the beginning of the ballad, the mirror serves as a metaphor for the Universe of the Minotaur, where he does not feel lonely but rather as a "leader" or "god", dancing with reflections.

The Universe, as the target space of the Mirror metaphor, is schematically illustrated in Table 1, presenting markers of this space and its characteristics.

The metaphor of the Mirror as the Universe is reminiscently associated with the image of the mirror-door in the library from "The Name of the Rose", which, in turn, becomes a symbol-metaphor of Eco's universe-labyrinth. It is also linked to the idea of the reconstruction of the Universe, attributed to the conjunction of the mirror and encyclopedia by Borges [1964, p. 3], as well as with the image of the mirror as a metaphor for infinity in Borges' "The Library of Babel" [Borges, 2000], where the mirror expresses and promises infinity.

¹⁵ blameless and guilty at the same time.

Table 2

Components of the target space of the metaphor “Mirror is the Minotaur’s Universe”

Nominations and images	The target space of the metaphor and its components
<i>durch das Weltall seiner Spiegelbilder daß der Minotaurus in ein Universum aus Stein zu blicken glaubte; das Weltall der Minotauren¹⁶</i>	Universe
<i>Labyrinth ins Unendliche widergespiegelt; als Spiegelbilder von Spiegelbildern von Spiegelbildern spiegelverkehrtwaren, bis sie sich im Unendlichen verloren¹⁷</i>	Infinity: boundless dimensions and intricate interconnectedness.
<i>es sich wie ein Anführer vorkam, mehr noch, wie ein Gott, wenn es gewußt hätte, was ein Gott ist; wie ein monströser Gott¹⁸</i>	God (creator of the Universe)
<i>Seine Welt hatte sich verdoppelt¹⁹</i>	World
<i>eine Unermeßlichkeit von Spiegelbildern; Es sah unermeßlich viele Wesen, wie es eines war, vor sich, und wie es sich herumdrehte, um sie nicht mehr zu sehen, unermeßlich viele ihm gleiche Wesen wiederum vor sich²⁰</i>	Immeasurability, Multiplicity and Diversity: The Universe contains a myriad of entities, phenomena, and worlds
<i>Er sah das unermeßliche, sich hinaufwälzende Rad, er hielt die Augen geschlossen, er sah es dennoch, das Rad des Fluches, der auf ihm lastete, das Rad seines Geschicks, das Rad seiner Geburt und das Rad seines Todes.²¹</i>	The cycle, cyclicity.

The walls of the labyrinth serve as mirrors in which the Minotaur sees multiple versions of himself, interacting only with his own reflections. The correlate of this mirror reflection is the echo – a reflection of sound in the mirrored labyrinth: *tausendfach scholl sein Echo zurück, schien endlos zu brüllen²²*.

The fact that the Minotaur does not recognize himself in the mirrored images but considers himself one being among many similar beings showcases the animalistic aspect of the human-bull, with a still “dormant” human nature that has not yet reached the Lacanian mirror stage of human development as the self-awareness of the Minotaur is hindered by the multiplication of his own image through infinite mirrors: *Wesen nicht nur seinem Spiegelbild gegenüberkauerte, sondern auch den Spiegelbildern seiner Spiegelbilder: Es sah unermeßlich viele Wesen, wie es eines war, vor sich, und wie es sich herumdrehte, um sie nicht mehr zu sehen, unermeßlich viele ihm gleiche Wesen wiederum vor sich; Es befand sich in einer Welt voll kauender Wesen, ohne zu wissen, daß es selber das Wesen war²³*.

At this stage of the text’s development, there are echoes of Borges’ “Fauna of Mirrors” [Borges, 1970], where mirrors show images of animals and beings that exist independently of the image they duplicate. This, in turn, intersects with some Chinese legends about “animals in the mirror” [Cirlot, 2001, p. 212]. The recurring motif in literature of “Mirror Images as an Antithesis of Loneliness” is also actualized. For instance, Potter, experiencing a sense of loneliness,

¹⁶ through the cosmos of his reflections, that the Minotaur believed he was gazing into a universe of stone; the cosmos of the Minotaurs.

¹⁷ Labyrinth mirrored into infinity; as reflections of reflections of reflections were mirrored in reverse, until they were lost in the infinite.

¹⁸ It felt like a leader, even more so, like a god, if it had known what a god is; like a monstrous god.

¹⁹ His world had doubled.

²⁰ An immensity of reflections; It saw countless beings, like itself, before it, and as it turned around not to see them anymore, countless beings just like it were once again before it.

²¹ He saw the immeasurable, rolling wheel, he kept his eyes closed, yet he saw it, the wheel of the curse that burdened him, the wheel of his destiny, the wheel of his birth, and the wheel of his death.

²² A thousandfold, its echo reverberated, seeming to roar endlessly.

²³ The creature crouched not only in front of its reflection but also in front of the reflections of its reflections: It saw countless beings, like itself, before it, and as it turned around not to see them anymore, countless beings just like it were once again before it; It found itself in a world full of crouching beings, without knowing that it was itself the being.

“had seen not only himself in the mirror, but a whole crowd of people standing right behind him” [Rowling, 1998, p. 208].

The conceptual reconstruction of the symbolic metaphor “Mirror – Universe of the Minotaur” reveals a set of attributes of generic space integrating the source space “Mirror” and the target space “Universe”:

(1) Symmetry, Balance, and Harmony: Despite its immense diversity, the Universe maintains a harmonious balance. Just as a mirror creates a symmetrical reflection of objects, the metaphor depicts symmetry between the Minotaur’s state and a harmonious and balanced whole of its inner universe. The beings inhabiting it interact with each other and with him in a unified dance: *dieser kindlichen Freude wurde allmählich ein rhythmischer Tanz des Wesens mit seinen Spiegelbildern, die teils spiegelverkehrt, teils als Spiegelbilder von Spiegelbildern mit dem Wesen identisch*²⁴.

(2) Illusion and Reality, Blurred Boundary: The semantic boundary between illusion and reality, much like a reflection in a mirror, becomes blurred, symbolizing the complex relationship between the Minotaur’s perception and the actual universe: *es nicht wußte, was Traum war und was Wirklichkeit*²⁵.

(3) Reflection and Interconnection, Iconic Isomorphism: An iconic correspondence between the Minotaur’s existence and its universe is established, akin to how images in a mirror correspond to their physical counterparts. Like a mirror, the Universe reflects various aspects of existence, capturing both visible and hidden elements. In the world of his mirrors, the Minotaur’s internal experiences are reflected, leading him to respond to these reflections with a friendly dance: *Er tanzte seine Ungestalt, er tanzte seine Freude, er tanzte seine Erlösung, und es tanzte sein Schicksal, er tanzte seine Gie; Es wurde übermütiger, sprang herum, überschlug sich, und mit ihm sprang und überschlug sich eine Unermeßlichkeit von Spiegelbildern*²⁶.

The metaphor blended space contributes to the hermeneutic code of the text: the mirrors in the Minotaur’s labyrinth create his harmonious universe, preserving his naively animalistic perception of the world, shielding him from realizing his loneliness and the chaos beyond the mirrors. The blend develops by incorporating elements from the source and target spaces of another metaphor “Mirror is Consciousness” based on such shared features of the first metaphor’s generic space as Reflection and Interconnection (the Minotaur’s feelings and perceptions is reflected in the world of mirrors).

The hermeneutic code of the text is supported by its semantic code through connotations associated with the parameters of the universe: infinity – *vom Labyrinth ins Unendliche widergespiegelt*²⁷, timelessness, and vastness: *eine Unermeßlichkeit von Spiegelbildern; Spiegelbilder von Spiegelbildern*²⁸.

Due to repeated instances in the text, such nominations, contributing to the semantic code, underlie foregrounding effects of quantitative deviation and parallelism. On the other hand, the semantic periphery of the metaphor includes connotations of “happiness”, “friendliness”, and “interaction”, which strengthen the metaphorical comparison of mirrors-labyrinths with the universe of the Minotaur as a harmonious and interconnected whole. *Ein Glücksgefühl überkam es; er tanzte seine Freude; Sein Gesicht wurde freundlicher, die Gesichter seiner Spiegelbilder wurden freundlicher; ein ungestümes Glück*²⁹.

At the beginning of the ballad, the mirror is not a tool for the Minotaur’s self-identification, and his human nature is only expressed through a creative dance-like interaction with the mirror images. The appearance of a human in the mirror reflections makes the mirrors a threshold

²⁴ This childlike joy gradually transformed into a rhythmic dance of the creature with its reflections, some of them mirrored, some identical as reflections of reflections with the creature.

²⁵ It didn’t know what was a dream and what was reality.

²⁶ He danced his deformity, he danced his joy, he danced his redemption, and his destiny danced, he danced his greed; It became more reckless, leaping about, somersaulting, and an immensity of reflections leaped and somersaulted with it.

²⁷ mirrored from the labyrinth into infinity.

²⁸ An immensity of reflections; reflections of reflections.

²⁹ A feeling of happiness overwhelmed it; it danced its joy; Its face became friendlier, the faces of its reflections became friendlier; an exuberant happiness."

phenomenon for the Minotaur's self-awareness: *Tanzend hatte das Wesen zwischen den tanzen- den Spiegelbildern Wesen gesehen, die nicht tanzten und die keine Spiegelbilder waren, die ihm gehorchten*³⁰.

In this context, the second hermeneutical interpretation of the mirror, corresponding to literary tradition, is the metaphor of the Mirror as a Threshold, a corridor between two worlds, which Dürrenmatt reinterprets in two dimensions. Firstly, as a boundary between worlds – the world of the Minotaur and humans, the labyrinth and the external world, aligning with the literary tradition exemplified by Lewis Carroll in "Alice Through the Looking Glass". Secondly, the mirror serves as a threshold of transition towards self-awareness or a qualitatively different state of the soul, as "the mythic form of a door through which the soul may 'pass' to the other side" [Chevalier, Gheerbrant, 1997, p. 211].

The first projection of the metaphor "Mirror as Threshold" between the Minotaur's world and that of humans emerges when the Minotaur realizes that the reflection in the mirror is the Other and the space of mirrors, reflecting the natural world of the Minotaur, is invaded by the human world. At first, it is a girl whom the Minotaur inadvertently kills in a sensual dance, then a young man who, like a matador, taunts him with a sword and a cloak, striking with a sword in the chest, the young men and women joyfully dancing in anticipation of his death, and finally the pseudo-Minotaur Theseus in a bull mask.

When human reflections appear in the mirrors, they cease to be incorruptible and mere prosthesis that, in Eco's words, cannot be used to lie [Eco, 1984, pp. 214, 216]. The mirror becomes deceptive not because it is distorted but because the centre of distortion becomes the human who disguises himself as a mirror reflection to kill. The human-twisted mirror distorts and inverts feelings and emotions, responding to merriment, warmth, lightness, and tenderness with malicious intent, betrayal, and murder.

At this stage of the text's development, the second projection of the metaphor "Mirror as Threshold" becomes actualized. The human "twists" the feelings of the Minotaur – from love to hatred – by mirror-like transmitting to him human feelings of hating, fearing, and understanding that everything that is not a Minotaur is his enemy. In other words, enantiomorphism, the inverted symmetry of the mirror (right – left), metaphorically changes "right" feelings to "left" ones. The semantic periphery of such a metaphor at the level of the text's semantic code is actualized by connotations reflecting the "transition" of the Minotaur to a new level of self-awareness – with human qualities: cruelty, hatred, fear: *seine Wut, seine Gier, seinen Wunsch sich zu rächen, seine Lust zu töten, seine Furcht; er die Leiber der anderen Menschen mit seinen Hörnern durchstoßen und zerfetzt hatte*³¹.

As the mirror becomes a model of deception, contradiction, and the conflict between appearance and essence, the Minotaur becomes aware of the illusory and deceptive nature of his mirrored universe. The idea of mirror illusion is supported by reminiscences of postmodern literature – the Minotaur no longer knows what is real and what is just a reflection, similar to the character in Ambrose Bierce's story in John Barth's "Lost in the Funhouse", who does not know if the image he sees in the mirror-maze is real or not [Barth, 1988]. He cannot find answers as to why the mirror reflections of humans carry hatred and death toward him; the answers are hidden behind the mirrors, remaining an enigma, much like the most forbidden place in the labyrinth from "The Name of the Rose", [Eco, 1983], *finis Africae*.

This leads to an explosion of hatred and the destruction of the mirror walls of the labyrinth that multiply and disseminate this illusion. This is somewhat reminiscent of the reference to Borges' "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius": "The visible universe [is] an illusion. Mirrors ... are abominable because they multiply and disseminate that universe" [Borges, 1964, p. 4]. Akin to the apocalypse of the universe of mirrors in Eco's "The Name of the Rose", where the labyrinth-library is consumed by fire, the Minotaur destroys the mirrors that invert his world: *Er durchbrach die Wand; darauf schlug er mit beiden Fäusten zu, das Spiegelbild ebenfalls, schließlich trommelte*

³⁰ While dancing, the creature had seen among the dancing reflections beings that did not dance and were not reflections, beings that obeyed it.

³¹ his anger, his greed, his desire for revenge, his urge to kill, his fear; he had pierced and torn apart the bodies of other people with his horns.

*er an die Wand; Er trommelte seine Wut, er trommelte seine Gier zu zerstören, er trommelte seinen Wunsch sich zu rächen, er trommelte seine Lust zu töten, er trommelte seine Furcht, er trommelte seine Rebellion*³².

Mirrors serve as signs of disorientation not only in the metaphorical sense but also in a direct, narrative sense – as they disorient the creature with the mirrored reflection of the pseudo-Minotaur, Theseus in a bull mask. Thus, the end of the story invertedly mirrors its beginning: the Minotaur confronts a Minotaur who, as hinted by his experience of self-identification, is his own reflection. However, he suddenly realizes that this is not his reflection but a representative of his own kind. Recognizing oneself in the other becomes a decisive moment for completing his own self, his self-identification, revealing himself. This fills the Minotaur with joy, hope for friendship, love, companionship, and community: *aber das ihm bewies, daß er einem anderen Minotaurus oder dessen Spiegelbild gegenüberstand. (...) Er tanzte den Tanz der Brüderlichkeit, den Tanz der Freundschaft, den Tanz der Geborgenheit, den Tanz der Liebe, den Tanz der Nähe, den Tanz der Wärme*³³. With joy, he extends his arms to “His Own”, and in that moment, Theseus delivers a deadly blow: *als der Minotaurus in die geöffneten Arme des andern stürzte, im Vertrauen darauf, einen Freund gefunden zu haben, ein Wesen wie er, (...) stieß der andere den Dolch in den Rücken*³⁴.

The ballad itself serves as a metaphor for a mirror that, on the one hand, reflects a world in which innocence and simplicity are threatened with destruction and, on the other hand, distorts the world of myth in order to convey such a reality.

The metaphorical symbolization of the Labyrinth image

The image of the labyrinth is a universal cultural archetype, symbolizing the structure of the universe, the cycle of life, the idea of eternal return, endless searching, and initiation. In postmodern literature, the labyrinth, destined “to be deciphered by men” [Borges, 1999, p. 35], becomes a metaphor for the chaos of life and the loss of human orientation and meaning, with the mirror labyrinth being a representation of postmodern reality, as it symbolically signifies the disorientation of human consciousness. This symbolic metaphor is particularly defining in the hermeneutic code of Borges’ stories like “The Library of Babel”, [2000], “The Garden of Forking Paths” [2018] and Umberto Eco’s novel “The Name of the Rose” [1983]. Both Eco and Borges associate the imagery of labyrinths with libraries or repositories of books as symbols of cosmic order.

In Dürrenmatt’s work, the labyrinth serves as a symbolic metaphor; however, the labyrinth model in the Minotaur does not fit into the classifications of labyrinths outlined by Umberto Eco in his “Notes on ‘The Name of the Rose’”: The Greek labyrinth of Theseus, where all paths lead to the centre; the mannerist labyrinth with a single path leading to the exit; and the rhizomatic labyrinth, characterized by the ability to connect any point with any other point, even if those connections have not been established yet, and it lacks both a centre and an outside [Eco, 1983, p. 81].

On one hand, the mythological characters in the ballad – Minotaur, Theseus, Ariadne – serve as intertextual references to the labyrinth of Theseus. On the other hand, in “The Minotaur”, the gates of the labyrinth are open, and due to the mirrored walls of the labyrinth, the structure of such a labyrinth with infinite multiplication of mirrored images becomes boundless, depriving it of structure and thereby associating it with the rhizomatic labyrinth. The infinity and hopelessness of such a labyrinth resonate with the postmodernist interpretation, with its characterization as “a sign of the labyrinth of the world” into which “You enter and you do not know whether you will come out” [Eco, 1983, p. 158] and which “promises the infinite” [Borges, 1964, 78].

This labyrinth serves an ambivalent protective function – protecting the world from the Minotaur and the Minotaur from the world: the Minotaur is confined in the labyrinth to protect

³² He broke through the wall; He then struck with both fists, at his reflection as well. Finally, he drummed on the wall; he drummed his anger, he drummed his greed to destroy, he drummed his desire for revenge, he drummed his urge to kill, he drummed his fear, he drummed his rebellion.

³³ But that proved to him that he was facing another Minotaur or its reflection. (...) He danced the dance of brotherhood, the dance of friendship, the dance of security, the dance of love, the dance of closeness, the dance of warmth.

³⁴ when the Minotaur rushed into the open arms of the other, trusting that he had found a friend, a being like himself, (...) the other thrust the dagger into his back.

people from the creature and the creature from people: *um die Menschen vor dem Wesen und das Wesen vor den Menschen zu schützen; es seinetwegen das Labyrinth gab, und das nur, weil er geboren worden war, weil es ein Wesen wie ihn nicht geben durfte, der Grenze willen, die zwischen Tier und Mensch und Mensch und den Göttern gesetzt worden ist, damit die Welt in Ordnung bleibe und nicht zum Labyrinth werde und damit ins Chaos zurückfalle, aus dem sie entstanden war*³⁵.

A commonality between Eco's and Dürrenmatt's conception of the labyrinth lies in the fact that the labyrinth-enigma is subject to destruction. The solution to the mirror labyrinth for the Minotaur becomes the realization and acceptance of its essence and distinction from humans. As a result, he shatters the mirrors – not to escape the labyrinth, but to release his new essence, to break the illusion that the world and the images in the mirrors are friendly and open to love and friendship. Thus, akin to the postmodern interpretation of the labyrinth, the Minotaur's journey is a search for self. The labyrinth in this sense becomes a symbolic metaphor for consciousness-self-awareness, it embodies the irresolvable, inescapable antinomies, much like the rhizomatic labyrinth – trust and betrayal, innocence and deception, life and death, pleasure and pain, harmony and chaos, all of which define the symbolic code of the text. In the hermeneutic code of the novel, the irresolvability of these contradictions is linked to the target space of another metaphor – the Labyrinth as the Other-the Human. Human attributes are associated with the right side of the antinomies – deceit, betrayal, pain, death, and chaos, forming the architectural space of the target space of the metaphor and supported by the connotations of the semantic code – bewilderment, distrust, and misunderstanding: *Er war verwirrt; Er begriff nicht*³⁶.

Thus, the symbolic metaphor of the labyrinth is polycomponent and polysemantic, including one input source space and multiple target spaces – Refuge, the Other, Self-Discovery/Path to Self. The generic space of the fundamental symbolic metaphor "Labyrinth is the Other" involves common attributes of the input spaces such as:

(1) complexity, ambiguity, and unpredictability in interacting with humans, understanding their actions – akin to a labyrinth where multiple paths can confuse, as well as a sense of loss and uncertainty: *Er begriff nicht; Er fühlte nur, daß dieses Wesen, das ihn angesprungen und etwas in seinen Leib gestoßen hatte, ihn nicht liebte*³⁷. Such characteristics of the generic space are revealed, in particular, in the metaphorical description of the dance in the Minotaur's labyrinth with the girl, involving interactions between oppositions such as beauty and ugliness, joy and fear, attraction and repulsion: *Er tanzte seine Ungestalt, es tanzte seine Schönheit, er tanzte seine Freude, es gefunden zu haben, es tanzte seine Furcht, von ihm gefunden worden zu sein, er tanzte sein Herandrängen, und es tanzte sein Abdrängen*³⁸,

(2) an attempt to overcome differences and find common ground (Minotaur's dances), associated with the crossing of labyrinth boundaries.

The metaphor "Labyrinth – Path to Self" is marked by nominations such as *Erleuchtung, Minotaureneinsicht, sich selber sich gegenüberbefand*³⁹. The space of common features from the input spaces involves seeking and discovering of one's essence: *Er spürte, daß es nicht viele Minotauren gab, sondern nur einen Minotaurus, daß es nur ein Wesen gab, wie er eines war, ein anderes nicht vor ihm und ein anderes nicht nach ihm, daß er der Vereinzelte war, und wie er das spürte, als ein Fühlen ohne Begreifen, als eine Erleuchtung ohne Erkennen, nicht als eine Men-*

³⁵ To protect the people from the creature and the creature from the people; the labyrinth existed because of him, and that only because he had been born, because a being like him was not supposed to exist, for the sake of the boundary that had been set between animal and human, and human and the gods, so that the world would remain in order and not become a labyrinth, and so it would not revert to the chaos from which it had emerged.

³⁶ He was confused; he did not understand.

³⁷ he did not understand; he only felt that this being, which had pounced on him and thrust something into his body, did not love him.

³⁸ He danced his deformity, she danced her beauty, he danced his joy at finding it, she danced her fear of being found by him, he danced his approach, and she danced its retreat.

³⁹ Enlightenment, Minotaur's insight, finding himself face to face with himself.

*scheneinsicht durch Begriffe, sondern als eine Minotaurensicht durch Bilder und durch Gefühle; träumte der Minotaurus, er sei ein Mensch*⁴⁰.

The common attributes of the target and source spaces in the metaphor Labyrinth-Refuge includes safety, and protection, isolation from the threatening external world.

In the blended space, the selected characteristics of the generic spaces are projected onto the hermeneutic code of the ballad: for the Minotaur, the labyrinth serves as a Refuge from the Other-Human, which is threatening in its unpredictability, does not respond to the dance-communication, responds with a dance that brings death and pain, and prompts the search for Self as distinct from this Other.

Being a space of initiation and self-discovery, the symbolic metaphor of the labyrinth is associated with Kierkegaard's idea of the enigmatic nature (labyrinthine nature) of self [Kierkegaard, 1992, p. 479–480] as well as with the concept of self-search, encountering oneself in mirrors in the existentialist transition from existence to essence when, in the words of Sartre, "Man first (...) encounters himself" and "defines himself afterward" [Sartre, 1973, p. 28]. The search for oneself is associated with existentialist concepts of anxiety, fear, and despair, creating constant connotations in the semantic code: *mit der Traurigkeit der Minotaurus; fürchtete er; um sich nicht zu fürchten, setzte er seiner Furcht den Stolz entgegen*⁴¹. The archetypal motif of the labyrinth is also connected with an existentialist concept like absurdity, relying on the symbolic code of oppositions that are irresolvable for the Minotaur. Overcoming them in the actional code of the ballad is linked to attempting to destroy the Other (killing humans) and the labyrinth itself.

Thus, Dürrenmatt's reinterpretation of the labyrinth image involves three levels of metaphorical symbolism. At the first level, the primary meaning of the labyrinth as an archetypal symbol – representing the world, the universe, eternity, and infinity – is utilized. At the second level, the target space of the metaphor is reimagined while retaining implications consistently associated with the original space (the labyrinth) and simultaneously using fixed symbolic correlates existing in postmodernist literature. On the third level, the image is reinterpreted – a new dimension is introduced into the symbolic metaphor, specifically, introducing chaos into the Minotaur's labyrinth in the form of the Other-Human, with a metonymic transfer of characteristics of labyrinthine chaos onto this Other in the metaphor "the labyrinth is the Other".

Conclusions

The symbolic metaphors in Dürrenmatt's ballad are polycomponential, since in each of them a source space – of the labyrinth, mirrors, and the Minotaur, coordinates with multiple target spaces. The archetypal image of the labyrinth is metaphorically reinterpreted by Dürrenmatt as "refuge", "other", and "self-discovery". The image of the Minotaur becomes a metaphor for "loneliness" and the "mirror of Man". The image of the Mirror is metaphorized as the Universe of the Minotaur and a "threshold", signifying both the boundary between the world of the Minotaur and the external world, and between the animal and human elements. Metaphors form the basis of the motives of the hermeneutic code of the text, as well as contribute to the enrichment of connotations of the semantic code and the actualization of oppositions of the symbolic code.

In the reinterpretation of the ballad, metaphors maintain allusive connections both with mythological images and with models of metaphorical symbolism in postmodernism – in continuity with the postmodernist interpretation of the labyrinth as a metaphor for chaos, loss of meaning, disorientation, and the destruction of the deciphered labyrinth; in the rethinking of the image of mirrors as a metaphor for infinity, the antithesis to loneliness, and the Universe as a mirrored illusion, as well as in establishing a correlative connection between the images of the mirror and the labyrinth in the symbolic metaphor of the Mirror-Labyrinth; in the reinterpretation of the image of the Minotaur in postmodernism as the encounter of a person with his beastly essence.

⁴⁰ He sensed that there were not many Minotaurs, but only one Minotaur, that there was only one being like him, no other before him and no other after him, that he was the unique one. And as he felt this, as a sensation without comprehension, as an enlightenment without recognition, not as a human insight through concepts, but as a Minotaur's insight through images and feelings; the Minotaur dreamed he was a human.

⁴¹ With the sadness of the Minotaur; he was afraid; to avoid being afraid, he countered his fear with pride.

From an existentialist perspective, the interpretation of metaphors in the ballad is associated with the idea of the labyrinthine nature of the Self, the encounter with oneself, which Dürrenmatt reimagines as the encounter of the Minotaur in mirrors with his human nature. It also relates to the concept of transitioning from existence to essence, with existentialist notions of anxiety, fear, and despair that accompany such a transition. It delves into concepts like “Self” and the “Other” and “The Other and the Look”, where one experiences themselves through the gaze of the Other, as well as the inevitability of conflict and guilt that arise when the Self meets the Other.

A promising avenue for further research would be to analyze the continuity of symbolic metaphors in other works by the author.

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SYMBOLIC METAPHORS IN DURRENMATT'S "THE MINOTAUR" WITHIN MYTHOLOGICAL, POSTMODERN AND EXISTENTIALIST CONTEXTS

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The research *aims* to interpret the symbolic metaphors in the ballad "Minotaur" with a focus on the commonalities and differences in their interpretation by Dürrenmatt in relation to mythological, postmodernist, and existential-philosophical traditions. This is achieved through the application of intertextual, structural-semiotic, and hermeneutical *methods* of literary analysis in conjunction with linguistic methods such as conceptual blending and the method of interactive theory of metaphor. The metaphors of Labyrinth, Mirrors, and Minotaur, which are polycomponential and polysemantic, with one source space and multiple target spaces, contribute to the hermeneutic, symbolic, and semantic codes of the text. The Labyrinth metaphor includes target spaces of "refuge", "other", and "self-discovery"; Mirrors – the Universe of the Minotaur and the "threshold" – a polysemantic metaphor, interpreted

in the hermeneutic code as the boundary between the world of the Minotaur and the outer world and between the animal and human elements. The image of the Minotaur is projected into the target space of "loneliness" and the "mirror of Man".

The blended spaces of all the metaphors form the hermeneutic code of the text, which is supported by the semantic code and the symbolic code of oppositions. For the "labyrinth" metaphors, the semantic metaphorical periphery includes, depending on the target space, connotations of "happiness", "harmony", "friendliness", "interconnectedness", and "bewilderment", "distrust", "misunderstanding". The "Mirrors" metaphors involve connotations of infinity, timelessness, vastness, associated with the target space of the Universe, and "danger", "cruelty", "death", "fear", which intensify the target space of the Threshold. The semantic periphery of the "Minotaur is Loneliness" metaphor is reinforced by connotations like "prison", "inevitability", "abandonment", "betrayal", "fear", "disappointment".

In the symbolic code, the "labyrinth" metaphor unfolds in oppositions such as "trust and betrayal", "life and death", "pleasure and pain", "harmony and chaos", the insolubility of which is associated with the rhizomatic labyrinth. The "Mirror-Threshold" metaphor is associated with oppositions like self – other, human – animal (with role reversal: the animalistic element in a human teaches the animal to be a beast), commonality – otherness. The symbolic code associated with the "Minotaur is Loneliness" and "Minotaur is the Mirror of Man" metaphors is based on oppositions of naivety, trust, friendliness, and kindness, which characterize the Minotaur-animal before his encounter with a human, and murder, cruelty, and betrayal, which distinguish humans. These oppositions encode the hermeneutic code of the text: Minotaur – the negation of the animal element vs. Man – the negation of the human element in the Minotaur.

Reinterpreted in the ballad, the metaphors maintain an allusive connection with mythological archetypes and metaphorical symbolism in postmodernism. In the metaphor of the labyrinth, the mythological symbolism draws on the archetypal image of the labyrinth as a structure of the universe, a cycle of life, the idea of eternal return, and initiation. The postmodern tradition is evident in the interpretation of the labyrinth as a metaphor for chaos, loss of meaning, and disorientation, with the destruction of the deciphered labyrinth. From an existential perspective, the metaphor is interpreted in the ballad in connection with the concepts of the labyrinthine nature of Self, encounters with oneself, the transition from existence to essence, and the anxiety, fear, and despair accompanying such a transition.

The metaphor of the mirror in the ballad, in accordance with the postmodern tradition, combines with the archetypal image of the labyrinth in dual symbolic and metaphorical relationships: Mirror – Another world, Mirror – Labyrinth as a metaphor for an otherworldly realm that draws one into the labyrinth. Reminiscences of postmodernism include the images of labyrinthine mirrors as metaphors for infinity, the universe as a mirrored illusion, and as antitheses to loneliness, when the mirrors are populated by beings.

The archetype of the Minotaur allusively intersects with ancient Greek mythology and its postmodernism reinterpretations as the encounter of a person with his beastly essence, as well as with existentialist ideas of "Self" and the "Other", "The Other and the Look", and the inevitability of conflict and guilt that arise when the Self encounters the Other: when confronted with the Other-Human, the innocent Minotaur becomes guilty solely because he exists.

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