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## IDENTITY DYNAMICS IN FRÉDÉRIC BEIGBEDER'S NOVELS: A SYNERGETIC ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

The article explores the concept of identity in Frédéric Beigbeder's autofictional and autobiographical novels through the prism of synergetics, self-organised systems and meta-metaphor. By analysing the writer's works, including trilogies about Marc Marronier and Octave Parango, as well as his autobiographical texts, the study examines how the processes of self-organisation and the interaction of various social, cultural and psychological factors determine the formation and evolution of characters' identity. The application of the synergetic approach reveals the mechanisms of identity formation through the system of attractors (goals, values, aspirations) and repellers (crisis events, destructive factors), which demonstrates the dynamics of the characters' self-identification in the conditions of modern socio-cultural changes.

Meta-metaphors in the works by Frédéric Beigbeder play an important role in the construction of layers of meaning, conveying complex aspects of individual and collective self-identification. For example, the arrest in *Un roman français* symbolises the awareness of his own past, the dam in *Un barrage contre l'Atlantique* reflects the struggle against destructive natural tendencies, the Tower of Babel in *Windows on the World* represents globalisation, and the cathedral in *Au secours pardon* illustrates existential crisis and the search for meaning. In addition, meta-metaphor serves as a way of literary transformation of biographical experience, turning the author's personal experiences into universal models of identity comprehension.

The results of this study show that Frédéric Beigbeder's autofictional and autobiographical works are complex multi-layered systems that combine the author's personal experience with postmodernist writing strategies. His protagonists function as dynamic systems undergoing transformations under the influence of social, cultural and psychological factors. The study highlights the significance of self-organised systems and meta-metaphors in the modelling of identity and opens new perspectives for the analysis of postmodern novels, showing how literature reflects the processes of personal self-determination in a changing world.

**Keywords:** *identity, synergetics, self-organised systems, meta-metaphor, discourse, Frédéric Beigbeder, autofictional/autobiographical novels.*

### 1. Introduction. Identity in literature: an interdisciplinary approach

Literature is a complex phenomenon that reflects not only objective reality, but also the multifaceted nature of human consciousness. As a means of representation of social processes and cultural transformations, it forms a space for comprehending identity in all its diversity. Literary texts of different epochs and traditions express both individual experiences and collective perceptions of

self-determination conditioned by historical, political and philosophical contexts. It follows that the study of literature as an instrument of identity modelling allows gaining a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of constructing the 'Self' in the socio-cultural space.

The study of identity is a complex scientific task due to its multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature. This concept covers a wide range of philosophical, sociological, psychological and cultural aspects, which requires the application of complex methodological approaches. In this context, the synergetic analysis, which allows considering the processes of formation and transformation of identity as a result of systemic interaction of various factors, is of particular importance. This approach contributes to a deeper theoretical reflection and empirical understanding of the mechanisms of identity construction in the socio-cultural space.

Western Romance literature, characterised by genre and thematic diversity, as well as the influence of various cultural and historical traditions, is a significant object of research in the context of identity studies. Its texts demonstrate the complex processes of formation, representation and transformation of the individual and collective self, which makes them valuable material for complex analyses.

Directly, the novels of the French writer Frédéric Beigbeder are largely represented by autobiographical and autofictional works, where a direct connection between the author and the literary projections of his protagonists can be traced, which makes him an ideal object for identity research. Such works allow to trace the evolution of author's identity against the background of socio-political and cultural changes (Allamand, 2018), globalisation, digitalisation, cancel culture, isolation and other phenomena of modernity (Sargar, 2013). The personal and creative experience of Frédéric Beigbeder provides valuable material for analysing the concept of identity, as it reflects the historical and cultural context in which his novels were created. The writer's childhood was spent in an affluent environment, which undoubtedly influenced the development of his cognitive and socio-emotional qualities. Growing up in a privileged environment, he had access to a wide range of educational opportunities and intellectual stimulation that laid the foundation for his later creative endeavours. Also, his life illustrates the complex interplay of factors of postmodern environment, social status, and personal choices that shaped his development as a literary figure. Frédéric Beigbeder's contribution to contemporary French and world literature is of particular importance due to several key aspects that make his works particularly valuable for identity studies.

Based on the foregoing, the **objective** of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of identity in the works of the French writer Frédéric Beigbeder through the lens of self-organizing systems and meta-metaphors. To achieve this objective, the following **tasks** must be undertaken:

- to analyse the concept of synergetics as the basis of the theory of self-organised systems and its connection with meta-metaphor;
- to define the concepts of meta-metaphor and self-organised systems in the context of literary analysis;
- to examine the novels by Frédéric Beigbeder in order to find examples of meta-metaphors and self-organised systems;
- to analyse these examples and their role in shaping and revealing the identity of the characters.

**The subject** of the study is the concept of identity in Frédéric Beigbeder's autofictional and autobiographical novels through the use of self-organised systems and meta-metaphors, and **the material** is Frédéric Beigbeder's works, namely his autofictional works of the trilogy about Marc Marronnier: *Mémoires d'un jeune homme dérangé* (Beigbeder, 1990), *Vacances dans le coma* (Beigbeder, 1994), *L'amour dure trois ans* (Beigbeder, 1997), the trilogy about Octave Parango: *99 Francs* (Beigbeder, 2000), *Au secours pardon* (Beigbeder, 2007), *L'Homme qui pleure de rire* (Beigbeder, 2020) and the autobiographical works: *Un roman français* (Beigbeder, 2009), *Un barrage contre l'Atlantique* (Beigbeder, 2022) and *Windows on the World* (Beigbeder, 2003).

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1. Synergetics principles of identity dynamics**

Since antiquity, philosophers have endeavoured to find a universal method of cognition of existence. Thus, the ancient Greek thinker Heraclitus came to the conclusion that “only the whole has meaning” (Hussey, 1982, p. 36), thus initiating a new concept. This idea continued to develop and regained relevance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1926, the term ‘holism’ was introduced into philosophical discourse by Jan Smuts, who argued that the whole is more than the sum of its parts (Smuts, 2005/1927), and that the study of the world should take into account all its aspects.

It was the idea of holism that became one of the prerequisites for the emergence of synergetics, a scientific trend that explains the processes of formation and self-organisation of patterns and structures in open systems that are in a state far from thermodynamic equilibrium (Pikhtovnikova, 2018, p. 273). In other words, synergetics studies open systems, which are not only the objects of its research, but also actively interact with each other.

Moreover, objects in the field of synergetics exchange energy, information or matter with the environment. It is important to note that such systems can be of a different nature: they can be cognitive, social, technical, biological, chemical and even cosmic. In addition, synergetics analyses the phenomenon of self-organisation, a process in which different systems establish interrelationships that determine their further development.

### **2.2. Self-organised systems and their elements**

Any system works on the principle of self-organisation if it is able to independently adequately respond to external changes and influences, adjusting its parameters, structure and functions, thus preserving its integrity. The response of the system is not necessarily reduced to passive self-adaptation – it may include active change of the system’s position and influence on the environment. Such a system acting on the basis of self-organisation is usually called self-organised (or self-managed).

A self-organised system inevitably has a purpose (or purposes) for its existence, which may change and develop over time. In addition, it is characterised by both obligatory and inadmissible factors that determine its stability or, on the contrary, can lead to its destruction. In synergetics, according to Pikhtovnikova (2018, p. 281) the goals of a self-organised system are denoted by the term ‘attractors’, and the factors necessary for its existence or detrimental to it are called ‘repellers’.

For example, in the system of self-identification, attractors can be, for example, a person’s awareness of his/her belonging to a certain social group and the desire to consolidate this feeling, or, on the contrary, the desire to leave this group. At the same time, the ability to perceive and realise one’s belonging acts as a repeller: in its absence or interruption, any self-identification disappears.

Attractors in systems often oppose repellers, facilitated by external factors. In synergetics, these external influences are called order parameters, because they can order the goals and structure of the system in a new, optimal way or, on the contrary, contribute to its destruction. Such relative opposition of attractors and repellers stimulates evolutionary changes, transformations of self-identity, which leads either to the formation of a new configuration of the system or to its collapse.

The concept of synergetics, which is an interdisciplinary field of knowledge that studies the processes of self-organisation and evolution of complex systems, has a deep connection with the concept of discourse. As a form of social interaction and communication, discourse manifests itself in a variety of forms and meanings, representing a dynamic process of exchanging information, ideas, and meanings. The synergetic approach allows considering discourse not only as a means of information transmission, but also as a mechanism that contributes to the evolution and self-organisation of social systems. Thus, synergetics and discourse, being interrelated concepts, open new horizons for analysing and understanding the processes occurring in socio-cultural systems.

It follows from the above that self-organised systems are systems capable of independently responding to external influences and changing their parameters, structure and functions to maintain integrity. Such systems are not limited to passive adaptation, but actively change their position,

influencing the environment. They are characterised by the presence of goals (attractors) that can develop and change over time, as well as limiting factors (repellers) that determine their stability or can lead to destruction.

### **2.3. Meta-metaphor as a symbol and image of identity**

Every self-organised system has a certain purpose and a set of constraints that influence its development. In the context of discourse, the goal is to structure the communication process between participants, as well as to create and transmit specific information and knowledge. In literary discourse, the goal is to form and disseminate visual and aesthetic information that reflects the perception of the world and the author's interpretation. To realise this goal, a meaningful dialogue is established in literary discourse not only between the author and the reader, but also within the discourse itself – between the author and his protagonists.

Concretisation of the general purpose of the literary discourse is carried out through the author's choice of key ideas, characters, image construction, speech strategies, authorial codes and stylistic features. At the same time, the author has to take into account a number of constraints, such as the linguistic picture of the world of a given nation and epoch, accepted norms of narration, archetypes of genres and communicative practices, as well as the extra-linguistic context of the work's creation. In literary discourse, special importance is attached to metaphor and metonymy, which together form literary works, performing not only expressive, but also numerous pragmatic functions – from nominative and conceptual to evaluative, expressive and the function of influencing the recipient of information.

Pikhtovnikova (2012) states that classical metaphor is sometimes unable to fully express the author's idea, which is especially noticeable in voluminous works with deep content or in short satirical genres such as fables and parables (p. 15). In such cases, regardless of the length of the text, whether it is an extended work of fiction or a concise work united by a single idea, the concept of meta-metaphor is widely used. Individual metaphorical elements may carry different meanings, but they are united by a common semantic basis and are often organised in a hierarchical structure, which reinforces the common meaning.

“Meta-metaphor is defined as a system in which ordinary metaphors are combined into a two-way hierarchical construction, where each component forms a syntagmatic relationship in the text” (Pikhtovnikova, 2012, p. 16). Since all the elements of this metaphorical structure relate to the same object, meta-metaphor establishes semantic links on the paradigmatic axis, ensuring the expansion of meaning through remote interaction.

Undoubtedly, the idea of meta-metaphor is closely related to the features of identity, which brings additional comprehensiveness to the analysis of these concepts in the works by Frédéric Beigbeder. Meta-metaphor, which implies the use of symbolic elements and images (McLeish, 2020), fulfils a key role in conveying aspects of identity. As Prykhodko notes (2008, p. 29), these components have informational, evaluative and symbolic character.

In the works by Frédéric Beigbeder, the memories and personal characteristics of the protagonists are not presented as abstract categories, but realised through concrete symbols and images. Such image-symbolic elements highlight the identities, distinguishing them from their fictitious counterparts, and give the characters additional depth, making them more authentic to the reader.

The use of meta-metaphor in the writer's works emphasises the importance of symbolic components in the mechanisms of memory and identification, demonstrating the uniqueness of human experience, which cannot be fully emulated or interpreted by fully-fictional works. In addition, this literary technique enriches Frédéric Beigbeder's texts, offering readers the opportunity to view the world through his unique point of view. Frédéric Beigbeder masterfully integrates complex ideas and concepts through meta-metaphors, demonstrating the diversity of aspects of

human experience, and the study will be focused on the most expressive and significant examples of their use in his novels.

Thus, meta-metaphor is literary device in which the meanings of one concept are transferred to another through figurative expression, which makes it possible to establish new semantic links in the text. In literary discourse, meta-metaphor performs not only an expressive function, conveying aesthetic and conceptual information, but also a pragmatic function – it organises a dialogue between the author, his characters and the reader, increasing the emotional and evaluative impact of the work.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Self-organised systems in Frédéric Beigbeder's narratives

From the perspective of complex self-organised identity systems, the autofictional novels by Frédéric Beigbeder are of particular interest. Changing the facts in the fiction only enhances the literary and narrative integrity of the three stories. By creating a fictionalised version of real events and people, the writer is given the creative freedom to shape the narrative to best suit the purpose of the story. This allows him to explore themes, develop characters, and create compelling storylines without being constrained by the confines of reality.

Frédéric Beigbeder's approach to autofiction is distinguished by the dual nature of the process of 'fictionalisation'. He does not limit himself to simply transforming his biography into a novel (the so-called 'fictionalisation of the self') but uses literature as a tool for creating an authentic narrative of the author's life, where it becomes an iconic mediator that defines both the 'Self' and the 'Other'. It is through literature that a virtual identity is formed, bringing together three key elements of autofiction: the emphasis on personal experience and self-expression, the representation of the self in the text, and the establishment of the boundaries of the autobiographical narrative. This dual process of fictionalisation turns autofiction into a factual event, positioning the writer in the role of a 'chronicler' who records real events and facts within the framework of literary reality, while blurring the line between fiction and reality.

The first novel in the trilogy about Marc Marronnier, *Mémoires d'un jeune homme dérangé* (Beigbeder, 1990), presents a young and promising socialite presenter, Marc Marronnier, who self-identifies with the bohemian community. In this context, the attractor, i.e., the goal of the system, belongs to this environment – a sense of wealth, elitism, popularity, prestige and influence. However, the meeting with Anne becomes a destructive repeller for the protagonist. His self-identification undergoes an evolution: although he continues to see himself as a representative of high society, this status is no longer paramount. From now on, the main attractor for him becomes his relationship with Anne and the time he spends with her.

In the next novel of the trilogy, *Vacances dans le coma* (Beigbeder, 1994), the new attractor of purpose is suppressed by the old one: the emphasis shifts again to belonging to the bohemian community – the protagonist goes to the noisiest party in Paris, where the further events of the narrative unfold. As it should be bright discos, all the 'stars' are gathered here: the best DJ, first-class music, excellent alcohol, small talk – all the signs of the elite community, which again draws Marc Marronnier into its net.

Towards the end of the novel, however, the protagonist encounters several destructive repellers. The first of these is an encounter with a girl who is "something different from all the other women at the party. She is different, she is above everyone else" (Beigbeder, 1994, p.196). As it turns out, this is Anne, to whom Marc Marronnier has already been married for two years. The second repeller, which radically changes the course of events, is the trio of dead, mutilated representatives of bohemia in the ladies' lavatory. After this, Mark finally cuts his ties with high society, seeking to leave the club with Anne as soon as possible. This destructive repeller not only affects the inner state of the protagonist but also sets a new narrative vector in the story of Marc Marronnier.

The final novel of the trilogy, *L'amour dure trois ans* (Beigbeder, 1997), centres on the protagonist's relationship with his objects of love. The narrative begins with the news of Marc Marronnier and Anne's divorce, which instantly destroys the former attractor – the goal of a comfortable and sincere relationship with which the protagonist was associated. However, the process of the destruction of this goal manifests itself gradually: Mark finds that he is unable to devote himself to one woman for the rest of his life; he finds long-term relationships commonplace, which prompts him to put forward the theory that “love lasts three years” (Beigbeder, 1997, p. 26). Without undergoing a significant evolution or changing the fundamental attractor, the protagonist merely replaces one link in the chain – Anne with Alice, a married woman he meets at his grandmother's funeral. And, having achieved what he wants, having established a new relationship and seemingly having restored his former purpose, the protagonist betrays Alice as he continues to count down the ‘three years’. On the so-called ‘Day X’ the novel ends, leaving the finale open-ended. In the final lines of the narrative, an author's voice declares: “*Marc Marronnier is dead. I killed him. From now on it is only me here, and my name is Frédéric Beigbeder*” (Beigbeder, 1997, p. 228), revealing the identity hidden behind the image of Marc Marronnier.

The Octave Parango trilogy is also of interest for the analysis of complex self-organised systems. In the first novel *99 francs* (Beigbeder, 2000) the protagonist appears before the reader in the role of a successful advertising specialist. His main goal (attractor) is to enter the circle of people who control the mass consumer. As he states:

*It seems that you are free to choose, but here it is: one day you will see my product on the supermarket shelf and take it just to try it; believe me, I know the oats* (Beigbeder, 2000, p.9).

Octave Parango is surrounded by an abundance of material wealth and leads a promiscuous lifestyle, indulging in drugs and sexual liaisons. It is during this period that he meets Sophie, who immediately attracts his attention. However, Sophie's confession that she is pregnant by him becomes fateful, which acts as a destructive factor (repeller). Now the protagonist faces a dilemma: to keep the usual way of free life, but without Sophie, or to experience the joy of fatherhood. Octave chooses the first option, which throughout most of the novel he deeply regrets. Unable to cope with the pain of loss and the grief that Sophie, who has left with their boss, commits suicide, the protagonist falls into despair, commits murder and ends up in prison.

In the next novel, *Au secours pardon* (Beigbeder, 2007), the plot begins when Octave Parango is released from prison. However, he is no longer offered prestigious positions as before but is merely assigned to the role of an ordinary scouter, which excludes him from the circle of the elite with whom he once identified. Octave goes to Moscow in search of a new face for a cosmetic advert. During this search, he encounters the harsh reality of Russian life – a destructive repeller which radically diverges from his previous ideas about the world. Amidst a maze of snow, beautiful women and cocaine, Octave falls in love with Lena, whom a priest has told him about. The climactic destructive repeller is the discovery that Lena is his daughter, which leads to the cathedral being blown up, where the story ends.

In *L'Homme qui pleure de rire* (Beigbeder, 2020), Frédéric Beigbeder presents a mature Octave Parango in a state of existential crisis, reflecting on his experiences and the pressing problems of modernity. This work acts not only as a memoir of the fictional protagonist's carefree years, but also as a socio-political analysis of globalisation, cultural interactions, and the influence of humour and social media on today's lifestyles. With a background in radio, Octave Parango assumes the role of an analyst, closely observing events and trends in society. The narrative focuses on how media, advertising and political structures influence people's behaviour and thinking. Frédéric Beigbeder's deep media background is obvious, as evidenced by his participation as a consultant to presidential candidate Robert Hue in 2002 and his experience as a television presenter.

The analysis of Frédéric Beigbeder's works through the prism of self-organised systems demonstrates the complex dynamics of identity of his protagonists and author. The writer's autofictional novels blur the boundaries between the real and the fictional, allowing him to construct a literary version of his biography and explore personal transformations. The development of Marc Marronnier and Octave Parango obeys the mechanics of attractors and repellers, which reflects the non-linear nature of their evolution. Each new stage of the protagonists' lives is conditioned by their encounter with destructive factors, leading to a change of reference points. In this context, Frédéric Beigbeder's autofiction becomes a way of literary reflection on identity, where the author's reflection becomes a tool for analysing and constructing subjective reality. By critically examining the relationship between Frédéric Beigbeder's personal development and the storylines of the characters Marc Marronnier and Octave Parango, the reader is able to see how the author's philosophical quest and evolution are reflected in his postmodern works, challenging established norms. This article section highlights the dynamic dialogue between the writer's self-analysis and the development of his characters' narrative, demonstrating how these processes are intertwined with his own evolution. Frédéric Beigbeder's oeuvre clearly shows the multifaceted nature of his literary personality, reflected in the autobiographical elements of his fictional works.

### 3.2. Meta-metaphors in Frédéric Beigbeder's texts

Meta-metaphor is not just a complex literary device, but a way of multilayered comprehension of reality, in which the personal, cultural and historical intersect. In Frédéric Beigbeder's texts, this technique plays a key role, turning biographical and social events into symbolic constructions that reveal the deep contradictions of the modern world. The arrest in *Un roman français* (Beigbeder, 2009), the dam in *Un barrage contre l'Atlantique* (Beigbeder, 2022), the Tower of Babel and the Twin Towers in *Windows on the World* (Beigbeder, 2003) – these images go beyond their literal meanings, connecting individual experiences with collective myths. The study of meta-metaphor in Frédéric Beigbeder's autobiographical novels reveals how literature redefines the boundaries of the personal and the social, the material and the symbolic, the real and the imaginary.

In *Un roman français* (Beigbeder, 2009), the arrest of Frédéric Beigbeder appears not only as a fact of the writer's biography, but also as a profound meta-metaphor. Here the notion of detention takes on a double meaning: it refers both to the literal confinement of his physical body and to the symbolic imprisonment of his memories, from which he tried to escape through amnesia as a consequence of his irresponsible lifestyle. Realising his guilt for his self-isolation from his past, his loved ones and his family, Frédéric Beigbeder decides to confront his own ignorance by breaking down the barriers between past and present, between who he was and who he has become, as if freeing himself from imprisonment. In the end, the writer emerges from his state of 'confinement' by recovering for himself the most significant memories. Thus, this 'confinement' becomes a meta-metaphor reflecting the complexity and multi-layered nature of the protagonist's inner world, which allows the reader to penetrate deeper into his experiences and understand how the past affects his present and future.

In *Un barrage contre l'Atlantique* by Frédéric Beigbeder the use of meta-metaphor is evident. The Cap Ferret peninsula, located between the Gulf of Arcachon and the Atlantic Ocean, acts as a barrier, shielding the inner part of the bay from sea waves. As the world faces unprecedented environmental challenges – accelerating climate change, increasing frequency of extreme weather events, rising sea levels and disrupted ecosystems – Frédéric Beigbeder raises the issue of environmental destruction and focuses on the role of humans in exacerbating natural disasters. This issue is reflected through the fate of ordinary people, represented by Benoît Bartherotte.

Thus, the 'dam' in this context appears not only as a material structure that protects against ocean waves, but also as a symbol of human resistance to destructive natural forces, climatic changes and other factors that hinder this struggle. The comparison with Marguerite Duras's *Dam Against the Pacific* only reinforces the multi-layered nature of this meta-metaphor, as in both works the dam becomes an emblem of human perseverance and determination in the face of

insurmountable natural and social forces. “Benoît is Marguerite Duras’s mother, who wanted to cultivate a rice field at sea level, on the swampy plain of Prey-Nop, in Cambodia” (Beigbeder, 2022, p.159).

In *Windows on the World* (Beigbeder, 2003), Frédéric Beigbeder resorts to a meta-metaphorical device to analyse human selfishness by integrating a motif from the Book of Genesis into the narrative. Despite the fact that he notes: “I do not know why I am thinking of the Book of Genesis” (2003, p.39), a complex metaphorical construction is evident in this context. The initial component of this meta-metaphor is the imagery of the Twin Towers, echoing the Tower of Babel described in Genesis 11, where people erected a tower in an effort to make themselves a name.

According to Frédéric Beigbeder, modern society has provoked God’s wrath by its desire for greatness and ‘reaching for the heavens’: this has manifested itself not only through the erection of the World Trade Centre towers, but also through attempts to establish a new global order through a capitalist system aimed at creating a unified social space. Thus, Frédéric Beigbeder uses the image of the Twin Towers as a symbol of the centre of world existence and American hubris, which is reflected in such names as ‘World Trade Centre’, ‘Windows on the World’, ‘The Greatest Bar on Earth’ and others, and the terrorist attack is perceived as a heavenly punishment for arrogance.

The second component of the meta-metaphorical image lies in the language in which, according to the Book of Genesis, the Tower of Babel was built before God mixed the languages, depriving people of mutual understanding and stopping the construction, and in modern English, which is its direct continuation. In the post-war period, American capitalism has had a significant impact on the world, infiltrating the fields of business, technology, science and entertainment. After the collapse of the USSR, according to the writer, the United States assumed a dominant position, actively promoting its own ideology. As Frédéric Beigbeder notes, “Today, having lost its antipode, America has become a ruler whom one would like to overthrow. America has become its own enemy” (2003, p. 125).

Thus, American English became the only ‘language of the future’ and ‘language of perspectives’, replacing the one that had lost its importance at the time of the Tower of Babel. The spread of English began as early as 1600 and went through a series of stages. The main stage occurred in 1900, when the colonies began to actively introduce education in English and organise special courses for immigrants in the USA, Canada and Australia. The independence gained by the British colonies in 1945 also contributed to its global spread.

The widespread use of English in science, technology, international organisations, aviation, maritime navigation, communications and business, as well as its use in the work of the United Nations, has stimulated the interest of young people from different countries in learning it. In particular, Frédéric Beigbeder notes that:

*My parents met on the Basques coast, but almost immediately went to America to study. Today, no one remembers anymore how much American universities, particularly business schools, attracted brilliant French graduates* (Beigbeder, 2003, p. 126).

Frédéric Beigbeder states: “I love Frenglish, it is the language of the future” (2003, p.128). In the novel *Windows on the World* (Beigbeder, 2003), the author focuses on the impact of Frenglish (French-English) on French culture. Language fusion, due to the influence of English on other language systems, is further developed in the context of globalisation. At the 1998 Debates of the Canadian Senate, former Senator Lowell Murray reflected on the precarious situation of French-speaking minorities outside Quebec, emphasizing that despite progress made under the Official Languages Act, French was still at a disadvantage compared to English. He pointed to census data showing stagnating or declining numbers of francophones in several provinces, which he saw as a result of institutional neglect and insufficient support for French-language education and services. Senator Murray warned that without sustained political will and federal commitment, French risked becoming marginalized in the face of English’s dominance in public life, media, and interprovincial



mobility (Senate of Canada, 1998). This displacement of other languages by English can be traced in many other countries.

Within the framework of global linguistic contacts, the influence of American English language is manifested in a variety of linguistic communities, as evidenced by the growing interest in the process of borrowing not only in French-speaking countries, but also around the world. The abundance of Anglicisms (Duběda, 2020) throughout the novel, as well as the presence of untranslated lines from American characters, serve a dual purpose: they not only contribute to a deeper immersion of the reader in the tragic atmosphere of the work, but also reflect the gradual embedding of English in other cultures as an integral part of the modern world. As Frédéric Beigbeder emphasises:

*We should not be afraid of English words. They enter peacefully into our language, creating a world language, defying God: the only language of the Tower of Babel. The World's Words. The new lexicon of SMS (A12C4), emoticons on the Internet, the popularity of "dorky" spellings, the proliferation of argot – all these help to give birth to the newspeak of the third millennium* (Beigbeder, 2003, p.128).

In autofiction, meta-metaphor fulfils the function of not only a literary device, but also a mechanism for comprehending reality through multilayered symbolic constructions. In the novel *Au secours pardon* (Beigbeder, 2007), meta-metaphor is realised through the image of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, chosen by Frédéric Beigbeder as a place of action for the protagonist Octave Parango. This architectural symbol is endowed with multiple layers of meaning, reflecting its complex history going back to the 19th century. The initial decision to build the cathedral was taken after the War of 1812, but the first project proposed for its construction was rejected, in part due to corruption factors. In 1832, the approved new project allowed ordinary citizens to raise funds for the construction of the building, which was consecrated in 1883. Thus, this meta-image embodies not only the memory of the past, but also the idea of national unity with a pronounced social connotation.

Later, in 1931, by order of the Soviet authorities, the cathedral was closed and destroyed, and its restoration in 1999 became a symbol of the people's repentance for their denial of God, giving the metaphor the meaning of a return to eternal religious values. On the other hand, the modern building is often criticised for its lack of authenticity, as it is perceived as a product of post-perestroika times, incapable of evoking true religious feelings. The protagonist of the novel *Au secours pardon* (Beigbeder, 2007) also fails to find a sacred beginning in the cathedral, which emphasises the absurdity of modern attitudes towards religion and sacred objects, adding a critical tone to the meta-metaphor. As in the trilogy about Marc Marronnier, Frédéric Beigbeder plays with the death of his alter ego in the work. In the finale of the novel *Au secours pardon* (Beigbeder, 2007), Octave Parango stages a terrorist attack by blowing up the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, leaving some 526 people, including Octave himself, missing and 362 injured.

Thus, the image of the cathedral acts as a meta-metaphor uniting different levels of perception and interpretation of reality, which allows the author to reveal more deeply the complexity and contradiction of the modern world, and its subversion – the rejection of everything that connected it with the modern world and even humanity.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this article, a comprehensive analysis of the concept of identity in the novels of Frédéric Beigbeder was carried out using the approaches of self-organised systems and meta-metaphor. The study allowed identifying the main mechanisms of formation and transformation of identity in autofictional literature on the example of the French writer's works.

The analysis has shown that Frédéric Beigbeder's autofictional novels are a complex system of interaction of various factors such as social environment, cultural transformations, personal

experiences and philosophical reflections of the author. His protagonists Marc Marronnier and Octave Parango act not only as a reflection of the writer's personal experience, but also as models for comprehending the dynamics of self-identity in the modern world.

The use of the synergetic approach allowed to consider Frédéric Beigbeder's novels as self-organised systems in which the process of identity formation is determined by the interaction of attractors (goals, values, aspirations) and repellers (destructive factors, crises, social challenges). This analysis showed that the protagonists' self-identity goes through stages of evolution, changes in priorities and encounters with external and internal conflicts.

Meta-metaphor, in turn, has been identified as a key tool for constructing layers of meaning in Frédéric Beigbeder's texts. Through symbolic and multilayered images, such as the arrest in *Un roman français* (Beigbeder, 2009), the dam in *Un barrage contre l'Atlantique* (Beigbeder, 2022), the Tower of Babel in *Windows on the World* (Beigbeder, 2003) and the cathedral in *Au secours pardon* (Beigbeder, 2007), the author conveys the deep processes taking place in the minds of the characters and society as a whole. These meta-metaphorical structures enhance the expressiveness of the narrative and create an additional dimension in the interpretation of identity.

Overall, the study confirmed that Frédéric Beigbeder's autofictional and autobiographical works are multi-layered constructions which reveal identity through the prism of self-organised systems and meta-metaphors. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the literary mechanisms used by the author to model identity and opens up new perspectives for the analysis of postmodern novels in a broad cultural context.

The results obtained may be useful for **further research** in the fields of literary, philosophy, and cultural studies, as well as for a more detailed study of autofiction and autobiography as genres reflecting contemporary trends in the perception and construction of individual and collective self.

### Declaration of competing interest

The author has no conflict of interest or funding support to declare.

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## ДИНАМІКА ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ У РОМАНІСТИЦІ ФРЕДЕРІКА БЕГБЕДЕ: СИНЕРГЕТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

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### Анотація

У статті досліджується концепт ідентичності в автофікційній та автобіографічній романістиці Фредеріка Бегбеде крізь призму синергетики, самоорганізованих систем та мета-метафори. Аналізуючи твори письменника, включно з трилогіями про Марка Марроньє та Октава Паранго, а також його автобіографічні тексти, розглядається, як процеси самоорганізації та взаємодія різноманітних соціальних, культурних і психологічних чинників визначають формування та еволюцію ідентичності персонажів. Застосування синергетичного підходу дає змогу виявити механізми становлення особистості через систему атракторів (цілей, цінностей, прагнень) і репелерів (кризових подій, руйнівних чинників), що демонструє динаміку самоідентифікації протагоністів в умовах сучасних соціокультурних змін.

Мета-метафори у творах Фредеріка Бегбеде відіграють важливу роль у конструюванні смислових пластів, передаючи складні аспекти індивідуальної та колективної самоідентифікації. Наприклад, арешт у *«Французькому романі»* символізує усвідомлення власного минулого, гребля в *«Греблі проти Атлантичного океану»* віддзеркалює боротьбу з руйнівними природними тенденціями, Вавилонська вежа у *«Вікнах у світ»* репрезентує глобалізацію, а храм в *«Ідеаль»* ілюструє релігійну кризу та пошук сенсу. Крім того, мета-метафора слугує способом художньої трансформації біографічного досвіду, перетворюючи особисті переживання автора на універсальні моделі осмислення ідентичності.

Результати дослідження показують, що автофікційні та автобіографічні твори Фредеріка Бегбеде являють собою складні багатопланові системи, в яких особистий досвід автора поєднується з постмодерністськими стратегіями письма. Його протагоністи функціонують як динамічні системи, що піддаються трансформаціям під впливом соціальних, культурних і психологічних чинників. Дослідження підкреслює значущість самоорганізованих систем і мета-метафор у моделюванні ідентичності та відкриває нові перспективи для аналізу постмодерністської романістики, показуючи, як література віддзеркалює процеси самовизначення особистості у світі, що змінюється.

**Ключові слова:** ідентичність, синергетика, самоорганізовані системи, дискурс, мета-метафора, Фредерік Бегбеде, автофікційна/автобіографічна романістика.

### Декларація про конфлікт інтересів

Автор заявляє про відсутність конфлікту інтересів або фінансової підтримки цієї роботи.