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SUMMARY

VERS UNE MEILLEURE CONNAISSANCE DU MYTHE DE PHILOCTÈTE AU XVIIIe SIÈCLE

Tatiana Ana FLUIERARU[1]

Abstract: *Few sources on Philoctetes were on record back in the Middle Ages. It is in the 16th century that other literary sources – Sophocles' homonymic tragedy, above all – or non-fictional sources are brought to light, rounding off the fragmented medieval image on Philoctetes. However, it is only in the 18thcentury that Sophocles' tragedy, "Philoctetes", has been translated into the vernacular languages. Also, the knowledge we have on the representation of Philoctetes was systematized by the ancient artists during the same period, as could be inferred from the few artefacts where the hero has been identified.*

Key words: *Philoctetes, XVIIth and XVIIth centuries, Sophocles, Cicero, Ovid.*

> Dans la Tragédie des anciens, une indignation involontaire contre leurs Dieux cruels, est le sentiment qui me saisit à la vue des maux dont ils permettent qu'une innocente victime soit accablée. *Œdipe, Jocaste, Phèdre, Ariane, Philoctète, Oreste*, et tant d'autres m'inspirent moins d'intérêt que de terreur. Êtres dévoués et passifs, aveugles instruments de la colère ou de la fantaisie de ces Dieux ! je suis effrayé bien plus qu'attendri par leur sort. (Beaumarchais, *Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux*)

1. Traductions du *Philoctète* de Sophocle dans les langues modernes

Une belle légende rapportée par Voltaire[2] faisait de la reine Élisabeth Ière un des premiers sinon le premier traducteur de *Philoctète* en langue vernaculaire :

> Les gens qui font les cabales à Paris n'entendent point le grec. Je vous apprendrai qu'une héroïne de votre sexe l'entendait […] ; c'est la reine Élisabeth. Elle avait traduit ce *Philoctète* de Sophocle en anglais. (Voltaire, lettre à Mme Denis du 22 avril 1752)

Les tragédies de Sophocle étaient lues et étudiées couramment dans des traductions latines – qui étaient parfois des adaptations plutôt que des traductions fidèles – dont

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[2] Cette légende pourrait se fonder sur les informations fournies par Roger Ascham dans sa lettre adressée à Johannes Sturm le 4 avril 1550 - T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol. I, University of Illinois Press, 1944, p. 259.

les premières ont été réalisées une quarantaine d'années après l'édition aldine[1]. La traduction en langues modernes de certaines tragédies de Sophocle vient assez tôt : pour nous rapporter aux traductions en français, *Electre* a été traduite en vers par Lazare de Baïf en 1537, *Antigone* a été traduite en alexandrins en 1572 par Jean-Antoine de Baïf (une autre traduction de Calvy de la Fontaine, en 1542)[2], *Trachiniae* par le même Jean-Antoine de Baïf, vers 1565 (texte perdu). Par contre, *Œdipe Roi* ne sera traduit qu'en 1692 par André Dacier[3], alors que la première traduction de *Philoctète* date de 1730.

Mais bien avant la traduction en langues modernes les poètes avaient donné des adaptations fragmentaires du *Philoctète* de Sophocle : ainsi, dans son *Paradis perdu* John Milton s'inspire de l'adieu qu'adresse Philoctète à son île pour l'adieu d'Ève au paradis ; Fénelon utilise de longs fragments traduits du *Philoctète* de Sophocle dans son *Télémaque*, 1699 ; le personnage Melisander de la tragédie *Agamemnon* de James Thomson est imité d'après le Philoctète de Sophocle[4]. Plus tard, Louis Racine en traduit en français et en vers quelques passages dans ses *Réflexions sur la poésie*, 1742, et William Mason fait résonner des échos du *Philoctète* de Sophocle dans son *Elfrida*, 1752, mise en scène en 1772 à Covent Garden.

Thomas Sheridan est l'auteur de la première traduction en une langue moderne du *Philoctète* de Sophocle - il s'agit d'une traduction en anglais, en vers blancs pour les dialogues, diversement versifiée pour les parties du chœur, publiée en 1725[5]. Quatre ans plus tard George Adams publie une traduction complète en anglais, en prose, des sept pièces de Sophocle[6]. Thomas Francklin est l'auteur en 1759 de la première version intégrale anglaise en vers de Sophocle - nouvelle édition en 1766, édition révisée et corrigée en 1788[7] quand paraît aussi la traduction de Robert Potter[8].

Pierre Brumoy publie dans son *Théâtre des Grecs*, 1730, la traduction intégrale de trois tragédies de Sophocle, *Œdipe Roi*, *Electre* et *Philoctète*[9]. Cette

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[1] Rappelons que la *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Iesu* exigeait que les pièces jouées et les intermèdes fussent écrits en latin, ce qui n'encourageait pas les traductions en vernaculaire.

[2] *Antigone* est traduite en anglais en 1581 par T. Watson et *Electre* en 1649 par Christopher Wase.

[3] J. Jouanna, *Sophocle*, Paris, Fayard, 2007, p. 531 ; R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaires*, Cambridge, 1954, p. 524.

[4] Lessing, *Du Laocoon*, traduction française par A. Courtin, Paris, Hachette, 1887, p. 34.

[5] Thomas Sheridan, *The Philoctetes of Sophocles, translated from the Greek*, Dublin, printed by J. Hyde and E. Dobson for R. Owen, 1725.

[6] *The Tragedies of Sophocles, translated from the Greek with notes historical, moral and critical by George Adams*, 2 vol., London, C. Davis and S. Austen, 1729.

[7] *The Tragedies of Sophocles, translated from the Greek by Thomas Francklin*, 2 vol., London, 1759 ; d'autres éditions en 1809 et 1832.

[8] *The Tragedies of Sophocles*, London, 1788.

[9] *Théâtre des Grecs* par le R. P. Brumoy, 3 vol., Paris, chez Rollin Père, Jean-Baptiste Coignard et Rollin fils, 1730 ; nouvelles éditions en 1749, 1785, 1788, 1820, 1826. V. aussi

édition, qui recèle la première traduction, en prose, en français de *Philoctète*, sera améliorée par Guillaume Dubois de Rochefort, qui semble être l'auteur de la première édition intégrale de Sophocle en français, une traduction en prose également, plus précise que celle du père Brumoy, publiée en 1788[1]. La première traduction française en vers du *Philoctète* de Sophocle est celle de La Harpe de 1783.

La première traduction de *Philoctète* en allemand date de 1760[2] : son auteur, Johann Jacob Steinbreuchel ou Steinbrüchel, publie trois ans plus tard une édition réunissant les traductions de plusieurs pièces de Sophocle et d'Euripide[3]. Les traductions de J. J. Steinbrüchel étant, selon Herder, assez prosaïques, les lecteurs allemands utilisaient couramment, comme Lessing[4], Herder[5], Schiller, Goethe, les traductions en français du père Brumoy[6]. À remarquer l'importance du *Théâtre des Grecs* du père Brumoy, lu par des auteurs de diverses nationalités - il est connu aussi en Espagne, comme l'avoue José Arnal dans la préface de *El Philoctetes* -, traduit en anglais par Charlotte Lennox[7], que Thomas Francklin, *Regius Professor of Greek* à Cambridge, prend comme modèle et auquel il renvoie à plusieurs reprises dans ses notes.

En 1777 Eustachius Moritz Goldhagen publie une nouvelle traduction de quelques tragédies de Sophocle dont *Philoctète*[8]. Georg Christoph Tobler fait paraître une traduction de quatre tragédies sophocléennes, dont *Philoctète* en 1781[9]. La première traduction intégrale des tragédies de Sophocle en allemand et en vers semble avoir été celle de Christian zu Stolberg-Stolberg[10]. La traduction de

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Jean-Noël Pascal, « De la somme à l'encyclopédie. Parcours à travers un siècle d'éditions du *Théâtre des Grecs* (1730-1826) », in *Anabases*, no 14, 2011.

[1] *Théâtre de Sophocle, traduit en entier avec des remarques et un examen de chaque pièce* par M. de Rochefort, 2 vol., Paris, chez Nyon l'aîné et Fils, 1788.

[2] *Philoctetes. Ein Trauerspiel des Sophokles nebst Pindars dritter Ode*. Aus dem Griechischen von dem Uebersetzer der Electra [Johann Jacob Steinbreuchel], Wien und Leipzig, bey Johann Friedrich Jahn, 1760.

[3] *Das tragische Theater der Griechen. Des Sophocles erster Band*, Zürich, Orell, Gessner und Comp, 1763. Ce premier volume contenait *Electre, Œdipe, Philoctète* et *Antigone.*

[4] Lessing, *Laocoon*, pp. 7, 34.

[5] Herder cite sa traduction dans l'analyse de *Philoctète* de Sophocle – J. G. Herder, *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, traduction et édition de Gregory Moore, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 76.

[6] Humphry Trevelyan, *Goethe and the Greeks*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 60.

[7] *The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy* translated by Mrs. Charlotte Lennox in three volumes, London, 1759.

[8] Eustachius Moritz Goldhagen, *Des Sophokles Trauerspiele*, t. I, Hinz, 1777. Le volume contenait *Antigone, Philoctète, Ajax* et *Les Trachiniennes.*

[9] *Sophokles.* Verdeutscht von Georg Christoph Tobler, t. I, Basel, Johannes Schweighauser, 1781. Le volume contenait *Les Trachiniennes, Ajax, Philoctète* et *Electre.*

[10] Christian graf zu Stolberg, *Sofokles*, Leipzig, bei G. J. Göschen, 1787. Chaque pièce était précédée d'un prologue en vers du traducteur.

Philoctète par Theodor Schmalz a la particularité d'alterner prose et parties versifiées, destinées à être chantées[1].

Philoctète a été traduit en néerlandais en 1793 - il s'agit en fait de la traduction de la version française de La Harpe réalisée par A. L. Barbaz.

La première traduction italienne de *Philoctète* date de 1767[2]. Mentionnons aussi la traduction en vers de Francesco Lenzini[3] et la traduction de Vittorio Alfieri, publiée en 1804, d'après les éditions de Capperonnier et Brunk[4]. Massimiliano Angelelli est l'auteur de la première version intégrale des tragédies de Sophocle en italien[5].

Il y aurait trois traductions espagnoles de *Philoctète* avant 1780[6]. J'ai pu documenter plusieurs éditions d'un texte publié anonymement par le jésuite José Arnal (1729-1790), réputé à usage scolaire, mis en scène dans un collège de Saragosse, qu'on doit considérer plutôt une adaptation qu'une traduction[7]. Ajoutons à cette liste la traduction inédite de Pedro Montengón y Paret (1745-1824), qui témoigne de l'intérêt pour la pièce de Sophocle à la fin du XVIIIe siècle en Espagne[8].

Philoctète sera transposé en grec moderne par Nikolaos Piccolos (Pikkolos ou Pikkolou), en 1818 - une adaptation en prose amputée des parties du chœur, la première tragédie antique en grec moderne à avoir été représentée[9].

2. Représentations du Philoctète antique

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[1] Theodor Schmalz, *Philoktet. Ein Schauspiel mit Gesang nach dem Griechischen des Sophocles*, Königsberg, Friedrich Nicolovius, 1795.

[2] *Il Filottete, tragedia di Sophocle con alcune rime* di Tommaso Guiseppe Farsetti Patrizio Veneto, Venezia, Angelo Geremia, 1767 ; en 1773 paraît à Venise une nouvelle édition de ses traductions en vers - *Le Trachiniesi, l'Ajace flegellifero ed il Filottete, tragedie di Sofocle, volgarizzate da Tommaso Giuseppe Farsetti*, Venise, s.n., 1773.

[3] Francesco Lenzini, *Filottete, tragedia di Sofocle volgarizzata*, Siena, Fr. Rossi, 1791.

[4] Dans ses mémoires Alfieri avoue s'être passionné « de plus en plus pour le grec » et s'être mis à traduire en 1797 l'*Alceste* d'Euripide, le *Philoctète* de Sophocle, les *Perses* d'Eschyle, les *Grenouilles* d'Aristophane - Alfieri, *Mémoires*, Charpentier, 1840, p. 440.

[5] *Tragedie di Sofocle recate in versi italiani da Massimiliano Angelelli bolognese*, 2 t., Bologna, Annesio Nobili, 1823-1824. L'ordre des tragédies est *Les Trachiniennes, Ajax, Œdipe Toi, Œdipe à Colon* (t. 1), *Antigone, Philoctète, Electre* (t. 2).

[6] O. Mandel, *Philoctetes and the Fall of Troy*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, p. 129.

[7] Sófocles, *El Philoctetes : tragedia, en dos actos,* Barcelona, por la viuda Piferrer, vendese en sy libreria administrada por Juan Sellent ; y en Madrid : en la de Quiroga, 1750.

[8] La traduction serait entreprise vers 1795 ; le manuscrit contenant la traduction est conservé à Real Academia de la Historia de Madrid (155 feuilles, Mss. 9-7-.082 - l'auteur y est appelé Filópatro Montengón). Maurizio Fabbri l'a publié sous le titre *El Edipo, La Electra, El Filoctetes : tragedias de Sófocles traducidas por Pedro Montengón,* Abano Terme, Piovan Editore, 1992, 284 pages.

[9] La version de Piccolos a été représentée par la société *Philiki Hetaireia* à Odessa, et reprise en 1822, 1858 et 1889 - Gonda Van Steen, « Enacting History and Patriotic Myth », in *Cultural responses to the Persian wars : antiquity to the third millennium*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 310.

L'archéologue Raoul-Rochette constatait en 1828 que la liste des artefacts antiques représentant Philoctète était très courte : deux pierres gravées de la collection du baron Stosch, publiées par Winckelmann, celle de Boethus insérée parmi les planches du *Voyage pittoresque* de M. Choiseul-Gouffier, et peut-être une quatrième publiée par J. Rossi, mais avec une explication erronée, en plus de quelques urnes étrusques des musées de Florence et de Volterra, la plupart inédites (*Journal des Savants*, mars 1828, p. 176).

En fait la liste des artefacts susceptibles de représenter Philoctète connus à la fin du XVIIIe siècle est un peu plus longue, contenant aussi quelques fausses attributions, instructives elles aussi à plus d'un égard.

1^0 Le premier artefact sur lequel est représenté Philoctète à être reproduit semble avoir été un sarcophage à guirlandes qui se trouvait à l'époque dans la basilique Sainte-Marie-du-Transtevere de Rome : le dessin est conservé dans le *Codex Escurialensis* 28-II-12, daté 1480-1500, dont l'auteur supposé est Ghirlandaio[1] ; le sarcophage sera par la suite reproduit dans le *Codex Coburgensis*, réalisé vers 1550[2]. Un nouveau dessin du même sarcophage est publié dans *Inscriptionum antiquarum Graecarum et Romanarum*, 1743 ; à l'époque le sarcophage était dans la Villa Medicea di Lappeggi à Florence[3]. Antonio Francesco Gori, le premier à s'y intéresser, pensait que le sarcophage était consacré aux exploits de Diomède, la scène à gauche représentant selon lui le moment où Diomède est blessé par Pandare tel qu'il est mentionné dans l'*Iliade*, V, 105, la scène à droite représentant un épisode de l'exil lemnien de Philoctète : le héros, sans barbe, tenant le carquois sous son bras droit, se traîne devant sa grotte appuyé sur un genou (l'autre jambe est recouverte d'une draperie), où l'attendent Ulysse et Diomède, envoyés par Agamemnon, comme dans Hygin, 102. La scène ressemble, selon l'auteur, à une urne étrusque mentionnée dans le volume trois de son *Museum Etruscum* (urne 332 du Musée de Volterra)[4].

Les opinions de Gori sont corrigées par Georg Zoëga qui considère que le sarcophage contient des scènes de la vie d'Ulysse et reconnaît dans l'image à gauche un autre épisode de l'histoire de Philoctète : l'archer est transporté dans un

[1] Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, 28-II-12, f. 44v.

[2] Codex Coburgensis, fol. 205 no 205 (Kupferstichkabinett der Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, Coburg, inv. no. Hz 2).

[3] Carl Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs. Mythologische Cyklen*, Berlin, Grote, 1890, pp. 150-152.

[4] Antonio Francesco Gori, *Inscriptionum antiquarum Graecarum et Romanarum quae in Etruriae urbibus exstant*, pars tertia, Florence, 1743, pp. CXXIX-CXXX. Le sarcophage (planche XXXIX) est dessiné par le peintre florentin Giovanni Domenico Ferretti dit Giandomenico d'Imola. Même interprétation chez Antoine Mongez : « [Diomède] retourne du combat, blessé & porté sur un char ; ensuite il reçoit les flèches de Philoctète » - Antoine Mongez, *Encyclopédie méthodique. Antiquités, mythologie, diplomatique des chartres et chronologie*, t. 2, Paris, chez Panckoucke, 1788, p. 384.

char au camp des Grecs pour y être soigné[1]. Selon L. A. Milani, Gori avait modifié le dessin en plaçant un carquois sous le bras de Philoctète (la position du bras indiquerait plutôt que l'archer s'appuyait sur un bâton pour avancer) et en changeant l'aspect des personnages[2].

2[0] Une gemme représentant Philoctète en train d'éventer sa plaie avec une aile d'oiseau est en circulation au XVIe siècle. La gravure attribuée à Enea Vico (1523-1567) avait été publiée par Giacomo Rossi dans *Ex gemmis et cameis antiquorum aliquot monumenta ab Aenea Vico*, 1650, figure 29. Avant cette date on connaissait une autre gravure ayant le même sujet attribuée à Battista Franco (1510-1561), réalisée vers 1550, mise en circulation par Antonio Lafreri et Antonio Salamanca, intégrée par la suite dans le *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, 1573[3]. La plupart des gravures dont celle représentant Philoctète sera rachetée après la mort d'Antonio Lafreri par Claudio Duchetti (1554-1597) qui en assurera la publication. Un artefact similaire à celui représenté sur cette gemme a dû inspirer l'auteur du relief de Mantoue, datant du XVIe siècle, la première sculpture moderne représentant l'archer.

Des gravures de cet artefact représentant Philoctète circulait donc depuis le dernier tiers du XVIe siècle, mais il est difficile de préciser si on y voyait une image de l'archer ou une autre figure antique - un philosophe stoïque, comme il est dit dans l'édition Rossi. En 1772 le sujet est identifié par le père Raffei :

> Io crederei piuttosto espresso Filottete in un altra antica Gemma edita da Giacomo Rossi tra le incise in rame da Enea Vico alla Tavola 29., comecchè ivi leggasi dichiarato per un *Filosofo Stoico*. [.] Se lo Smids s'incontrava a vedere quella gemma, non dubito, che as esclusione dell'altra le avrebbe dato luogo nella sua *Scena [Troica]*.[4]

La dernière phrase semble indiquer que l'artefact était peu connu, sinon un amateur comme Smids n'aurait pu l'ignorer. Remarquons que la copie du camée Boethos publiée par James Tassie (no 9358) était faite d'après un original provenant de France[5], ce qui indique que plusieurs gemmes du même type ou des copies étaient en circulation. Il y a pourtant une différence entre les deux séries de gravures, en plus de la présence/absence des mouches volant près du pied malade de Philoctète

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[1] Georg Zoëga, *Li Bassirilievi antichi del palazzo Albani incisi da Tommaso Piroli*, t. 1, Roma, Fr. Bourlié, 1808, p. 259, n. 4 ; Hermann Egger, *Codex escurialensis ein skizzenbuch aus der werkstatt Domenico Ghirlandaios*, Vien, Alfred Hölder, 1906, folio 44v, p. 118.

[2] L. A. Milani, *Il mito di Filottete nella letteratura classica e nell' arte figurata*, Firenze, 1879, pp. 92-95. Ce sarcophage qui se trouvait à Florence, dans les jardins du comte della Gherardesca avant qu'on n'en perde sa trace, présente des ressemblances avec le sarcophage de Hever Castle conservé depuis 1983 à l'Antikenmuseum de Bâle (Sarkophag Lu 255).

[3] Site du Metropolitan Museum, numéro 41.72(2.173) (*Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*) ; British Museum numéro 2005, U.78 (*Ex antiquis cameorum et gemmae delineata*).

[4] Stefano Raffei, « Filottete addolorato, altro bassorilievo nella Villa dell'Eminentissimo sig. Alessandro Albani », in *Saggio di osservazioni sopra un Bassorilievo della Villa dell'Eminentissimo Signor Cardinale Alessandro Albani*, Roma, 1773, p. 23.

[5] Probablement de la collection du duc Rohan-Chabot.

et de la tête du fauve sur lequel est assis le héros[1] : les dessins de Rossi et de Battista Franco ne portent pas la signature de Boethos, comme ceux publiés par James Tassie et Choiseul.

3[0] Ludolph Smids, qui s'était déjà intéressé à Philoctète dans son livre *Pictura Loquens*, 1695, identifiait, erronément, l'archer sur une gemme publiée en 1695 dans l'édition de la *Dactyliotheca* d'Abraham van Goorle par Jacobus Gronovius[2]. Smids utilise l'image empruntée à Gronovius pour illustrer son commentaire sur Philoctète dans *Scena Troica*[3]. Comme dans *Pictura loquens*, Smids se sert d'indices déduits de textes antiques pour identifier le personnage, les mêmes en gros dans les deux ouvrages : Valérius Flaccus, I, 391 ; Sophocle, *Phil.* ; Pindare ; Théocrite ; Philostrate ; Ovide, *Mét.*, XIII ; Ovide, *Tristes*, V, 1. Cette fausse attribution sera corrigée par Lorenz Beger qui identifie Hector, opinion qui se retrouve aussi chez le père Raffei[4].

La gemme avait été antérieurement publiée par Fortunio *Liceti dans son Hieroglyphica*[5] et Mariette se demandait s'il ne fallait peut-être pas y voir dans ce « Guerrier qui se délasse de ses travaux […] Philoctéte retiré dans l'isle de Lesbos [sic!] »[6]. Philipp Daniel Lippert croit lui aussi y reconnaître Philoctète - il connaissait le livre de Mariette - dont il rappelle l'histoire et renvoie au livre d'Abraham van Goorle où se trouve cette même pierre, mentionnant aussi que Beger identifiait le personnage avec Hector[7].

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[1] Le camée Boethos sera mentionné par Choiseul-Gouffier parmi les pierres gravées inédites qu'il publie (Philoctète dans l'Ile de Lemnos, *Sardonix Nicolo*) – Le Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, t. 2, Paris, 1809, p. 155 et planche 16. V. aussi cette notation selon laquelle le duc de Malboroug « possède une pierre gravée sur laquelle Philoctète assis à terre chasse avec des plumes les mouches qui s'attachent à sa plaie » - Antoine Mongez, *Encyclopédie méthodique. Antiquités, mythologie, diplomatique des chartres et chronologie*, t. 4, Paris, chez Panckoucke, 1792, p. 691.

[2] *Abrahami Gorlaei Dactyliotheca, pars secunda, seu Variarum gemmarum, cum succincta singularum explicatione Jacobi Gronovii*, Luguduni Batavorum, executit Petrus Vander, 1695, gemme 538 (p. 47 pour le commentaire - « sagittarius miles nudus & rupi accubans […] arma sua, hic est, pharetram & arcum, arbore suspendens »).

[3] Louis Smids, *Scena Troica sive Tabularum, Dictyos Cretensis De Bello Trojano* dans *Dictys Cretensis et Dares Phrygius De Bello et Excidio Trojae, in usum Serenissimi Delphini, cum interpretatione Annae Daceriae*, Amstelaedami, apud Georgium Gallet, 1702 – VI. PHILOCTETE. II LIB. XIV CAP. C'est Jan Goeree (1670-1731) qui illustre le commentaire de Smids, à peu près le même que dans *Pictura Loquens*.

[4] Lorenz Beger, *Bellum et excidium Troianum, ex antiquitatum reliquiis*, Ulricus Liebpertus, Typogr. Elect. Brandenb., 1699, p. 31, par. 40 ; Raffei, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[5] Fortunio Liceti, *Hieroglyphica, sive* antiqua *Schemata Gemmarum Annularium,* Patavii, Typis Sebastiani Sardi, 1653, gemme 57, p. 408.

[6] P. J. Mariette, *Traité des pierres gravées*, t, I, Paris, de l'imprimerie de l'auteur, 1750, p. 272.

[7] Philipp Daniel Lippert, *Dactyliothec: das ist Sammlung geschnittener Steine der Alten aus denen vornehmsten Museis in Europa zum Nutzen der schönen Künste und Künstler ; in zwey Tausend Abdrücken*. Band 2: Historisches Tausend, 1767, pp. 54-55, gemme 179.

4⁰ À la fin de ses remarques sur le sarcophage de Philoctète Gori renvoyait à une urne du Musée Guarnacci représentant le héros, qu'il mentionnait aussi dans son *Musée étrusque*, 1743[1]. C'est probablement la première publication de cet artefact récemment découvert qui présente Philoctète au seuil de sa grotte, entre deux arbres, ayant à sa droite probablement Diomède et Ulysse et à sa gauche Pâris et un autre Troyen. Philoctète est nu, hirsute, le pied malade pansé, mais il a l'air en bonne santé. Il menace d'une flèche Pâris, tenant de son autre main d'autres flèches.

L'auteur fait le récit de la vie de Philoctète, argonaute d'après Valérius Flaccus, I, 391, protagoniste de la tragédie de Sophocle, exemple de la misère humaine chez Cicéron, *De Finibus*, II, héros dont la présence à Troie avec ses flèches est indispensable pour la prise de la cité, selon Sophocle et Pausanias, *Eliac.*, I, XIII. Gori remarque que la scène pourrait être tirée du *Philoctète* d'Euripide. Il ajoute que les arbres fruitiers étaient peints à l'origine, renvoyant aux *Métamorphoses*, XIII, 45, et aux *Tristes*, V, 1. Par la suite il renvoie à Philostrate, *Héroïques*, V, 1-2 (pied pansé), et cite la fable 102 d'Hygin. Finalement il cite Philostrate, *Images*, XVII, pour justifier l'aspect du héros.

5⁰ Pierre Jean Mariette reconnaît le héros sur une cornaline de la collection Crozat[2] : « 705. Philoctète, compagnon d'Hercule retiré dans l'isle de Lesbos [sic !]. Il est assis sur les armes de ce Héros, vis-à-vis d'un petit Temple consacré à une divinité, & il souleve sa jambe où il a reçû une blessure incurable. » Ajoutons à ces détails un oiseau mort et un pot grossier placés sur son siège. La gemme passera dans la collection du duc d'Orléans et sera minutieusement décrite, et ensuite dans les collections des tsars[3]. C'est un faux inspiré probablement du récit de Philoctète dans le *Télémaque* de Fénelon[4]. Utiliser Philoctète pour confectionner un faux artefact antique est un gage de notoriété aussi bien du roman de Fénelon que du mythe de Philoctète dans les premières décennies du XVIIIe siècle.

6⁰ Pierre Jean Mariette évoque un second artefact censé représenter Philoctète dont il fournit aussi l'image : il s'agit cette fois d'un jaspe sanguin ayant pour titre *Les*

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[1] Antonio Francisco Gori, *Museum Etruscum exhibens insignia veterum etruscorum monumenta*, volumen tertium, Florentiae, 1743, pp. 156-158 ; l'urne, planche VIII, est rangée dans la classe 3. Cette urne se trouve toujours au Musée Guarnacci de Volterra (no 332).

[2] J.-P. Mariette, *Description sommaire des pierres gravées du cabinet de feu M. Crozat*, Paris, 1741, p. 42.

[3] Abbé de La Chau, Abbé Le Blond, *Description des principales pierres gravées du cabinet de S.A.S. Mr Le Duc d'Orléans, premier prince du sang*, t. I, Paris, 1780, pp. 290-292. Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, le futur Philippe-Égalité, a vendu sa collection de pierres gravées deux ans après la publication de cet ouvrage à Catherine II de Russie.

[4] Pour prouver l'authenticité de la pierre, La Chau et Le Blond se fondaient sur *Télémaque* de Fénelon. L. A. Milani cite lui ce même fragment de la confession de Philoctète soulignant certains passages pour démontrer que l'artefact s'en inspirait, la gemme étant achetée par Pierre Crozat 15 ou 20 ans après la parution du roman - Milani, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

Grecs redemandans Philoctéte, de la collection de pierres gravées du Cabinet du roi de France.

> On y voit Philoctéte désarmé, & dans la situation d'un homme qui dans sa retraite s'est consacré à la vie champêtre. Il reçoit les deux Députés, qui, pour lui faire entendre qu'ils sont porteurs des ordres des Dieux, commencent leur mission par un sacrifice. Néoptolème a entre les mains le feu sacré, Dioméde prépare la victime, prenant soin de lui faire lever la tête, parce que l'offrande doit être faite aux Divinités célestes. Un jeune Guerrier plus éloigné, qui joue de la lyre, est sans doute Eunée fils de Jason, le fidéle compagnon de Philoctéte, qui cherche à calmer la douleur, & à charmer l'ennui de son ami.[1]

Dans son interprétation Mariette renvoie à Sophocle (mention de Néoptolème) et à Philostrate (mention d'Eunée), peut-être via la traduction de Blaise de Vigenère. Le scénario qui en résulte, hybride et fantasque, rend compte d'une méthode d'analyse des documents iconographiques fondée exclusivement sur des sources littéraires convoquées au mépris de la chronologie. Pour Philipp Daniel Lippert la scène représente la guérison de Philoctète par Machaon : le guérisseur, agenouillé devant Philoctète, lui présente un médicament ; Diomède joue de la lyre et Ulysse fait avancer la victime du sacrifice, un bélier. Lippert y voie un autre épisode de l'histoire de Philoctète, se fondant sur la scholie de Tzetzes à Lycophron, 911, qui évoque le destin de Philoctète à la fin de la guerre et la fondation du sanctuaire d'Apollon Alaios, et Hygin, 81[2].

Ce jaspe est en fait une réplique moderne d'une gemme antique représentant Ulysse de retour à Ithaque[3].

7^0 Philipp Daniel Lippert mentionne dans son ouvrage *Dactyliotheca* trois gemmes sur lesquelles est représenté Philoctète : la première, le numéro 179, est similaire sinon identique à celle reproduite par Gorlée et Beger représentant un archer (v. ci-dessus, 3^0) ; la deuxième, le numéro 180, un jaspe gris qui est la propriété du comte de Vitzthum qui figurerait le rapt des flèches de Philoctète par Diomède et Ulysse ; le troisième, le numéro 181, le jaspe rouge décrit et reproduit par Mariette.

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[1] Pierre Jean Mariette, *Traité des pierres gravées du Cabinet du roi*, t. 2, Paris, chez P. J. Mariette, 1750, planche XCIII ; les illustrations sont d'Edmé Bouchardon. Mariette y reconnaît un motif traité par « Æneas Vicus, d'après un Camée antique ».

[2] Philipp Daniel Lippert, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

[3] La gemme antique a été dessinée par Aenea Vico, *Ex gemmis et cameis antiquorum aliquot monumenta ab Aenea Vico*, Roma [1650 ?], pl. 5, reproduite aussi par Joseph Hilarius Eckhel, *Choix de pierres gravées du Cabinet Imperial des Antiques*, Vienne, Joseph Nobel de Kurzbek, 1788, p. 151, gemme no XXXVII. Ces deux dessins sont similaires, alors que le dessin reproduit par Mariette présente des altérations importantes. Salomon Reinach avoue n'avoir plus retrouvé cette gemme dans l'ancienne collection du roi - Salomon Reinach, *Pierres gravées des collections Marlborough et d'Orléans, des recueils d'Eckhel, Gori, Levesque de Gravelle, Mariette, Millin, Stosch*, Paris, Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1895, p. 101.

8^0 Philoctète apparaît sur un miroir qui fait 16,6 cm de diamètre faisant partie de la collection de Luigi Ferdinando Marsili [1]. La partie gauche du miroir est endommagée, mais la partie droite s'est intégralement conservée et laisse voir un homme barbu, la tête tournée à gauche, nu sous une draperie, un arc à la main, qui se fait soigner par un autre homme ; il s'appuie sur une hampe, près d'une table sur laquelle se trouve un vase et une éponge. L'arc, le serpent enroulé près du pied valide, le pied malade que l'autre personnage est en train de panser, autant d'éléments qui font penser à Philoctète. En 1789 Luigi Lanzi, le premier à avoir décrit ce miroir et l'ayant reproduit, semble-t-il, y reconnaissait Philoctète, mais il pensait que l'inscription désignait Télèphe. Au début du XIXe siècle Filippo Schiassi et Francesco Inghirami démontreront que l'inscription désignait bien Philoctète et non Télèphe comme le pensait Lanzi[2].

À remarquer que, selon Luigi Lanzi, Philoctète n'était pas un personnage si rarement représenté sur des objets antiques découverts en Étrurie[3] !

9-10^0 James Tassie s'était fait une réputation européenne dans sa qualité de modeleur et graveur ; les portes des collections les plus prestigieuses lui étaient ouvertes, ce qui lui a permis de se constituer sa propre collection de copies et de gravures. Il fait état de cinq représentations de Philoctète dont le jaspe sanguin de la collection du roi de France mentionné par Mariette et Lippert (no 9356) et deux gemmes de la collection du baron Stosch (nos 9359 et 9360), « Philoctète assis sur un rocher, & tourmenté par sa playe au pied » et « Dito, en face, un des pieds en bandage, appuyé du bras droit sur le carquois & l'arc d'Hercule »[4]. Les deux autres artefacts qu'il mentionne sont inédits : une première reproduction du camée Boethos provenant de France (no 9357) et une sardoine brûlée appartenant à Charles Townley, « Dito, écartant une aile les mouches qui viennent à lui attirées par l'infection de sa playe » (no 9358). Ce dernier artefact est à présent à British Museum (Museum number 1814,0704.1313), où se trouve aussi un dessin sur papier ayant appartenu au même propriétaire, acquis la même année, 1814 (Museum number 2010,5006.1121).

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[1] Giuseppe Sassatelli, *Corpus speculorum Etruscorum. Italia, Bologna - Museo civico*, fascicolo 1, L'Erma di Bretschneider, Roma, 1981, p. 35. Le miroir est conservé au Museo civico archeologico de Bologne (Inv. It. 1074, coll. Universitaria no 273).

[2] Filippo Schiassi, *Guida del forestiere al museo delle antichità della regia Università di Bologna*, Bologna, Giuseppe Lucchesini, 1814, p. 100 ; Francesco Inghirami, *Lettera al Signor Barone di Zach sopra un bronzo rappresentando Filottete*, Genova, dalla stamperia e fonderia di A. Ponthenier, 1819.

[3] « Se avesse a giudicarsi dalla figura, quel primo si terrebbe per Filottete ; di cui sono in Etruria tanti bassirilievi ; ed uno della miglior maniera nel M. R. [Museo Reale]. » - Luigi Lanzi, *Saggio di lingua etrusca e di altre antiche d'Italia*, t. II, Roma, Nella stamperia Pagliarini, 1789, p. 22, planche XVIII.

[4] James Tassie et R. E. Raspe, *A Descriptive Catalogue of a General Collection of Ancient and Modern Engraved Gems, Cameos and Intaglios, Taken from the Most Celebrated Cabinets in Europe; and Cast in Coloured Pastes, White Enamel, and Sulphur*, vol. II, London, 1791, pp. 545-546. Le no 9360 correspond au no 301 décrit par Winckelmann dans *Description des pierres gravées du feu Baron de Stosch.*

11-13^0 J. J. Winckelmann identifie trois gemmes représentant Philoctète dans la collection du baron Stosch - il s'agit des numéros 299-301. Se fondant sur des sources littéraires, Winckelmann a identifié sur une sardoine Philoctète cherchant l'autel de Jason. Sur une cornaline Philoctète est figuré tel qu'il est envisagé par Sophocle (*Phil.*, 287-291), assure l'auteur : il marche appuyé sur un bâton, sa jambe droite pansée, tenant d'une main l'arc et le carquois. Le dernier artefact décrit, une cornaline, figure Philoctète assis sur un rocher, la jambe pansée, la tête appuyée sur sa main droite, tenant l'arc et le carquois de l'autre main[1].

Dans ses *Monuments inédits de l'antiquité* Winckelmann publie 3 artefacts antiques figurant Philoctète dont des gravures des premiers deux artefacts (numéros 118 et 119), sans plus mentionner la dernière cornaline de la *Description*. Le sujet de Philoctète assis, ses armes à côté de lui, est décliné dans de nombreuses variantes et peut être facilement confondu avec Hercule au repos[2]. Un Philoctète assis, tel qu'il devait apparaître sur la gemme de la collection du baron Stosch, sert de modèle à Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein qui réalise une gravure en circulation vers 1790 à partir d'une gemme antique : Philoctète, vieux, hirsute, assis sur un bloc de pierre, s'appuie sur un bâton ; un bandage recouvre son pied et son mollet[3].

14^0 Le troisième artefact figurant Philoctète publié par Winckelmann dans ses *Monuments* est un relief - « il bassorilievo al Num. 120. da me posseduto »[4]. Les conclusions de Winckelmann, qui ne veut y voir un sujet purement allégorique et essaie de justifier la présence de Philoctète offrant un sacrifice, seront réfutées par le père Raffei et par Louis Petit Radel[5].

Le tableau ci-dessous permet un repérage plus facile des artefacts sur lesquels est représenté Philoctète identifiés par Winckelmann :

Winckelmann, *Stosch*, 1760	Winckelmann, *Monumenti*, 1767	Milani, *Filottete*, 1879
299^0, sardoine	118^0	Fig. 7 (v. aussi p. 72)
300^0, cornaline	119^0	Fig.19 (v. aussi p. 78)
301^0, cornaline	-	Fig. 27 (v. aussi p. 82)
-	Bas relief, fig. 120	Mentionné p. 67, n. 3 (fausse attribution)

[1] J. J. Winckelmann, *Description des pierres gravées du feu Baron de Stosch*, Florence, chez André Bonducci, 1760, pp. 386-387 (mythologie historique, troisième classe).

[2] Salmon Reinach, *op. cit.*, p. 139, planche 127, fig. 86 (cornaline dans la collection du duc d'Orléans, antérieurement dans la collection de Fulvio Orsini et Crozat).

[3] Cet artefact présente des similitudes avec des documents iconographiques reproduits par L. A. Milani dans *Il Mito di Filottete*, figures 26 à 28 et 31 à 33.

[4] Giovanni Winckelmann, *Monumenti antichi inediti spiegati ed illustrati*, t. I, Roma, 1767, pp. 159-162.

[5] Le père Raffei rapporte que le relief ayant appartenu à Winckelmann se trouvait après sa mort dans les collections de la Villa Albani - Raffei, *op. cit.*, p. 24. Le relief est passé ensuite dans les collections du Musée Napoléon (Louvre) ; comme le père Raffei, Louis Petit Radel rejette l'interprétation de Winckelmann et considère qu'il s'agit d'une scène allégorique, un *Sacrifice à Minerve* - *Les Monuments antiques du Musée Napoléon*, t. 4, Paris, Au Collège des Grassins, 1806, pp. 33-36 et planche 11.

15[0] Le père Raffei croit avoir trouvé dans un coin de la villa Albani, dissimulé au regard de son illustre prédécesseur, un autre bas-relief de marbre représentant « Filottete assalito dai più fieri dolori della sua piaga nella solitudine di Lenno », tel qu'il apparaît dans la tragédie de Sophocle et d'Accius[1]. Il conclut : « l'effigie del viso, gli atteggiamenti, la situazione della persona, la gamba coperta, e la serpe ci assicurano a riconoscere senza esitazione nel Baslorilievo Filottete abbandonato ; massimamentecche non v' ha nella Eroica Favola personaggio, cui tutte insieme le dette particolarità possano convenire ». Plusieurs auteurs dont Ennio Quirino Visconti, Stefano Antonio Morcelli et Georg Zoëga[2] rejettent l'opinion du père Raffei, objectant que non seulement manquent tous les signes distinctifs du héros, mais en plus le visage n'exprime pas la douleur et les crispations provoquées par sa blessure et proposeront d'autres interprétations.

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Ces derniers auteurs, J. J. Winckelmann et Stefano Raffei, méritent bien une mention spéciale dans ce contexte, vu leur intérêt particulier pour Philoctète.

3. J. J. Winckelmann, Philoctète et l'histoire de l'art chez les Anciens

J. J. Winckelmann a contribué doublement à la réception du mythe de Philoctète, et dans les deux cas d'une manière décisive. D'une part, il a donné de la publicité aux artefacts représentant Philoctète et, d'autre part, il l'a introduit dans le débat esthétique du XVIIIe siècle, contribuant dans les deux cas à la notoriété du personnage et encourageant la réflexion sur son histoire et sa représentation.

Par la notoriété qu'il lui confère, il engage des antiquaires et autres érudits à s'intéresser à Philoctète, leur fournissant une méthode, leur indiquant certaines conventions dans la représentation du héros. Pour identifier le thème et les personnages représentés sur les artefacts de la collection du baron Stosch, Winckelmann se fonde sur l'intuition et l'érudition : « Les preuves que nous avons tirés des monuments antiques sont souténues par des citations d'Auteurs fort exactes, […] toutes ces citations sont puisées dans les premiéres sources »[3]. Ainsi, pour justifier le sujet d'une sardoine, n[0] 299 de la collection Stosch, « Philoctète [...] mordu d'un serpent lorsqu'il alla chercher l'Autel que Jason dans son

[1] Raffei, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[2] Stefano Antonio Morcelli, *Indicazione antiquaria per la villa suburbana dell'eccellentissima casa Albani*, Roma, Vincenzo Poggiolo, 1803, p. 53 ; Georg Zoëga, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-264. Dans l'ouvrage de Morcelli l'artefact est qualifié de « bassorilievo preteso di Filottete spasimante pel morso di una vipera, che siede sopra uno scoglio, figurato pel promontorio deserto di Lenno, dove i Duci Greci l'abbandonarono, passando senza di lui all'impresa di Troja, edito dall' Ab. Raffei Diss, p. 23. ; ma che rappresenta il Genio di un Monte col serpe dietro, simbolo del Genio, non di Filottete, di cui la figura nulla ha di somigliante […] ; non avendo segno di ferita alla gamba come il altri monumenti Filottete, per provarne la spasimo : e questo, che il Raffei scorge nella testa della figura, altro non è che l'effetto del vento, che […] rebbuffa i capelli. »

[3] J. J. Winckelmann, *Description des pierres gravées du feu baron de Stosch*, p. V.

Expédition de Colchos, avoit élevé à Chryse, Promontoire de l'Ile de Lemnos »[1], Winckelmann renvoie à plusieurs sources, Sophocle, *Phil.*, 269, Philostrate, *Images*, XVII, la scholie à Lycophron, 912. L'artefact n^0 300 présente Philoctète blessé « à la jambe droite »[2] se déplaçant appuyé sur un bâton, tenant l'arc et le carquois de l'autre main, « tel qu'il est peint par Sophocle, qui lui fait raconter ses miséres à Néoptoléme », la gravure paraissant, selon ses dires, « copiée d'après cette Tragédie inimitable, & supérieure à toutes celles qui ont été faites depuis »[3]. Winckelmann cite ensuite un fragment sophocléen, en grec et en latin (*Phil.*, 286-289), ajoutant une convention glanée quelque part conformément à laquelle « Homére fait marcher les Chefs des Grecs blessés appuyés sur leurs épées »[4].

Étrangement, la troisième pierre gravée dont la description ne comporte aucune référence n'est plus mentionné dans l'ouvrage suivant, *Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati*[5]. Là, pour décrire les deux artefacts mentionnés ci-dessus, Winckelmann ajoute d'autres sources à celles déjà utilisées dans son ouvrage antérieur, Pausanias, Stephane de Byzance (exil à Lemnos ou dans l'île Néa) ; Appien, *Mithridate* (temple où se trouvent les armes de Philoctète) ; Lucien de Samosate, *De la danse,* 46 (Philoctète est « celui qui est abandonné ») ; Accius, cité d'après Scaliger qui citait Varro, et Quintus de Smyrne (Philoctète porterait « una coperta di penne d'uccelli intorno al basso ventre »).

Winckelmann ajoute aux descriptions fournies sept ans auparavant de nouvelles interprétations, preuve indubitable de l'évolution de sa pensée et de l'approfondissement du sujet : ainsi, le Philoctète gravé sur la pierre n^0 118 est jeune, en contraste avec les deux autres artefacts sur lesquels le héros a une barbe touffue qui indique « la vie solitaire et malheureuse que mena durant dix ans Philoctète dans cette île déserte » plutôt que son grand âge[6] ; sur la pierre gravée n^0 119 Philoctète porte deux arcs, l'arc hérité d'Hercule et un autre, à usage trivial - « un altro arco fra esse, per indicar la caccia ch'è facea degli uccelli, per procacciarsi da vivere »[7].

Pour le nouvel artefact sur lequel il avait identifié Philoctète - un bas-relief, n^0 120, où apparaissent un personnage féminin ailé et un guerrier placés de part et d'autre d'un autel surmonté d'une Athéna, autour duquel s'enroule un serpent - Winckelmann diversifie sa démarche afin de démontrer qu'il s'agit d'un sacrifice

[1] Idem, p. 386.
[2] Traditionnellement, Philoctète est blessé au pied gauche, mais ici, y compris pour la description de l'artefact antérieur, n^0 299, comme dans les *Monuments antiques*, Winckelmann parle de la jambe droite !
[3] J. J. Winckelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 386.
[4] Idem, p. 387.
[5] Ces trois pierres sont montées en bague d'or, traitement réservé aux « sujets les plus rares » - idem, p. XXIX.
[6] J. J. Winckelmann, *Monuments inédits de l'Antiquité, statues, peintures antiques, pierres gravées, bas-reliefs de marbre et de terre cuite,* t. 2, Paris, L. Paravicin, 1808, p. 104. Les gravures ont été exécutées par David, mais l'édition est défectueuse.
[7] Winckelmann, *Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati*, t. II, Roma, 1767, p. 160.

offert par Philoctète en présence de Hygie ou de la Victoire[1]. L'auteur se trompe, mais son analyse est instructive à plus d'un égard.

Intrigué par le sujet, Winckelmann aura besoin d'un long détour pour passer d'une interprétation strictement allégorique à un mélange d'allégorie et de vérité : l'allégorie subsiste (le sacrifice pour recouvrer la santé), mais il y glisse un personnage mythologique susceptible d'être distribué dans une telle scène. Comme dans les autres cas, Winckelmann réunit de nombreuses sources livresques ; pour le seul Philoctète il renvoie à Philostrate, Images, 17 (barbe hirsute, pointue) ; Eustathe (temple de Pallas appelé Chrysé bâti par Jason ; peut-être un bomos ; causes de la morsure) ; Énéide, V, 95 (le serpent, génie ou ministre du défunt). Mais il a besoin de nouveaux arguments pour démontrer sa thèse, alors il se concentre sur certains détails caractéristiques - vêtements, coiffures, postures et mimiques. Or, une certaine position de la jambe lui indique qu'il pourrait s'agir d'un personnage qui a mal au pied :

> La figura di Filottete ci manifesta il dolore del morso del serpente nel piè destro, col tenerlo alzato ch'ella fa, quasi non attentisi posarlo in terra ; e il dolore come veggiamo nella celebre statua di Laocoonte, sembra anche quì sentirsi da Filottete fino nelle dita del piede.[2]

Mettant à profit ses connaissances en matière de conventions de l'art antique, il remarque que Philoctète, comme *Hygie d'ailleurs, est nu-pieds*[3].

On peut donc savoir gré à Winckelmann d'avoir entamé une réflexion sur la représentation de Philoctète dans les documents iconographiques anciens, orientant la démarche des antiquaires et autres collectionneurs vers une étude scientifique d'un sujet de la glyptique antique. Parmi ses émules, *deux célèbres antiquaires français, l'abbé Géraud de La Chau, bibliothécaire et garde du cabinet des pierres gravées du duc d'Orléans, et l'abbé Gaspard Michel, dit Le Blond, sous-bibliothécaire du collège Mazarin. Pour ces auteurs,* « la description des Pierres du Cabinet de Stosch est un modèle en ce genre : on y voit partout l'érudit qui observe avec les yeux d'un Artiste éclairé. Dans tous ses ouvrages le goût est joint à la science […] »[4] Et leur admiration est si grande qu'il leur arrive de copier des phrases tirées des études du maître ! Ainsi, pour identifier Philoctète sur une cornaline de la collection du duc d'Orléans, se trouvant antérieurement dans *la collection Crozat* et décrite en 1741 par *J.-P. Mariette - le numéro 5 ci-dessus -, ils commencent par* un bref rappel de la légende de Philoctète, abandonné à Lemnos par Ulysse avec l'accord de l'armée, convaincue que « Philoctète étoit frappé de la

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[1] Idem, pp. 160-161.

[2] Idem, p. 161. V. aussi les considérations de l'auteur relatives à la position du pied reposant sur les doigts comme signe de la douleur, dans Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'art*, vol. 2, p. 109.

[3] Franciscus Junius qui invoque une épître de Philostrate (épître 18, *ad excalceatum adolescentulum*) mentionne une (fausse) convention dans la représentation antique des héros que « les anciens […] peignaient le plus souvent déchaussés, au contraire des malades et des vieillards ». Philoctète fait exception « parce qu'il était boiteux et malade » - Franciscus Junius, *De pictura veterum libri tres, Rotterdam, 1694,* édition du livre I par Colette Nativel, Droz, 1996, p. 280.

[4] Abbé de La Chau, Abbé Le Blond, *op. cit.*, pp. XXI-XXII.

main des Dieux ». Les auteurs jugent bon de citer un ample passage de Télémaque, celui justement dans lequel le héros raconte son abandon et sa vie à Lemnos, qu'ils croient traduit de Sophocle. S'ensuit la description de la cornaline : Philoctète, assis sur un rocher, soulève de ses deux mains sa jambe malade, qui n'est pas pansé ; l'arc, le carquois, un oiseau au long cou et un gobelet sont autant de détails qui permettent l'identification du personnage. Ce qui suscite le plus grand intérêt est un rocher étrange, troué, dans l'ouverture duquel on voit Vulcain « à qui cette isle étoit consacrée », un marteau à la main, coiffé d'un bonnet spécifique. Une source jaillit de ce rocher ; à côté de Vulcain, un flambeau sollicite toute l'imagination des auteurs :

> […] quant à la torche qui brûle à côté de la Statue, peut-être est-elle un attribut de Vulcain, & peut-être l'Artiste a-t-il voulu par-là donner à connoître que les Anciens faisoient de l'isle de Lemnos le séjour du Feu, ou désigner les secours précieux que Philoctète trouva dans cet élément.[1]

La fin de cette description est un hommage explicite au théoricien Winckelmann. Les auteurs y voient une illustration de sa thèse conformément à laquelle Philoctète se montrer supérieur à ses souffrances : « il dévore sa douleur dont on ne voit pas même les traces sur son visage ». Le héros serait représenté selon « les principes de l'Art & non ceux de la Philosophie », le peintre et le sculpteur évitant de suivre les procédés du poète[2].

4. Le père Raffei et les reliefs de la Villa Albani

Stefano Raffei, le successeur de Winckelmann à la villa Albani, est l'auteur de plusieurs dissertations qui se constituent en autant de suppléments aux *Monuments inédits de l'Antiquité*, l'ouvrage de son prédécesseur. La quatrième de ces dissertations, *Filottete addolorato*, porte justement sur un bas-relief de la Villa Albani qui, selon le père Raffei, représenterait le héros[3]. Dans la tradition inaugurée par Winckelmann, l'auteur ne manque pas de rappeler les sources livresques les plus importantes pour la séquence lemnienne, les tragédies de Sophocle, Eschyle, Euripide et Accius[4]. Il constate un décalage entre l'intérêt que portent à Philoctète les écrivains et celui beaucoup plus modeste que lui témoigneraient les artistes pendant l'Antiquité. Car sur son inventaire des artefacts représentant Philoctète connus à son époque sont inscrits seulement cinq objets, deux gemmes de la collection du baron Stosch décrites par Winckelmann, une gemme reproduite par Louis Smids, mais sur laquelle le père Raffei reconnaît Hector à Delphes, inspirée d'un tableau décrit par Pausanias, *Phocide,* 31, la

[1] Idem, p. 292.
[2] Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'art*, II, p. 289.
[3] Raffei, *op. cit*., 1773.
[4] Idem, p. 23.

gemme gravée par Enea Vico, le bas-relief décrit par Winckelmann – ces artefacts sont tous mentionnés ci-dessus, dans cet ordre : 11^0, 12^0, 3^0, 2^0, 14^0. [1]

Comme Winckelmann avant de livrer son interprétation sur un objet inédit, le père Raffei procède par un long détour. Il essaie de présenter au lecteur l'histoire de Philoctète dans toute sa complexité : il précise les circonstances de l'exil - la volonté expresse des dieux -, la grotte à deux entrées, les manifestations de sa maladie - renvoyant à Sophocle, Accius, cité d'après Cicéron et Nonius Marcellus, et Eschyle -, son aspect sauvage, effrayant - renvoyant à Sophocle, cité en grec, latin et italien, Accius, et Philostrate, cité en italien. Ce n'est qu'après avoir fourni et commenté ces détails que le père Raffei décrit l'artefact, reproduit d'ailleurs en tête de sa dissertation. Pour étayer sa thèse, il s'attarde sur les simples que Philoctète utilisait pour calmer ses douleurs, mais aussi sur la description de la posture du personnage et surtout sur la position de son pied. Il pense que, comme dans le cas des artefacts indiqués par Gronovio et Smids, comme dans le commentaire de Winckelmann sur l'artefact 14^0, il n'est pas obligatoire que l'artiste montre la blessure de Philoctète.

Le père Raffei croit donc que le personnage figuré sur le bas-relief est Philoctète saisi de « fierissimo spasimo », situation qui exige de nouvelles considérations sur la position de la plante du pied, mais aussi sur le mal du héros, appelé chez Eschyle et Euripide *φαγέδαιναν*, et chez Sophocle *Διαβόρος*, « dichiarato dal greco Scoliaste così : *Morbo, che divora, devasta, imputridisce, da' Medici chiamato φαγέδαιναν,* cioè *ulcere fagedenico* »[2] - et des renvois à Hésychios, Julius Pollux, Galien et Hippocrate.

Le père Raffei déploie des trésors de subtilité pour expliquer que dans le bas-relief qu'il a découvert il s'agit bien de Philoctète : il demande au lecteur de s'imaginer la grotte sous la forme d'une brèche, de croire que l'arbre qui pousse derrière le héros et dont le tronc passe sous son bras n'a pas de feuilles parce que le héros les a utilisées comme remède. Il demande au lecteur d'accepter que, la plaie de Philoctète étant affreuse, le sculpteur a préféré la cacher sous le drapage, le serpent présent dans l'image rappelant suffisamment la cause du mal[3]. Enfin, le père Raffei demande au lecteur d'accepter que Philoctète n'a pas d'arc parce qu'il est en train de soigner sa blessure et que d'ailleurs comme Sophocle le mentionne il a toujours peur qu'on ne le lui vole et donc il le cache parfois dans la grotte, avec ses flèches [4].

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[1] Par la suite, Georg Zoëga reprochera au père Raffei d'ignorer les deux artefacts représentant Philoctète publiés par Gori, un sarcophage et une urne funéraire (v. ci-dessus, 1^0 et 4^0) - Georg Zoëga, *op. cit.*, p. 259, n. 4.

[2] Raffei, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[3] « […] prese il nostro scultore il saggio partido di coprire in quel modo tutta la gamba, non contravenendo così nè al decoro, nè alla poetica fama » - Raffei, *op. cit.*, p. 27-28.

[4] « […] allorchè vi capitarono i Greci, sentendosi dallo spasimo assalire, diè le frecce con l'arco in custodia al figliuolo di Achille, ed è molto verisimile che in altri tempi della sua solitudine la tenesse nella sua abitazione riposto con gelosia » - idem, p. 28.

SURREAL HISTORICITY AND HISTORICISED SURREALISM: SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *SHAME*

Angela STĂNESCU[1]

Abstract: *The article examines the particularities of Salman Rushdie's metafictional discourse, which articulates the author's reflections on the nature of historical reality, referentiality and the politics of textual representation. The author's aesthetic dilemmas between realism and fabulism interrogate the dialogical ethics of fictional discourse as opposed to the monologic discourse of oppressive autocracies, which seem to de-familiarise the boundaries between reality and the surreal experience of history. The analysis focuses the metafictional strategies by which Rushdie ironically rationalises his choice of a surrealist aesthetic, considered as best fitting the nature of his historical referent.*

Key-words: *postcolonial satire, historiographic metafiction, surrealism, metafiction, historical reference.*

Shame, Rushdie's third novel of 1982, could be regarded as a thematic sequel to *Midnight's Children*, in that it takes up the narrative thread of Pakistan's emergence and consolidation as a nation state, which is episodically, though memorably represented in Saleem Sinai's panoramic overview of the closely knit national politics of the subcontinent's young states. If Saleem's master-narrative envisages a myth of origins of the Indian nation, the author-narrator of *Shame* spins the founding myths of Pakistan and the extraordinary tales of its internal and external political quarrels.

The novel rehashes what Homi Bhabha describes as 'the emergence of India and Pakistan, born together from a cleft womb, still as restless in relation to each other as the day they stepped into the harsh light of nationhood' (Bhabha 2004: ix). The narrative projects a political biography of Pakistan, fictionalised in a wildly postmodernist collage of narrative modes and discourses, fusing together elements of the folktale, the fantastic, the gothic, the ghost story, vampirism, realism, documentary, journalism or political dystopia, all self-consciously commented upon and appropriated by the metafictional voice of the implied author.

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Thinly disguised behind the voice-over commentary of an intrusive authorial consciousness, Rushdie exposes in a disingenuously self-deprecating manner the moral motivations and artistic choices of his undertaking. He overtly refers to the life of his family and friends in Pakistan, as if to justify his close interest in and familiarity with the country's realities. Like Saleem Sinai, he appears 'handcuffed to [the] history' of the two twin nations born simultaneously in the year of his own birth. While India remains the country of his past, of his enchanted Bombay childhood in which he grew his cultural roots, Pakistan is the country of his family's present and future, the place to which he becomes attached by the bonds of blood and love, the site of his family home.

Self-consciously anticipating potential contestations of his right to narrate, Rushdie stages a defence of his moral right to his subject, warding off imaginary attacks from offended readers. He repeatedly bursts onto the stage of his narrative in the persona of a sometimes defensive, sometimes vociferous, revolted and anguished author, in order to rationalise his choice of content and form or respond to virtual accusations. *Shame* overtly foregrounds its author's wrestling with the alternative temptations of realism and fabulism, thus staging the crucial dilemma confronting the novelists of the last half a century.

Moreover, the metafictional authorial commentary engages dialogically the on-going critical debate over the politics and poetics of the contemporary novel as a repository of a collective socio-historical consciousness. The prominence of the authorial figure and his meta-discourse on the problematic of his novel consecrates *Shame* as a paradigmatic exemplar of Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction. All of Rushdie's novels fit the paradigm of the novelistic subgenre theorised by Hutcheon, insofar as they are narrated by self-conscious writer figures preoccupied with the credibility of their perceptions of historical reality and with the relationship between the politics and aesthetics of fictional representation. But *Shame* expands and enriches the repertoire of the paradigmatic metafictional discourse.

The authorial asides in which the writer's persona takes the reader in his confidence install a profoundly dialogical discourse addressing and responding to imagined counter-discourses or opposing voices. More than merely indulging in the staple metafictional convention of 'baring the device' or inviting the reader into the writer's workshop, the author-narrator of *Shame* doubles as both plaintiff and defendant as he simultaneously questions and proclaims the very legitimacy of his narratorial undertaking or the validity of his ethical and aesthetic approach. The artist's controlling consciousness splits into the divergent perspectives of the manager, actor and spectator of his own narrative performance, which reminds one of Thackeray's conversational intrusions. But while Thackeray envisaged an empathetic complicity with his reader, Rushdie is aware of the cultural heterogeneity of his implied audience, unevenly distributed on either side of the ideological divide between East and West. He operates by overly 'othering' those whose sensibilities are bound to be offended by his satire as he self-consciously starts to ventriloquize their virtual attacks on his project.

As he embarks on his alleged fantasy about a purportedly fictitious country resembling Pakistan, the thinly disguised author figure imagines the protestations of those who, scathed by his political fable, might respond by challenging his credentials. He fears that his position as a self-exiled outsider, as a refugee to the barricades of the West, enjoying the critical licence of the cosmopolitan émigré, might be invoked to contest his right to comment on realities of which he has no direct experience:

> Outsider! Trespasser! You have no right to this subject! .I know: nobody ever arrested me. Nor are they likely to. Poacher! Pirate! We reject your authority. We know you, with your foreign language wrapped around you like a flag: speaking about us in your forked tongue, what can you tell but lies?' (Rushdie 1982: 28)

While admitting that there are others more entitled than him to voice the plight of Pakistan, such as his friend, 'the poet [who] had spent many months in jail, for social reasons' (28), Rushdie takes it upon his himself to speak on behalf of those silenced by political persecution: 'Maybe my friend should be telling this story, or another one, his own; but he doesn't write poetry any more. So here I am inventing what never happened to me' (28). In defence of his right to narrate, Rushdie invokes his moral duty to avail himself of his unrestrained freedom of thought and speech. As such freedoms are a luxury denied to his friends and family in Pakistan, he feels it is incumbent on him to voice their predicament and further their cause. His retort to the torrent of abuse mimicked above unambiguously states his right to engage the reality of this or any other country, on the grounds that its political destiny partakes of the global heritage of world history and cannot be swept under the carpet of national sovereignty or imprisoned within the borders of domestic secrecy:

> I reply with more questions: is history to be considered the property of the participants solely? In what courts are such claims staked, what boundary commissions map out the territories? Can only the dead speak? (28).

The self-conscious authorial persona both defensively and offensively elaborates on the rightfulness of his critical engagement with and claim on the subject of Pakistani politics and society. The mere mention of his family's residence in Pakistan is enough to hammer his point home. Though not explicitly argued, this autobiographical fact makes his case that he is bound up to the country's fate by the inextricable ties of blood. He mentions his visits to Karachi with the offhand naturalness with which one talks about ordinary reunions with family and friends, but his feigned casualness contrasts with the unnatural tension, cautious silences and sense of menace perceptible in the manner of his interlocutors.

Thus, Rushdie stakes his claim to inside knowledge of a stifling socio-political climate in which 'the air…is full of unasked questions' (27), but also pregnant with the muted answers which the author feels called upon to voice on behalf of the oppressed. Apart from his familial attachments to this oppressive space, Rushdie invokes the strength of cultural and ethnic affinities with the life of the subcontinent, which override the distancing effect of migration. He explains that the novel under way is intended as a kind of literary testament addressing his

native subcontinent, a ritual farewell aimed to mark the nostalgia of his severance from his past, which already feels like a foreign country:

> I tell myself this will be a novel of leave-taking, my last words on the East, from which, many years ago, I began to come loose. I do not always believe myself when I say this. It is a part of the world to which, whether I like it or not, I am still joined, if only by elastic bands (28).

The narrator's affirmation of his right to the subject of Pakistan is paradoxically counteracted by his negation of any attempt at realism. These disingenuous disclaimers, so transparently self-contradictory, are not really meant to deny the obvious, but to suggest that his fiction can accommodate the country's unimaginable realities only by means of an epistemological displacement which relocates them into the different order of an alternative universe, an imagined parallel world where any abnormality or surreal monstrosity becomes possible and plausible:

> The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional countryexist, like myself, at a slight angel to reality. I have found this off-centring to be necessary; but its value is, of course, open to debate. My view is that I'm not writing only about Pakistan (29).

The author's plea for the reader's suspension of disbelief is marred by internal contradictions, hesitations and *double entendres* ('or not quite', 'the same space, or almost the same space', 'open to debate'). Far from alleviating our temptation to establish connections and correspondences with real history, these half-hearted denials only serve to reinforce our suspicions. Furthermore, the vagueness of his Pakistan is belied by his undisguised reference to Karachi. The implication that the book may as well be 'not…only about Pakistan' indicates its encompassing scope as a universally significant cautionary tale about the dangers of founding states and nations on the fundaments of religious purity, which has led to the intoxicating Islamisation of politics in the Muslim world.

At the same time, the author is at pains to rationalise his inability to write a realist novel about Pakistan. In his apologia for eschewing realism he offers two main reasons. Firstly, a mimetic representation of the country's reality would be difficult because of his fragmentary knowledge of its quotidian life. Emphasising again his affective ties to the private sphere of Pakistani history, he draws a parallel between his episodic, discontinuous relationship with his youngest sister and his scrappy image of the country. He confesses that he can only perceive the country as a subjective reality, due to the private significance it bears for him as the setting of his sister's existence. Just as his sister's image has been reconstructed from the jigsaw pieces of a temporally segmented acquaintance, his picture of the country has to be pieced out from fugitive glimpses. Replicating the central trope of *Midnight's Children*, by which Saleem defines himself as the mirror image of India, the narrator identifies the destiny of Pakistan with that of his own family. Pakistan is appropriated as a subject by virtue of its being the background of his family album, and by extension an inextricable part of his identity and cultural self-consciousness.

> If this were a realistic novel about Pakistan, I would not be writing about Bilquis and the wind; I would be talking about my youngest sister. Who is twenty-two, and studying engineering in Karachi… and who (unlike me) is a Pakistani citizen On my good days, I think of her as Pakistan, and then I feel very fond of the place, and find it easy to forgive its (her) love of Coca-Cola and imported motor-cars. Although I have known Pakistan for a long time, I have never lived there for longer than six months at a stretch… I have learned Pakistan in slices, the same way as I have learned my growing sister. I first saw her at the age of zero… then at three, four, six, seven, ten, fourteen, eighteen, and twenty-one. So there have been nine youngest sisters for me to get to know. I have felt closer to each successive reincarnation than to the one before. (This goes for the country, too). I think what I'm confessing is that, however I chose to write about over-there, I am forced to reflect that world in fragments of broken mirrors… I must reconcile myself to the inevitability of the missing bits (68-9).

While confessing to the gapped, fragmented experience of the migrant who, torn between two cultural spaces, projects his image of home onto the features of the loved ones left behind, the narrator also admits to the inherent fallibility of his perspective on Pakistan. His narrative project can only reflect his outsider's take on the inner continuities, or rather discontinuities, of a people's collective perception and experience of history in the making. His insight into the country's social and political issues is only gleaned from eye-witness testimonies, from his occasional visits or from the media, and therefore liable to yield a necessarily perspectival montage of a mediated reality. With the patently postmodern wariness of absolute truths, Rushdie puts into question the finality of his own judgements by adopting the self-exonerating stance and licence of the unreliable narrator.

The second reason which the author invokes in his refutation of realism is related to the extraordinary nature of his topic. He explains that a realistic depiction of Pakistan would involve outrageous details of its political, social and religious corruption, anecdotes about the rottenness and venality of its political and military elites, about horrors infinitely more mind-blowing than the fantastic apologue which he has envisaged. But his tongue-in-cheek disavowal of his fiction's historical referentiality is belied by the mention of Bhutto and Zia, the real-life referents of the novel's main protagonists. Their political rivalries, unlawful abuses and discretionary rule of Pakistan are thinly disguised in the mock-heroic, epic confrontations between Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder. The narrator's breathless, cumulative enumeration of the sorry facts which would pile up in a realistic novel about Pakistani politics streams into a page-long, explicit summary of all the corruptions, manipulations, bigotries and venalities engendered by the power struggle and personal vendettas between the two arch-rivals, both real and fictional. The cumulative effect created by this shocking inventory of enormity characterising Pakistan's affairs of state is subversively intended to give the reader a taste of the tremendous challenge which a realistic representation would entail:

> But suppose this were a realistic novel! Just think what else I might have to put in…How much real life material might become compulsory! ... about

> smuggling, the boom in heroin exports, the military dictators, venal civilians, corrupt civil servants, bought judges, newspapers of whose stories the only thing that can confidently be said is that they are lies; or about the apportioning of the national budget, with special reference to the percentages set aside for the defence (huge) and for education (not huge). Imagine my difficulties! (70).

Rushdie claims that the times are not propitious to realistic narratives, that pursuing such an approach would mean courting disaster. The bitter irony is that the scenario he envisioned was to be substantiated only a few years later, when his *Satanic Verses* unleashed the infamous 'Rushdie Affair':

> By now, if I had been writing a book of this nature, it would have done me no good to protest that I was writing universally, not only about Pakistan. The book would have been banned, dumped in the rubbish bin, burned. All that effort for nothing! Realism can break a writer's heart' (70). Having argued his alleged case against political realism, the author solicitously offers his readers an interpretive key to his story, which he describes as 'a sort of modern fairy tale (70).

It is, however, a fairy-tale in which, though evildoers get their due deserts by dying an un-heroic death, good cannot be said to prevail and no one lives happily ever after. Moreover, Rushdie's fairy-tale also seems to have had a disturbing bearing on reality, if we are to read General Raza Hyder's fictional death as an uncanny anticipation of the untimely demise of President Zia-ul-Haq in a mysterious aircraft crash occurred in 1988. We cannot but wonder how much Rushdie's satiric art illustrates the ancient superstitions about the prophetic, deathly tongue of the archetypal satirist-magician, whose verbal poison was believed not only to stigmatise its victims, but also to inflict death.

Just as the authorial voice playfully issues self-contradictory pronouncements on the thematic and formal concerns of the novel, Rushdie has displayed, in various essays or interviews, the same tendency to offer ambiguous clues for its reading. Critics have found it quite a challenge to pinpoint the polymorphous quality of the novel or agree on a generic denominator that would best describe its structural and technical originality. Catherine Cundy begins by revising Rushdie's own inconsistent assessments of his novel. Curiously enough, he has described *Shame* as a 'realistic' novel, though 'not entirely a-*roman-a-clef*' (Rushdie, quoted in Cundy 45). Cundy examines the appropriateness of defining it as an allegory, a genre considered by Fredric Jameson and Timothy Brennan to characterise much of Third World literature, which is often permeated by the didacticism of the 'national allegory' (Cundy 61). Seeking a satisfactory definition of allegory which would best fit Rushdie's particular brand, the critic settles for Jameson's insightful diagnosis of the genre's contemporary function.

Jameson defines the postcolonial allegorical spirit as 'profoundly discontinuous, a matter of breaks and heterogeneities, of the multiple polysemy of the dream rather than the homogeneous representations of the symbol', naturalised by writing from and about the Third World so that 'the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public

third-world culture and society' (Jameson, quoted in Cundy 62). Irrespective of the labels invoked to describe Rushdie's hybrid novel, it is generally agreed that it fuses the rhetoric of a whole array of genres belonging to Western or Eastern traditions. An allegorical reading is inherent to the story's didactic and moralising thrust, warning against oppression in the most general sense, with particular emphasis on the corrupt oppressiveness of autocratic regimes ousting each other in Pakistan.

The novel's indebtedness to the Western mock-epic tradition is illustrated by the symmetry of the parallel plot, following the un-heroic rise and fall of two families, the Harappas and the Hyders, whose private and domestic melodramas are exorcised on the public stage as political farces. Their entwined stories satirically dramatize the political careers of the two prominent, antagonistic Pakistani rulers - Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and general Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. The novel is also reminiscent of the Hindu epics, insofar as the two dynastic families, like their mythical counterparts, are locked together in an iniquitous web of kinship, complicities, alliances, betrayals, humiliations, rivalries and assassinations, and doomed by a lethal embroilment of hatred which eventually leads to their apocalyptic annihilation. But the benign humour of the mock-heroic mode, sustained by the novel's caricatured portraits and burlesque entanglements, conjoined with the grotesque crudity of the Menippean carnivalesque, is darkened by the admonitory irony of classical satire.

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CONSTANTIN BRÂNCOVEANU'S LIBRARY OF HUREZ - A MODEL OF MULTICULTURALITY

Agnes ERICH[1]

Abstract: *The libraries present in time in princely residences, boyars' houses, schools and monasteries have preserved undeniable written evidence about the scholarly preoccupations of the Romanian reigning princes. This is how the passion for books, passed on from generation to generation among the Cantacuzinos, materialized as well in the spiritual preoccupations of Constantin Brâncoveanu, who was brought up by his mother, Stanca Cantacuzino, the daughter of the postelnic (Chamberlain) Catacuzino, and by his uncle, the stolnic (Seneschal) Constantin Cantacuzino. Thus, he will grow up and shape his personality in the residences of the Cantacuzinos of Filipeşti (Mărgineni) and Bucharest, where he must have had at hand large and precious book collections coming from the European area.*

Key words**:** *Brâncoveanu, Library of Hurez, Bucharest Bible.*

The Wallachian ruler began his reign by means of a very important cultural act for the Romanians, namely the printing of the Bucharest *Bible* (its first complete edition in Romanian, a large work for its time, in large folio format, 2 columns on page, small characters), in just 10 months. It began on November 5, 1687, in the printing shop managed by Mitrofan, and ended in September 1688, the second circulation being ready on November 10, 1688 (in one month).

Brâncoveanu was the "administrator" of this work, a work actually realized with the contribution of Romanian scholars from everywhere. The future reigning prince grew aware of the importance of the reference tools needed for the translation of the Bucharest Bible and created a lexicographic fund comprising, among other essential works: the edition printed in Venice in 1523 of the *Etymologicum magnum*, *sive thesaurus universae linguae Graecae ex multis variisque autoribus collectus*, also known as the *Greek Lexicon* of Varinus Favorinus; *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta*, appeared between the years 1653-1657 (London, 6 volumes in folio)[2], edited by the great orientalist Walton Bryan, or *Lexicon heptaglotton*, realized by Edmund Castell (collaborator of Bryan in the editing of the polyglot Bible).

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[2] Vol. 1, 1046 p.; vol. 2, 918 p.; vol. 3, 1203 p.; vol. 4, 808 p.; vol. 5, 983 p.; vol. 6, 818 p.

The volumes were prepared to be shared to all those able to understand the historical significance referred to in their forewords. The Seneschal himself had asked Constantin Brâncoveanu to send copies in the country to make the change of reign known, which allows us to state that we may probably witness a first *manifesto* distributed for the sake of the creation of the political connections needed for the realization of his reforms.

Constantin Brâncoveanu was interested as well in creating a library sheltered by the Monastery of Hurez, for which he had a room built at the same level as the chapel and the princely rooms. About this library, just one mention has been preserved, dating from the first half of the 18th century (1727), which highlights the existence of a beautiful library: "*eine schone bibliothek*"[1] mentioned by the German scholar C. F. Neickelio.

We can also deduce the importance of this library from the Greek inscription laced over the construction's door: "*Bibliotecă de hrană dorită sufletului, această casă a cărţilor îmbie prea înţeleaptă îmbelşugare, în anul 1708*" (namely, *Library of food desired by the soul, this book house invites to richness of wisdom, in the year 1708*), realized by the Archimandrite John. Here, Constantin Brâncoveanu will bring together volumes and manuscripts of various domains, discovered by Alexandru Odobescu in 1861, written in Greek, Latin, Italian, Arab and Georgian. During the following years, a part of the books and manuscripts arrived at the National Library (in 1865), the Library of the Holy Synod of Bucharest (in 1877) and at the National Museum of Antiquities (in 1865 and 1885)[2], and at the Library of the Romanian Academy.[3] In a Report addressed to the School Inspectorate (Eforia Şcoalelor) (13 September 1840) it is mentioned that Gheorghe Ioanid had a catalogue of the library of the Hurez Monastery, out of which he had selected over 200 titles that he wanted to transfer to the National Library.

In April 1865, Ion C. Gîrleanu informed to the Ministry of Instruction that at Hurez Monastery there were 150 volumes (Byzantine historians, Socrates etc) and suggested that they should be transferred to the National Library. The first catalogue was drawn up on May 1, 1865 by the reviewer I. Eliade and included 425 manuscripts and printings. In this catalogue the tomes needed for the divine service had not been recorded. A number of 138 volumes were kept for the National Library.[4] In 1907, N. Iorga selectively publishes the archive of Hurez Monastery, stating that "several series of Church books and others, all sealed by the princely seal, were entrusted to Ioan", the first Archimandrite of the Monastery.[5]

For the National Museum of Antiquities several Church books were selected: *Greek Evangel* with golden covers; *Greek Evangel* with silver covers;

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[1] C. Dima-Drăgan. *Biblioteci umaniste româneşti*. Bucureşti: Editura Litera, 1974, p. 11.

[2] At that moment at Hurez Monastery there were still 38 manuscripts and 393 printed books.

[3] C. Dima-Drăgan. Ibidem, p. XII.

[4] Present in a "List of books chosen from the Catalogue of Hurez Monastery to be brought to the Library of Bucharest" ("*Listă de cărţile alese din Catalogul Monastirei Orezu pentru a se adduce la Bibliotheca din Bucuresci*").

[5] C. Dima Drăgan. "Un catalog necunoscut al Bibliotecii Mănăstirii Hurezu", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, nr. 5-6, 1969, p. 591.

Romanian Evangel [with Cyrillic Characters] given to C. Brâncoveanu by the Tsar Peter the Great; *Small Romanian Evangel* [with Cyrillic Characters], *Evangels* in velvet binding with corners made of silver or copper.

On December 12, 1876 the Ministry of Public Instruction was informed on the existence of 600 volumes in the precincts of the monastery. A catalogue was drawn up (3 April 1877) including 175 titles described bibliographically and other volumes recorded only numerically (33 Greek, 122 Old Slav, 244 Romanian). A decision was made that the Church volumes should remain entrusted to the monastery, while the others should be transferred to the Holy Synod (212 titles)[1], with the obligation of creating a library.

The oldest inventory is that of 1740 in which all the Church books were recorded, except for the ones covered in metal considered precious objects meant to be used in the divine service. We can discover the existence of numerous Romanian *Evangels*, *Apostles' Acts and Letters*, *Octoechos*, *Triodions*, *Euchologions*, *Liturgical Books*, *Psalm Books*, *Horologions*, *Sermon Books*, etc.

In 1692, Constantin Brâncoveanu had an *ex libris* bearing the signs of the princely power, *ex libris* that made it possible to partially reconstitute the library. This seal appears as well on the 1688 Bible, copy referred to by C. Dima-Drăgan. The same seal can be met as well on a copy in the collections of the Library of the Faculty of Letters at the Central University Library of Bucharest.[2]

We can even say that the reigning prince envisaged the organization of a cultural complex at Hurez, probably with a view to setting up a national library, since he required the five printing houses (Bucharest, Snagov, Buzău, Râmnic, Târgovişte) to send to Hurez what we would now call a copy meant to become part of the legal deposit.

In France there was the model of Gabriel Naudé, "*father of the library science*", in the service of several cardinals and kings. Up to him, a librarian had formerly been a high official, entrusted exclusively books. Yet, Naudé becomes more than that, namely a *counsellor* managing the power of information for the political power. It seems that the Wallachian rulers also became aware of this thing, since some used the services of personal secretaries who also worked as librarians. Such was the case of Constantin Brâncoveanu.[3]

For a while, the task of librarian was fulfilled by Ioan Comnen, the doctor of the princely court, who at a certain moment wrote down: "But you have also set up a library worth seeing, spending a lot of money, at the beautiful Hurez Monastery, built by you, and you filled it with various and very useful books."[4] Considering

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[1] According to "Catalogul de cărţile din biblioteca Sf. Monasteriu Hurezu quari urmează a se înainta la biblioteca ce are a se forma la Sf. Sinodu al Bisericii autocefale ortodoxe Române".

[2] Doru Bădără. *O carte cu pecetea lui Constantin Brâncoveanu în colecţiile Bibliotecii Centrale Universitare din Bucureşti*. Available on the web : http://www.bcub.ro/carti-vechi-rare/carte-romaneasca/o-carte-cu-pecetea-lui-constantin-brancoveanu-in-colectiile

[3] Gh. Buluţă. *Civilizaţia bibliotecilor*. Bucureşti: Editura enciclopedică, 1998, p.54.

[4] Cf. N. Iorga. *Manuscripte din biblioteci străine relative la istoria românilor*. Bucureşti, 1898, p. 12.

that a librarian was needed, it means that the fund must have been quite important quantitatively.

In 1694, Constantin Brâncoveanu hired Nicolaus de Porta, born on Chios Island, in a family of Venetian origin. De Porta had been secretary of the ambassador of Holland in Istanbul, being involved in matters that are nowadays called espionage, letter interception and deciphering. He was a very useful character at the Princely Court of Constantin Brâncoveanu, who used him as a secretary and librarian. He became the trusted man of Constantin Cantacuzino, who was head of the diplomatic chancery of the reigning prince, and who entrusted him with writing down the catalogue of his library of Mărgineni. Nicolaus de Porta also organized the Library of the Princely Academy of St. Sava[1], as it is shown in a letter of February 1714 of the Greek teacher Marcus of Cyprus, who was in charge of this settlement and who informed the patriarch of Jerusalem, Hrisant Notara: "we are beginning to order the books with Signor de Porta".[2] After Constantin Brâncoveanu's death, he continued to work in the service of Ştefan Cantacuzino, for whom he was also serving as a translator. This library will later on become national.[3] Not too much information has been preserved in relation to this library, although it was created at the same time as the school, its starting core being the books left by Constantin Cantacuzino.[4] Brâncoveanu himself, in a letter addressed to the same Hrisant Notara, states that because of the plague the works for the printing press and the library had not been finished.

What did the documentary fund of Hurez contain? Mainly theological writings in Greek and Romanian with Cyrillic characters/ Old Slav, printed in Venice, Lvov or Kiev. Mario Ruffini noticed that the there were various writings and that the reigning prince proved "*a large culture and opening to the values of human spirituality*". One can detach the profile of a library at the same time erudite, with a mainly theological component, along with the historical one, yet with a political significance. The library does not seem to have been built randomly, but in order to serve the legitimacy of Power. It is not the collection of a whimsical book-lover, but the library of an ambitious prince, with counsellors of adequate value, with interest for the European (Eastern and Western world) and for the political dimension of history. Corneliu Dima Drăgan, partially reconstituting the profile of Brâncoveanu's collection, observes, in his turn, that it was "of a great thematic diversity": *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, printed in Paris in the 17th century, under the coordination of the Byzantinologist Charles du Fresne, sieur du Cange; the historical works of the Byzantine emperor John VI

[1] Seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino had founded at St. Sava Monastery a Princely Academy where philosophy, logic, Latin, Greek, rhetoric etc. were studied.

[2] E. Hurmuzachi. *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*. Vol. 14, part I. Bucureşti, 1915, p. 573, doc. 568.

[3] Gh. Buluţă. *Scurtă istorie a bibliotecilor din Rpmânia*. Bucureşti : Editura Enciclopedică, 2000, p. 57.

[4] A part of them, bearing the *ex libris* of the Seneschal can be found at the Library of the Romanian Academy.

Cantacuzino[1]; bilingual editions of Origen's patristic writings: *On First Principles* (Colonia-Köln, 1685); the works of Clement of Alexandria, (Köln, 1688); the works of Saint Basil the Great (Paris edition of 1638, in three volumes); the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea, in 3 volumes (Mainz, 1672–1679); the works of Saint Epiphanius of Salamis (Colonie, 1682); the theological discourses (*Opera omnia*) of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (Paris, 1609); the works of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, in 3 volumes (Paris, 1638); the works of Saint Maximus the Confessor (Paris, 1675); the works of Saint John of Damascus (3 volumes, Paris, 1619) and others.

The library also held a series of literary works of the Antiquity: Homer's *Iliad* (brought from Wien, being translated and checked by Gheorghios Rusiadis), Homer's *Odyssey* (Basel, 1541), Euripides' *Tragedies* (Basel, 1551), Aristophanes' *Comedies* (Venice, 1542), Herodotus' works[2] (Venice, 1502). To these, one can add a few works of the Byzantine juridical literature (Justinian's *Pandects*, Romanian Regulations - *Pravilele româneşti*), works of geography, philosophy, literature, lexicons, grammars, prayer books and others. Calendars for the years 1693, 1694, 1695, 1699, 1701, 1703 and 1707 are also present. Odobescu noted that "It is useless to try to further explain how these calendars arrived at Hurezu, as it is known that everything that remained after Brâncoveanu's house was has been robbed, when the reigning prince fell, came there; among others, the prince's library, which contains to this day the great collection of Byzantine authors printed under Louis XIV by Du Cange and most of the Church Fathers in Greek-Latin editions." [3] Of particular interest is the fact that on the pages of some of these books there are different handwritten observations made by Constantin Brâncoveanu, in Romanian and Greek, with pieces of news concerning his reign. We could even say that we are in front of a sort of "*daily notations*".

A library separate from that of the reigning prince is that of his son, prince Ştefan Brâncoveanu, remarked even since his youth for his deep love for books. The Library of the Academy in Bucharest and the State Archives of Braşov contain some books with his *ex libris*.

[1] The imperial descent of the Constantinopolitan Cantacuzinos had roots in the 14th century, in Mihail Şaitanoglu and Andronic.
[2] Printed in Greek by Aldus Manutius.
[3] C. Dima-Drăgan. *Biblioteci umaniste româneşti*. Bucureşti: Editura Litera, 1974, p. 11.

THE QUEST FOR SELF-IDENTITY IN DORIS LESSING'S *TO ROOM NINETEEN*

Elena Anca GEORGESCU[1]

Abstract**:** *The focus of this study is to demonstrate, by a close discussion of Doris Lessing's To Room Nineteen, how the author has re-worked the concept of female subjectivity, arguing that her female characters established a new concept in understanding the twentieth century women liberation movement. My critical approach is based on post-structuralist feminist theories of the 'self' as they are formulated by Elaine Showalter and Teresa de Lauretis.*

Keywords**:** *self-identity, consciousness, female subjectivity, woman, inner space.*

Across the multifarious writings in Doris Lessing's career, the concern with the individual's quest for self-identity is familiar, a consistent feature of her works, if not even one of her leitmotifs. Her fiction, which is inclusive, spiritual and intricately woven, embodies and displays a spacious panoply of themes specific to late-twentieth-century consciousness: race, the conflict of the generations, the psychological dimensions of male-female relationships, women and women's experiences, politics, philosophical questions about life, the nature and planes of reality, the labyrinths of the human mind, explorations of madness, and mystical forms and modes of consciousness.

Over the course of her fictional works, Lessing draws extensively on women's inner, private experiences and on their departure from the unsatisfactory reality of life in an alienated and alienating society. Her heroines act out their lives in roles proffered to them by society, roles they consciously or unconsciously assume, until through painful growth, or through the rejection of certain roles, they come to the awareness of who they are.

The focus of this study is to demonstrate, by a close discussion of Doris Lessing's *To Room Nineteen*, how the author has re-worked the concept of female subjectivity, arguing that her female characters established a new concept in

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understanding the twentieth century women liberation movement. My critical approach is based on post-structuralist feminist theories of the "self" as they are formulated by Elaine Showalter and Teresa de Lauretis.

In *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing,* Elaine Showalter gives us the perfect definition for women's search for self saying that:

> First, there is the prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and *internalization* of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of *protest* against these standards and values, and *advocacy* of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of *Self-discovery*, a turning point inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity. (1977: 12)

I think Showalter's widely accepted modern feminist theory, which provides a direction to study psycho-sociological feminine existentialism as a progression from the "feminine to the female", best informs Susan Rowlings's search for identity in Doris Lessing's *To Room Nineteen*. Doris Lessing's innovation lies in the reinterpretation of the idea of female subjectivity by examining the psyche of the woman struggling for her self-identity.

Post-structuralism has brought into question the humanist belief in the autonomous self. Post-structuralist theories of subjectivity set up a much more complex problem by recognizing the influence of economic, historical and social constructs which not only affect but also work to construct the individual. For a post-structuralist, the individual is no longer the Individual, but rather a subject constructed by cultural codes and belief systems. At this time, the question at issue for some feminist theorists attempting to formulate a theory of female subjectivity is the question of the relationship between contemporary feminist theory and the humanist tradition whose "crisis" might be called post-structuralism. The question of defining the inner world of the "self" has become problematic for feminist theory since the late twentieth century, and perhaps it is no coincidence that just as the feminist theorist begins to address the issue of the politics of women's experiences and women's identity, the male theorists argue that there is in fact no self free of cultural ideology, no autonomous identity free of social encoding.

We must then ask the following questions: If the concept of the unitary self is no longer historically feasible for some theorists, is it possible then to formulate a theory of female subjectivity and female agency? How can a feminist theorist acknowledge the crisis of the theory of identity and at the same time formulate a theory for female subjectivity? What are the advantages for a feminist theorist today if she repositions herself in relation to the male discourse surrounding the theories of subjectivity which never included the issue of female subjectivity to begin with? Could repositioning ourselves in relation to these two historical discourses lead the feminist theorist to recognize that she inhabits a position that is both "inside" and simultaneously "outside" the male discourse? Could this recognition allow a feminist theorist to read feminist narratives in such a way that she could identify in those narratives what Elaine Showalter calls a "double-voiced

discourse" of women's writing (1985: 263), or what Teresa de Lauretis calls the "view from 'elsewhere'"? (1987: 25).

Showalter bases her theory of the double-voiced discourse of women's writing on a cultural model of female experience which explains that there is a "complex and perpetual negotiation taking place between women's culture and the general culture" leading to "women liv[ing] a duality – as members of the general culture and as partakers of women's culture"; that is, women "constitute a muted group" within the "dominant (male) group" (1985: 261).

While Showalter talks about the double-voiced discourse of feminist narratives based on a cultural model of female experience, Teresa de Lauretis uses the language of film theory to describe what she calls the "view from elsewhere". De Lauretis argues that the "view from elsewhere" is a "movement in and out of ideology, [a] crossing back and forth of the boundaries . . . of sexual difference(s)", and of course she very carefully explains that this is not to say there is ever any movement that goes beyond or outside the socially constructed sex-gender system of a particular society (1987: 25-26). Rather, de Lauretis's "elsewhere" is the movement which the female subject constantly makes between her experience of herself as Other in the dominant discourse and her experience of herself as Subject in the muted discourse or the "space-off" of her own position which is invisible but nonetheless present.

Teresa de Lauretis argues that women are both inside and outside male discourse, and Elaine Showalter states that women writers are "inside two traditions simultaneously" (1985: 264). The double experience of female subjectivity addressed by these two theorists derives from the fact that historically the female subject has entered the dominant discourse as objectified "Woman", as "Other". However, the representation of women as Other is not simply discarded as women writers attempt to find a voice for female subjectivity.

In her fiction, Lessing pushes the boundaries of realistic fiction beyond its limits and allows us to see that indeed there is no Other but rather a subject-as-other perceived and defined simply as Other. She comes to explore the dis-integration (between body and self, image and identity and woman and society) at various points in her characters' lives and to examine the development of female identity and the characters' struggle to come into being. Lessing is an author who has spent her life writing about the subject of women and their inner voyage into the self and psyche. Her preoccupation with the dimensions of the female mind is surely a remarkable manifestation of her feminist tendencies.

It can be said that identity – the processes of its construction and deconstruction, the roles of others in its definition, the necessity of growth through continual redefinition, its enabling and crippling properties – and the inscription of female subjectivity are certainly the most central and urgent themes of *To Room Nineteen.* In this long story, Lessing appears to be testing the angst of identity or what might happen in the new feminist era to a woman of the old dispensation who is not only entrapped in the image of the cultural construct of Woman but who has also accepted her traditional roles of mothering and nurturing and of what has become too often a part of the territory – the role of the betrayed wife. Susan

Rawlings, who feels locked into her own cocoon of stereotypical roles and who is seen through her various collectively imposed identities – the suburban, understanding wife, the ever-available mother and good time party girl – wearies of the role of sustainer and comforter. Having experienced a psychic death and a state of catatonia, she resists the culturally stultifying enclosures and constraints, discards the various garments and social roles she has worn and adopted, and retreats into her own room.

Through her over-a-year daily visits to room nineteen in Fred's Hotel near Paddington Station and through her own self-communing, she battles to wake up out of the web of "non-being" or nothingness and begins slowly to strip away the masks of social roles and to search for her autonomous self. She confronts the fact that she has been virtually a non-person all her life and comes to know that there is a core of genuine identity which can only be confronted if she chooses to live outside the cocoon of social approbation.

Susan's reclusive stay in room nineteen serves a healing, redemptive function enabling her to break down her emotional sterility and isolation and find more satisfying ways of being. Her inner voyage into the psyche delivers her into autonomy and into another region of being, perception and experience. Her retreat into the space of the "elsewhere" of consciousness is a sort of liberation, a release from the cage of labels and culturally defined roles and expectations or what one can call the represented consciousness of the collective society that would fix her identity.

Lessing's representation of Susan's statement about herself amounts to a rejection of the classic female condition of acquiescence. Susan is not prepared to return to children and husband and when Matthew's enquiries intrude on her precious solitude, she prefers to die than to capitulate to conventionality. Rather than continue to live in a radically alienated position, she chooses the only healing she can find through death. She chooses death over compromise with the crushing image of the ideal Woman, the monolithic scripted self which patriarchy has called upon women to produce and create. She remains true to herself, which she discovers and creates through her introspection, the "real" authentic self that has been in "cold storage" (Lessing 1978: 311) during her married life.

As a series of fragmented commentaries, in the traditional discourse of sexual power politics, Lessing's story engages in a recognizably feminist dialogue, speaking back to the patriarchal order in a way that resembles Luce Irigaray's feminist critique of Freud. In "Speculum de l'autre femme" (1982), Irigaray speaks back to Freud's 1933 essay on "Femininity". Indeed, in her deliberately non-theoretical way Lessing explores the same territory that contemporary feminist theorists arrived at fifty years later. Through her stories of doomed dissenting women, she exposes the interests at stake in male centered psychoanalytic constructs of the feminine, just as she explores collaborative sexual fantasies where women are perceived and perceive themselves as objects of the male gaze.

Lessing offers alternative versions to traditional stories of patriarchy which are ignored or unheard within the fictions themselves because they are unspoken, for as she shows, her female protagonists are silenced by the very orders of that

discourse. In ways that are again very similar to Irigaray's encounter with Freud's master text on woman, Lessing questions patriarchal pronouncements and offers a radical investigation of the social and psychological constructions of gender. She writes in suppressed female narratives which not only deconstruct ready-made definitions of Woman in favour of representations of individual women but also investigates into the split between Woman as object of representation and the representation of 'women' as historically defined speaking subjects. It is in this invention of a dialogue situation that her fictions are so innovatory and avant-garde.

It is worth saying that Lessing has always been interested in space and foreign territories: from the vastness of the African veld to the female spaces of rooms, houses and flats. Her interest in psycho politics and in mental landscapes or mind-spaces with their own invented territories is therefore not an altogether unexpected matter. The unbounded realm of psychic space encloses and encodes the "elsewhere" of consciousness, which is described by Teresa de Lauretis as "the spaces in the margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and in the chinks and cracks of the power-knowledge apparati" (1987: 25). De Lauretis was perhaps the first to develop an exploration of "somewhere else" by showing us how the space of "elsewhere" is not some "real place" beyond or outside of discourse, but "a movement from the space represented by/in a representation, by/in a discourse, by/in a sex-gender system, to the space not represented yet implied (unseen) in them" (1987: 26). She attests that it is not that "elsewhere" does not exist, but that it is as yet unrecognized:

For, if that view is nowhere to be seen, not given in a single text, not recognizable as a representation, it is not that we – feminists, women – have not yet succeeded in producing it. It is, rather, that what we have produced is not recognizable, precisely, as a representation. For that "elsewhere" is not some mythic distant past or some utopian future history: it is the elsewhere of discourse here and now, the blind spots, or the space-off, of its representations. (1987: 25)

In *To Room Nineteen,* Susan enters the "elsewhere" of consciousness, the primary place of identity and enunciation of female experience and subjectivity rather than the socially produced ego with all its negative defenses; it is a psychological state of being in that it provides an alternate ground for subjectivity, and it is a mode of consciousness that helps women to enter an imaginable, yet inhabitable, universe where they can review their lives and seek self-knowledge and from that vantage point come to understand the wider world. Lessing makes it clear that Susan's quest involves the ontological space, who she is rather than where she is. She strongly suggests that in order to survive we must find the presence of "elsewhere" by exploring human consciousness beyond the cultural constructs of gender, class and race. This is exactly what Susan does. As she becomes someone else, she comes to respond to the change by placing herself somewhere else. Betrayed by her husband, she cannot place herself among her family and friends. She resorts to a trick of her own imagination, recreating and replacing herself. In this trick, she opens a door onto "somewhere else", that consciousness that she retreats to for renewal, which bespeaks a world of potential

actions and possibilities for human renewal, a world that is considerably more diverse than our present, dulling reality. Susan's ability to be elsewhere gives her voice a formal power in the story even as she becomes most socially powerless.

Recently, a questioning of the agreement about what we call reality or about one special type of consciousness has become widely acceptable. Individual psychologists like R. D. Laing and Robert Ornstein have shared similar views on the nature of human consciousness. They maintain that beyond our culture's "normal" consciousness, which they call egoic or rational-analytic, there is a different mode of cognition, which they term non-egoic or intuitive. For them, the rational or egoic mode, which dominates our civilization, is characterized by the sense of "a consistent identity, a me-here over against a you-there, within a framework of certain ground structures of space and time" (Laing 1967: 113).

In her attempt to locate the gap between the culturally produced norm Woman and the specific historical subject, Lessing goes beyond our culture's "normal" consciousness and locates "elsewhere" for women in order to explore the "other" mode of consciousness that points to the place of female subjectivity.

In response to the traditional social dictates of Woman, Susan turns away from the social prescriptions for her or from her egoic identity and embarks on a journey toward self-discovery, for the first time leaving her family and marriage – her identity – behind. She begins to ask Woolf's questions: "Who am I?" and "How can I tell the truth about myself, my body?" In her internal quest for authentic selfhood, she finds a gap between the dominant cultural ideology or her social role as Woman and her own lived experience as a woman. She slips into de Lauretis's "chinks and cracks", into the other consciousness which she finally recognizes the culture would consider mad.

Although Susan tries to search for words to express the place of "elsewhere" and to claim it as a foundation for a new identity, she is unable to articulate her subjectivity from this place and to integrate it in any significant way with her culturally produced self and identity. She, however, becomes absorbed in the other reality and becomes conscious of the collapse and disintegration of her egoic identity (culturally produced ego) which to her is now like a dress off the rack which she can choose to put on or not. Understandably, Susan cannot numb herself and live a lie for the rest of her life, and she cannot find a compromise she can accept with the figure Woman. Her greatest forte is not only her discovering of the deep ramifications of the split between Woman and women, but also her passionate desire for freedom, self-determination and self-satisfaction.

Rather than be annihilated, Susan annihilates herself. She moves progressively away from the cultural and social trappings that have defined her life and enters the realm of death willingly.

On the surface, Susan has had a good life: a successful marriage by most standards; the successful raising of four children; and friends. It is a life characterized by intelligence, humanity and love, which are usually considered the highest attributes of mankind, but in the story they are displayed as superficial and ineffective. Apparently happy, married to Matthew who works on a newspaper, and mother of four children, Susan seems to have no aspirations beyond the roles of

wife and mother she more than competently fulfills. She has lived for twelve years as a wife and mother; this is how she defines herself, how she feels she must define herself, how everyone else defines her. One comes to understand why one day after twelve years of contended yet complacent marriage, Susan feels pangs of "bitterness" (309) and is "more and more often threatened by emptiness" (311). The situation that causes her severe psychic disruption is her husband's infidelity. For ten years, Susan, as Woman, has functioned to bolster her husband's sense of himself, as the looking glass of A Room of One's Own "possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (1929: 35).

Even though Susan tries to deny the painfulness of her husband's betrayal and to treat it as "banal", "not important", and resort to her props of "education . . . discrimination . . . and judgment", (308) she is left feeling "irritable", "bad-tempered, annoyed"; there is, she finds, "something unassimilable" about Matthew's infidelity and confession (309). She cautiously allows herself "understanding" but not "forgiveness", since forgiveness belongs to the "savage old world" of wickedness and brute passion (308). But her misguided behavior wears her out and her traditional feminine virtues of endurance, renunciation and compassion which uphold the patriarchal status quo weigh her down. As time goes by, Susan begins to feel confined to her home in Richmond, burdened by intense feelings of hurt, anger and jealousy. Having denied validity and expression to her intensely felt emotions and having turned solely to her reason, for her marriage was "grounded in intelligence" (305), Susan begins to feel "arid", living in a state of exilic consciousness , which in this case involves an unfixed identity, and to her everything seems "absurd" (309). She capitulates to housewifery and submerges her subjectivity in the patriarchal paradigm.

To accept such a role, as Simone de Beauvoir and the existentialists have pointed out is to accept being an object; it is to deny the subject-self that is autonomous and creative. The denial of the subject-self necessarily means a fundamental falseness. It means engaging in a perpetual lie. But Susan must move beyond these socially determined, limiting personas into a sense of self which is both wholly her own and thoroughly disconnected from everything she believes unique to Susan Rawlings. She must separate what she really feels from the socially fabricated and break the vicious circle of convention that defines and determines women and reinforces the conventional notion that a wife and mother should be self-sacrificing, dutiful, good, kind and above all, calm and controlled. She must assert herself and stop assuming the self-sacrificing role which she had previously felt she must assume, even when she herself had felt oppressed by it. When she takes a holiday alone, she desires to move beyond the isolated world of her familial duty, reinforcing her individual network of identity, but as she prowls "over wild country" (322), she begins to see how her job as the hub of the family or the Angel in the House has occupied and consumed ten years of her life. Susan herself acknowledges that she is no longer sure that the "marriage, four children, big house, garden, charwoman, friends, cars . . . and this thing, this entity" (307) revolve around her. She feels that she is no longer herself, that she is no longer anybody. The "essential Susan", she feels, is "in abeyance, as if she were in cold

storage" (311). Boredom and weariness are made tolerable only by her belief that "in another decade, she would turn herself back into being a woman with a life of her own" (311), but after having looked forward to when "the children would be *off her hand*" (311), Susan is unable to go back to her earlier self.

Lessing wants us to see Susan not only as a woman who has been caught up in the enmeshing web of the social roles of her community but also as a woman who tries to step out of a constrictive world into another world of her own making. She uses the third-person narrator, who could be described as omniscient, using panoramic sweeps as well as the detailed presentation of specific scenes, and switching freely from summary to direct speech, from objective description to the subjective perspective of the protagonist, from mere factual reporting to analysis and commentary. The text not only draws attention to Susan's stress and distress, to her loss of faith in love, to her self-sacrifice and self-denial, to her detachment from her own feelings and self-division, to her social roles and inner conflict, but it also invokes an atmosphere of protest against the world as it is and depicts the creation of an alternative reality that is unacknowledged in our world. As Susan sees herself entombed in her own world, she contemplates what she is feeling, what she is becoming, what she wants.

Elaine Showalter (1977) raises the question of the "family home . . . as a prison house" (168). Her double-voiced discourse, represented by her interior and intervening discourse and by her asides, hedges and negations, begins to question the validity of the words that Susan speaks and those she hears in conversations around her. Remembering the first time she had sex with Matthew, Susan describes their "delight" parenthetically as "a very long shadow at sundown", then muses, "(why did I say sundown?) (309). "And that word bondage – why had she used it?" she wonders when contemplating her good marriage, the house, the children (317). Susan's italicized musings throughout the story are significant, for they hint at or suggest a growing newly found self that attempts to find an alternative reality, a new way of fitting into the world. Even though Susan's bracketed or parenthetical thoughts are placed on a retrospective level, they themselves maintain the immediacy of the present tense, and thus the reader retains the impression of having direct access to them. Certainly, Lessing is convinced that the only hope for securing our life does not only lie in unspeaking the already spoken and unlearning the already learned but also in the individual's journey "back and in" to his self.

Lessing's critique of the cult of domesticity is a forceful attack on the virtues of the Victorian ideal of womanhood which has been dubbed the Angel in the House by feminist writers and literary critics.

From a loving wife who feels bound to her family, content with being nothing except the roles that went with being Mrs. Matthew Rawlings, Susan gradually changes into a woman imbued with a sense of spiritual sterility and despair. She sits in the garden and confronts what she calls the "enemy" (312) who represents, quite simply, her introverted, conditioned weaknesses and her strongest feelings or impulses of restlessness, rage, irritation and resentment that she projects or externalizes.

Like Virginia Woolf, Lessing believes that a woman, particularly at middle-age, must find a room of her own and spend some time discovering who she really is. No longer mistress, wife, mother, organizer, Susan is free of the restraints of being Mrs. Rawlings. For the first time in her life, she negates her negations and escapes her social role and the strangling formalities that gird her spirit by changing her name and paying off the hotel owner. Since names both identify and constitute identity, the act of giving up the name under which one has known and been known is in many respects an act of consenting to become someone else. Now, Susan has the time for self-reflection; she is alone and moves beyond what is expected of her, the prepackaged set of Woman. She retreats from outward-oriented activity, through abandoning herself to receptivity and discovers that she has been playing a role, wearing a set of masks that had received her family's approval but limiting her life and existence and inspiring only ennui. She comes to break out of the cultural construct Woman and to grow out of the nannying role, whether in relation to her own children or to her husband. She sheds the ideology of Otherness she has internalized and forges her identity in terms of her own needs, experiences and perceptions. She engages an au pair girl who takes over this role and experiences the collapse of the social mask, the role, the persona.

In *To Room Nineteen*, Susan's self-imposed, utterly necessary exile from her home and family and former identity offers her time and space to review her life and to explore what it is like not to be a Woman or a self-in-society. By refusing to obey assigned roles and rules, Susan is free of her family's hold, free of the will to please, free of appearances, free of an identity based on self-abnegation. Her struggle against the mental entrapment of traditional female roles and her desire to satisfy her own needs, to minimize her parental obligations and to seek her freedom, independence and old self are a lucid rebellion against adherence to defined orders, to socialized sanity.

Room nineteen gives Susan a reassuring presence. In it, she finds peace and knows that it is here she belongs:

> What did she do in the room? Why, nothing at all. From the chair, when it had rested her, she went to the window, stretching her arms, smiling, treasuring her anonymity, to look out. ... She was Mrs. Jones, and she was alone, and she had no past and no future. ... And she leaned on the sill, and looked into the street, loving the men and women who passed, because she did not know them. She looked at the downtrodden buildings over the street, and at the sky, wet and dingy, or sometimes blue, and she felt she had never seen buildings or sky before. And then she went back to the chair, empty, her mind a blank. ... For the most part, she wool-gathered – what word is there for it? – brooded, wandered, simply went dark, feeling emptiness run deliciously through her veins like the movement of her blood. (327)

For Lessing, a room can be a sanctuary or a place of love and visionary experience or the site of a mystical journey as well as a prison. For Susan, room nineteen, unlike the spare room in her house which represents limits, acts as a buffer, a place of refuge against the traditional roles of wifehood and motherhood.

Lessing takes a conventional image of woman's enclosure and transforms it into an image of empowerment. Room nineteen not only suggests a place that is security and a space that is freedom, but it also represents a symbol of growth and fulfillment rather than a demeaning emblem of a woman's place. Over the course of her sojourn in the hotel room, Susan grows and develops her unique (and uniquely female) self, which she significantly regards as one of her most important possessions.

Confronted with the threat of non-being, Susan feels it is her responsibility to protect her authentic self and deliver it to total emancipation. She must assert a sense of self that must be met and remain in the process of becoming; to remain static would be to return to her previous life and externally imposed sense of self, defined conventionally and unequivocally. It is not surprising then that Susan stays in motion and moves toward a conscious and meaningful choice. She chooses to die rather than lose herself and compromise her reality; she chooses personal truth and personal awakening rather than renunciation and despair. Her final emotion as she drifts off into the "river", which is an alternative to an imprisoning rigidity, is contentment and tranquility (336).

Susan's self-willed death is not a defeat. Rather than regressing back to the old self and abdicating self-knowledge and self-rule, Susan decides to remain true to herself – the self she has discovered and created through her wool-gathering or introspection. Significantly, Susan has begun the process of staking out a new place of female enunciation for female subjectivity. She has not only rejected the demands of the image of Woman created by patriarchal culture, but she has also moved beyond her culturally produced sense of self. While the real world becomes uninhabitable, she experiences her own "elsewhere", that consciousness that she has retreated to for renewal, which makes the realm of "elsewhere" inhabitable. Her daring, conscious voyage into the "elsewhere" of consciousness, which is certainly a journey of self-discovery, opens regions beyond culturally prescribed identities and helps Susan to pursue and find what truly counts and which her true self is.

Susan's death is a means of resisting her culturally conditional roles and the crushing, culturally enforced image of Woman, and of positing a new politics of identity, as a first step toward bringing into the culture new formulations, new cultural alternatives, new language, for experiences which patriarchy has forced into repression. Susan has reached psychic maturity, and her death is transcendence, a liberating form of self-assertion. She has finally dropped her mask, her fictive other and, rather than being limited to her own social and cultural alienation, she chooses to die in an attempt at completion, at restituting her identity.

Patricia Waugh (1992) has argued that the female subject is not a static object but rather is always "in process" as it continuously moves toward a "becoming-other" than itself. Lessing dismantles the traditional notions of Woman and moves toward the delineation of a new female subject that appeals to our freedom that we should "become what we are capable of being".

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TALES OF THE UNUSUAL: PARANORMAL PHENOMENA IN ROMANIAN URBAN LEGENDS

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Abstract: *The present paper deals with unusual phenomena that fall within the realm of the paranormal. According to most folklorists, such occurrences have nothing to do with urban legends; still, we have decided to include them in this category based on the fact that the transmitters, the narrators do not distinguish between these elements and the rest of contemporary legends and that today's pop culture abounds with such accounts. We shall particularly insist on stories about water monsters (the huchen or Danube salmon, the catfish) which are said to reach huge sizes enabling them to attack and eat people. We shall see, however, that these legends are neither contemporary nor modern as they are deeply rooted in mythology and folk beliefs. Other aspects of the paranormal we shall consider are those referring to special devices, such as Henri Coandă's laser or psychotronic weaponry, that seem to belong rather to the field of science-fiction. At this point, an excursus on the realm of conspiracy theories was deemed as appropriate as we believe that these ideas share a common ground with rumours and legends.*

Key-words: *urban legend, paranormal, water monster, conspiracy theory, psychotronic weapons.*

Paranormal beliefs are, to some extent, the product of the social and cultural background of those who believe in them. It is quite unlikely for someone growing up within a certain culture to develop beliefs that are not represented in that particular cultural environment. Furthermore, people often believe in paranormal phenomena which they themselves have not experienced. Therefore, paranormal beliefs can be acquired partially through a process of socialisation as well. At the same time, they can be embraced by people with certain innate predispositions and traits of character (Irwin, 2009: 22).

Harvey J. Irwin, a reputed Australian specialist in psychology and parapsychology, has classified the various instances of the paranormal, including here superstitions (traditionally related to the concepts of *good luck* and *bad luck*), Psi phenomena (extrasensory perception), divinatory arts (astrology), spiritism (the belief in a world of spirits of the dead, communication with these spirits and their intervention in the mundane world), Eastern mystico-religious beliefs (reincarnation, Karma, etc.), Judeo-Christian religious beliefs (beliefs in the

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existence of God, Heaven, Hell, devil and angels), extraterrestrial aliens and cryptozoological creatures (legendary monsters, mysterious beings) (Irwin, 2009: 3-7).

WATER MONSTERS. Mysterious beings, fabulous monsters – which are currently the object of study of cryptozoology (also known as *pseudoscience* precisely because it does not comply with the rigors of scientific research, relying on anecdotic evidence, stories or legends) – continue to fascinate the human mind which is naturally drawn by mysteries capable of sending shivers down one's spine. The belief in fantastic creatures is present in all cultures worldwide; what differs is only the nature of beings haunting the nightmare of mankind. The Scots have Nessie, the Loch Ness monster, the giant Bigfoot (a bipedal creature, a hybrid between man and ape) populates North American forests, its 'counterpart' Yeti the Abominable Snowman lives in the Himalayan regions of Nepal and Tibet, while the Chupacabra, 'the goatsucker', described as being either a bipedal creature with long claws and spikes on its back, or something between a dog and a coyote, with vampire teeth and red eyes that hypnotise its prey, dwells in Latin America and some parts of the United States and mutilates domestic animals draining all blood from them. We have our monsters as well, but they mostly live in the depths of waters; there is hardly a river or a lake without its own giant fish.

"Nothing to be heard, seen or felt. But something down there can hear you, see you, feel you". That is an article on the monsters of Lake Tarnița starts[1]. But what is it? For 30 years or so, this question has been hovering over the Tarnița. Lake Tarnița was formed in the 1970's following the construction of a dam and it is then that the first stories about giant huchen appeared. According to the locals, the huge sizes of these fish (allegedly three metres long) lurking 50 metres deep can be put down to the existence of a uranium mine operating by the lakeside decades ago, the wastes of which were supposedly discharged into the water. Others say that Ceaușescu himself had the huchen or Danube salmon brought here after the dam was built; the giant fish would thus protect the area by scaring curious people away. The first accounts reportedly belong to some divers conducting maintenance works at the dam who swore never to plunge into the lake after encountering the enormous creatures. Later on, the drowning cases and disappearance of the bodies were explained by the existence of these ferocious water monsters that will devour anything and, though depth dwellers, will attack their prey at the surface as well. Another incident occurred in the mid 90's when a truck plunged into the lake.

> Then, after a truck fell into the lake, a team of divers were brought to recover the vehicle and the driver's corpse. When they came out, some of

[1] See *Legendele Clujului (IV): Monştrii din lacul Tarniţa*, http://adevarul.ro/locale/cluj-napoca/legendele-clujului-iv-monstrii-lacul-tarnita-1_50aeb2e57c42d5a6639f475b/index.html (accessed 5 November 2012).

them refused to dive again without protective metal cages, claiming they had seen monsters on the bottom of the lake. [1]

However, the area inhabited by the terrible beings is not confined solely to Lake Tarnița; similar reports have been also recorded around Vidraru Dam:

> At a rally competition, one of the racers jumped with his car into the reservoir and was immediately saved by divers who refused to go in again to help recover the vehicle. Their reason? They say they saw giant huchen of 1.5 up to 4 metres. Another argument is the fact that upon return from one of my hikes in the mountains surrounding Vidraru Dam several of my friends and I saw a cow that had fallen into the water and was half eaten… I hardly believe that mere normal fish could have eaten a cow… perhaps it is not a conclusive argument, but it is a certainly a frightening one.[2]
>
> My uncle was among the divers who plunged into the Vidraru when the water monster got stuck on the turbines. I was a little boy when he told me that, once they had reached the turbines, they had run for it saying that never again would they go down again. It was a 15-20 metre-long fish, with a mouth as large as an X5 and they said that, if it only moved its tail, it could break the dam and thus the entire city of Piteşti would be swept away. People say that it died and gradually disintegrated.[3]
>
> What they say about those big fish of Vidraru is true. One of my buddies went with his dad to the dam and took their boat. It was so hot that he dipped his foot into the water to cool, but all of a sudden something bit him and ripped off his heel. So far no one has been able to give a clear explanation. People have since been talking about giant fish that have reached huge sizes because Vidraru Dam has never been completely drained. After that incident, some divers from Constanţa came but found nothing (or so they say). The interesting thing is that the dam is 10 km and they only searched 2 spots.[4]

The legends about giant fish remind us of probably the most famous huchen, that of Vasile Voiculescu's short story, "Lostrița", which starts from the folk belief according to which *Dracul de baltă* 'the Devil of the pond' (the Devil, *Necuratul*) has the ability to take any shape in order to allure the people, hence that of a huchen (or Danube salmon). *Dracul de Baltă* or *Cel din baltă* 'the one of the pond' is among the fantastic creatures that populate Romanian water mythology (alongside of *Ştima Apei* 'the water nymph', *Sorbul* 'the water dragon', *Dulful* 'the dolphin', *Faraonii* 'the pharaohs or the sirens' or *Oamenii de Apă* 'the water

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[1] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/17/monstri-marini/comment-page-1/#comment-45205 (accessed 23 February 2012) (Note: the translation of the texts analysed belongs to the author of this article).

[2] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/17/monstri-marini/ (posted 8 March 2007, accessed 23 February 2012).

[3] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/17/monstri-marini/ (posted 6 May 2012, accessed 23 February 2012).

[4] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/170/pesti-uriasi/comment-page-1/ (accessed 23 February 2012).

people'). In his *Mitologia*, Marcel Olinescu mentions *Cel din baltă*, "the name of the Devil that fell into the water when God and St. Elijah threw all demons from the sky; ever since, it has multiplied so much that even the smallest and most insignificant water has its own little goblin. […] The devils never lie still under water. They lurk and stalk people and their ships seeking to harm them, cause trouble to them and, if possible, kill them" (Olinescu, 2004: 314-315).

The fascination with the fish called huchen is not perhaps coincidental. A species in danger of extinction, the huchen (Danube salmon) is the largest salmonid in Romanian which can reach the size of a man. Precisely because it is so rare, and of unique beauty, exquisitely coloured (brown-green shades on its back, silver on the flanks, dark metallic green on the sides, the belly ranging from milky-white to a yellow tint), very fast, lean, and elegant, this nocturnal, lone predator has inflamed popular imagination, turning it into legend.

For decades, legends about giant fish, whether we speak about huchen, catfish, carp or other unspecified species, have circulated not only in Romania, but all over the world. In the United States, the first accounts were recorded in the 1950's. Legend has it that a giant catfish was discovered by some divers trying to rescue the passengers of a car that had sunk; in other versions, the divers saw the fish while repairing a dam. Back then, it was the size of a Volkswagen Beetle. By the end of the next decade, the legendary catfish had grown as large as a Ford Falcon, in the 1970's it was as big as a Buick and recently it has reached the size of a Winnebago motor home (Snopes.com – *Rumor Has It*)[1]. The huge fish threaten the diver (may even attack them, tearing off their limbs) or circle the sunken vehicle, drawn by the decomposing bodies of victims trapped inside. "In the murky water at those depths the catfish loom in and out of the shadows like ghostly blimps" (Brunvand, 2001: 172). At the horrible sight of the monsters, the divers are so shocked that they grow pale (or their hair turns instantly white) and vow that never again will they do this job. These details are present in most of the stories, including in Romanian versions, thus proving this is still a legend. Let us consider, for instance, other legends published on the *Mituri urbane autohtone* blog:

> In Bucharest, a team of divers was called to look for a drowned child. After a while, they came out in terror saying they would not go in because of the monsters (some enormous catfish) they had seen.[2]
>
> The other day a boy died, drowned in Lake Snagov… He was found two days later by divers. One of them recounted how he saw a very big catfish, some 200 kg, which looked like a baby whale… The diver got very scared and swore that never in his life would he plunge into Lake Snagov![3]
>
> Divers are said to have sunk in Lake Pantelimon to recover the bodies of the drowned. Here they found huge galleries and pits with catfish whiskers

[1] http://www.snopes.com/critters/lurkers/catfish.asp (accessed 15 July 2012).

[2] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/17/monstri-marini/comment-page-1/#comment-45205 (accessed 23 February 2012).

[3] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/170/pesti-uriasi/comment-page-1/ (posted 23 June 2009, accessed 23 February 2012).

as thick as a man's arm coming out of them. They refused to go in again. Near Bucharest, in 1996, a poacher is said to have drowned in Vadu Anei pond, near the village of the same name. Apparently his net was completely pulled under water and the man, who was floating on a tractor inner tube, was drawn with it and fell into the pond. When his body was recovered, it didn't have a leg and an arm. It seems the pond is extremely deep and giant catfish live under the reed and cannot be brought out with anything.[1]

Guys, I don't know what you believe or not, but even if sometimes I myself find it hard to believe, one thing is clear: there must be something for, otherwise, the only explanation would be COLLECTIVE SCHIZOPHRENIA… For years they've been saying that there are large fish the size of a car in Paltinu dam, or 'the DAM' as we call it. They were even caught on camera, but every time we were lied to that it's nothing but some computer-generated bull!!![2]

Some divers plunged into one of the reservoirs of Cernavodă nuclear reactor to conduct some maintenance works and got scared when they saw giant fish. They refused to sink again. It is said that, because of radiation, the fish would have undergone genetic mutations and that is why they became so enormous. I heard it from someone in my family who had spoken with an acquaintance of that particular diver.[3]

Truly giant fish lurk in waters worldwide, but the largest of them, the Piraiba catfish, also known as *Goliath*, swims in the murky waters of the Amazon. Though a fish-eater, there are stories that small animals, such as monkeys, cats or dogs, were found in its stomach, and in that area he is feared as a man-eating fish. Such a story surfaced in the 1990's: three men on the Amazon fishing; their net gets entangled to a stone, one of them plunges in but disappears in the depths. Later on, a Piraiba comes out writhing with two legs sticking out of its mouth: the catfish had swallowed the fisherman up to his legs. Somehow, the two other fishermen manage to catch it and kill it with their bats, then take it to the police with the dead man inside to prove everyone that their story was true. The case was investigated by Jeremy Wade, a biologist and host of a popular television programme called *River Monsters*[4]. He concluded that a Piraiba may indeed reach sizes that would enable it to swallow a person.

Still, how large can a catfish grow in our country? That is a moot point. The media report that a German caught, at Moldova Nouă, the largest catfish ever to be caught in Romania: it measured a little over two metres and weighed almost

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[1] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/17/monstri-marini/ (posted 9 November 2007, accessed 23 February 2012).

[2] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/17/monstri-marini/ (posted 17 November 2007, accessed 23 February 2012).

[3] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/170/pesti-uriasi/comment-page-1/ (posted 8 July 2007, accessed 23 February 2012).

[4] *River Monsters* is a documentary produced for Animal Planet. The host of the show, biologist and extreme angler Jeremy Wade, explores the waters of the world in order to discover the creatures behind local folklore and disturbing accounts of water monsters.

100 kilograms. But fishermen tell stories about a catfish of 400 kilograms caught in the Danube Delta[1].

Therefore, fear and the unknown tend to distort things. Such underwater encounters with oversized beings evoke the fear of dark and of all things unknown and the anxiety about the possibility of being taken by surprise by huge wild creatures. They are probably perpetuated in order to keep out young children and inexperienced swimmers who can be easily drawn by the currents and who face real dangers when venturing in deep waters or poachers that create great havoc during periods of prohibition. Naturally, we cannot rule out the entertaining, fun side of such an account told in order to amuse or shock the audience. There are also people for whom these phenomena can only be explained by the existence of conspiracy theories: "They were even caught on camera, but every time we were lied to that it's nothing but some computer-generated bull", "some divers from Constanţa came but found nothing (or so they say)". For what are conspiracy theories than a response to the anxieties of people who are desperate to make sense of shocking events?

There is not a long way from urban legend to conspiracy theory. There are opinions that the conspiracy theory is the next stage, when legends and rumours become more elaborated and nuanced (Fine and Ellis, 2010 *apud* de Vos, 2012: 107). Some considerations on conspiracy theories would not be therefore out of place at this point of the discussion.

The essence of conspiracy beliefs lies in the attempt to delineate and explain evil. According to Michael Barkun, conspiracy theories view history as being controlled by demonic forces. Evil, he states, can be found somewhere outside the community itself, in a foreign or barbarian place, often disguised as innocent and righteous. The consequence of that is a view of the world which is divided between the realms of good and evil. Therefore, "a *conspiracy theory* is the belief that an organization made up of individuals or groups was or is acting covertly to achieve some malevolent end" (Barkun, 2003: 3). Or, as David Aaronovitch put it, it represents "the attribution of deliberate agency to something that is more likely to be accidental or unintended" (Aaronovitch, 2010 *apud* de Vos, 2012: 105).

A conspiracist view is a universe governed by a pre-established plan and not by chance, and this idea is expressed by the three principles underlying any conspiracy theory (Barkun, 2003: 3-4):

- *Nothing happens by accident.* Conspiracy implies a world that relies on intentionality, from which coincidence and accident have been removed.

- *Nothing is as it seems.* Appearances are deceptive as conspirators seek to deceive so as to hide their true identities and actions.

[1] See the article "Monştrii apelor. Cei mai mari peşti prinşi vreodată în România" ('Water monsters. The largest fish ever caught in Romania'), available at http://www.realitatea.net/monstrii-apelor-cei-mai-mari-pesti-prinsi-vreodata-in-romania_899784.html (published 30 December 2011, accessed 23 February 2012).

- *Everything is connected*. In a world of conspiracies, there is no room for accident, therefore there is a pattern, though hidden, in everything.

Paradoxically, conspiracy theories frighten and reassure at the same time: on the one hand, they amplify the power of evil, sometimes leading to a dualism in which light and darkness fight for cosmic supremacy; on the other hand, they promise a meaningful rather than arbitrary world, one dominated by order, rather than by chaos (Aaronovitch, 2010 *apud* de Vos, 2012: 106).

The nature of conspiracist ideas may be best explained by the category of folklore we call urban legend. Urban legends are always told as true, they pretend to be true or, at least, believable and may contain a grain of truth. Similarly, conspiracy theories seem to be possible but are never proven. According to Ellis and Fine, "conspiracy theories can explain large swaths of an otherwise ambiguous world; they are transcendent explanations, unlocking a closed world with a cleverly forged key. The power of a conspiracy theory is that it connects rumors with documented, official facts" (Fine and Ellis, 2010 *apud* de Vos 2012: 107).

Urban legends and conspirative theories have been circulating orally. However, the sophisticated technology of present-day society has produced new ways of dissemination, the Internet being the main means. Technology and industrialisation have not destroyed traditions, but altered the manner in which they are expressed and communicated, have produced and perpetuated new types of folklore. Technological innovations are particularly important for the subcultures in which conspiracy theories have taken root.

The Internet is also attractive due to its extremely large audience, low operating costs and, perhaps most significantly, lack of censors to intervene in message content. Consequently, those who have built a worldview around conspirative ideas find on the Internet virtual communities that share their vision. Several versions of the same document, some identical, some slightly different, may appear on various websites. Unlike oral versions, all variants, on the Internet, may be virtually accessible at the same time to users who may be tempted to judge the credibility by the number of times it is told (Barkun, 2003: 13). Repetition establishes veracity by substituting direct evidence. One can make an analogy with the rumour that emerges precisely in those situations in which the usual means of determining credibility are missing, therefore the potential consumer ends up establishing the truth relying on how widely that particular rumour circulates. And that gives rumours – and conspiracy theories – the quality to self-validate. The more an account is told and the more it is heard, the greater the likelihood for it to be believed.

We do not claim to debunk or engage in some kind of polemics over various conspiracy theories; it is not our goal. Instead, we shall make brief comments on several examples.

PSYCHOTRONIC WEAPONRY. Psychotronic weapons, parapsychological warfare, psychological manipulation of masses by using remote devices are viewed, by some of us, as belonging to the realm of science fiction or, by others, as elements of genuine conspiracy theories. We do not intend, by bringing technical arguments into discussion, to prove if these technologies have a real basis or

remain nothing but fiction. In the aftermath of the 1989 Revolution, rumours about a parapsychological attack on Romania emerged. Unconventional weapons were allegedly used either by the former USSR or the USA to control the protesters that had gathered in the square outside the Central Committee where Ceaușescu was delivering his last speech. Or they had been ordered by the president himself in an attempt to keep the masses under control. Ever since 1990, psychotronic weapons, which manipulate human brain by emitting some waves, have supposedly served to keep the population of an entire country in a state of lethargy, thus reining the people in, incapable to react to social injustice. The following text can be found on several websites, reproduced as such or with insignificant variation[1]:

> In an effort to inform everybody as well as possible about what is going on in Romania, and not only, I shall post a list of the cities where psychotronic instruments have been placed or which are strongly influenced by such devices, the hours they emit and the message they deliver. Those of you who will read this post take great care of your mind. Have no fear, people. Only be careful what you think and check twice before accepting that a certain thought is yours. Many of these thoughts are put there because most of you are very unaware of what you think.
>
> The main cities which are influenced by such instruments:
>
> 1. Bucharest
> 2. Braşov
> 3. Cluj Napoca
> 4. Iaşi
> 5. Galaţi
> 6. Constanţa
> 7. Arad
> 8. Timişoara
> 9. Craiova
> 10. Focşani
>
> Hours of emission: 00, 04, 09, 12, 15, 18 and 21.
>
> Messages: sexual, carnal, political propaganda, outrageous messages regarding human behaviour, messages of hate and fury, murders and physical attacks. So, pay a lot of attention to your thoughts and emotions. Most of the times they are not produced by you. These instruments influence people every day and make them plunge deeper into superficiality, hate, rage, lack of harmony and separation."[2]

Other posts even mention a source that is supposed to be credible, namely a NASA report entitled "Bioeffects of non-leathal weapons on Romania", "uncovered in a

[1] Here are only a few of them: http://www.petitieonline.net/comentariu/ps5015952154.htmlm , http://www.certitudinea.ro/tema-de-gandire/view/armele-psihotronice-in-romania-Si-in-lume , https://adevarulcotidian.wordpress.com/2012/02/04/arme-psihotronice-in-romania/ , http://2012hroniculsemnelor.blogspot.ro/2011_07_01_archive.html (accessed 15 July 2012).

[2] http://cybershamans.blogspot.com/2010/05/armele-psihotronice-in-romania.html (accessed 23 February 2012).

basement", according to which psychotronic weapons that manipulate the masses through "mind control, telepathic impulses and radiation bombing" were brought to Romania, after 1990, at the army's headquarters. Their use against the population would explain "the lack of revolts, riots, revolutions among Romanians" over the last quarter of a century[1].

We do not deny that scientific experiments which involve brain manipulation from a distance are being conducted in some laboratories. But, in the absence of official reports to confirm the stage of research, sceptics may feel free to raise an eyebrow and consider these ideas as mere legends.

HENRI COANDĂ'S LASER. According to a legend that appeared in the 1960's, a secret weapon developed in Romania made it possible for President Ceaușescu to prevent an invasion of the Red Army similar to that of Czechoslovakia. A laser weapon, invented by Henri Coandă (or some say by Gogu Constantinescu, the 'father' of the theory of sonics), apparently destroyed the Soviet tanks gathered by the Prut River, along the border with Romania, melting them. I heard the story from one of my students:

> My grandfather told me about a laser that simply melt down Russian tanks when they were about to cross the border. He said it was Henri Coandă's invention. (*Narcis E.*, student)

A great number of versions, however, circulate on the Internet. Here are a few that have been collected from the *Mituri urbane autohtone* blog[2]:

> That's what my father told me: that we had some anti-tank missiles from the French, the Russians were about to cross the border and soldiers had been ordered to fire if they tried to invade Romania; they did try and several of their tanks were melted (by the wonder missiles) while the others withdrew. (*Cetățeanul*, posted on 24 February 2007)

> We learned from the teacher of Physics that he had been one of those who cut 10 Russian tanks with the famous laser (I don't remember the year or other details). (*Maco,* posted on 3 March 2007)

> Let me tell you the Caraş Severin version. A neighbour of mine, a pensioner, served in the army somewhere near Reşiţa, at Valea Deni. Very serious and confident, he tells me he saw that, when they fired the laser, the sky brightened as if it was daylight. In order to do that, they had to split the hill where the weapon was kept and then closed it back. As a result, the Russians immediately withdrew. (*Dani*, posted on 30 January 2009)

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[1] See the article "Psihotronica – Războiul viitorului" ('Psychotronics – the War of the Future'), available at https://sites.google.com/site/dimensiuniparalele/arme-psihotronice (accessed 28 July 2012).

[2] http://mituriurbane.vira.ro/mituri-urbane/4/arma-secreta-cu-laser/comment-page-3/ (accessed 29 July 2012).

> It was my father I learned it from… he said that the Russian tanks were melted by the Romanian laser… Anyway, I don't know if it's true. Afterwards, he also told me that in Ceauşescu's time, when the Hungarians kept insulting Romania saying that Transylvania belonged to them, six missiles were placed in Dâmbovița County aiming at Hungary, ready to destroy it if they didn't take back their insults. However, you should know, folks, that, if the story about the Russian tanks is only a legend, Romania was the fourth country to have studied the laser and manufactured it. Long live Romania! (*Lucy*, posted on 21 December 2009)

> About 12 years ago, I met a high-school educated young man who worked as a carpenter and who had completed his military service in the artillery after the Revolution. He told me with no shame that he had taken part in laser firing operations. I tried to mess with him (for I considered him a liar) by asking him questions, but I was surprised by how much he knew about the principle, charging, behaviour, usage, details that someone like him would normally have no idea about. Why would he have learned and invented so much only to lie to his co-workers and superiors? I forgot his name, but I still believe him. (*Virgil*, posted on 23 April 2011)

> I'm from Prahova and I very well remember, I was talking to my father about it in August '68, I also recall that they talked about Romania's secret weapon on Radio Free Europe, a weapon designed by H. Coandă who had ceded it to Romania in exchange for his coming back to the country from exile. All I know is that Warsaw Pact armies intended to cross the western border, but they were turned into heaps of iron. I also remember that in the east, by the Prut, a bridge was melted. (*Paul*, posted on 29 February 2012)

The legend probably originates in people's fears of an invasion similar to that of Czechoslovakia (that occurred on the night of 20–21 August 1968) by military forces belonging to the Warsaw Pact countries. Annoyed by the programme of reforms and liberalisations initiated by President Alexander Dubček and deeming that the latter was weakening the position of the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War, the troops of the USSR (led at the time by Leonid Brezhnev) and those of the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria invaded the country. Romania was the only state of the Communist Bloc that refused to participate in this military action, a decision made by President Nicolae Ceaușescu which drew the admiration of western chancelleries. Tens of thousands of people gathered in front of the Communist Party headquarters and listened to Ceaușescu's virulent speech[1] that strongly condemned the aggression against Czechoslovakia, expressing his "full solidarity with the Czechoslovakian people". The invasion was considered "a grave error and constituted a serious danger to peace in Europe".

[1] See *Discursul lui Ceaușescu din 21 august 1968* (Ceaușescu's speech of 21 August 1968), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpL8U-A_-lE, loaded on 1 October 2007 (accessed 29 July 2012).

"There can be no excuse, and there can be no reason to accept, even for a single moment, the idea of a military intervention in the domestic affairs of a fraternal socialist state", Ceaușescu also stated.

This historical context, with rumours on Soviet troops moving at the border with Romania (in his San Antonio speech of 31 August 1968, the American president Lyndon Johnson would warn Moscow that similar pressures on Romania threatened to "unleash the dogs of war", thus putting the country's population on national alert[1]), led to the emergence of the story about the secret weapon that intimidated the Kremlin after destroying numerous Soviet armour-clad vehicles. It was later called "Coandă's laser" maybe because the great Romanian scientist returned to Romania for good in 1969 as director of the Institute for Scientific and Technical Creation (INCREST). The existence of such unbeatable weapon was a response to the general fear of a potential Russian occupation, reassuring the Romanians and satisfying their need for safety. We do not exclude the possibility of this legend having been initiated in the high spheres of power, as a means of propaganda of the Communist regime. The Romanian folklorist Constantin Eretescu supports this theory, stating that it was a way of "exciting the people's patriotism and instilling the idea that, in case of actual aggression, the resistance might use weapons unknown to the enemy" (Eretescu, 2004: 304).

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[1] See Dawisha, Karen (1984): *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, p. 371.

MY TÂRGOVIŞTE – "BRIEF SENTIMENTAL TRIP"

Cristina Lizeta FURTUNĂ[1]

Abstract: *As a daughter of Târgovişte, I have been impressed ever since my childhood by the history and monuments of the city, particularly by the 47 churches, each one as old as the hills and with a history acknowledged both by historians and ethnographers. The title of the paper is inspired by the book of the late writer Mircea Horia Simionescu, "Târgovişte – scurt excurs sentimental" ('Târgovişte – Brief Sentimental Excursus'), and by the suggestive phrase coined by the Dâmboviţa County born author, "Târgovişte – o Florenţă valahă" which expresses the entire mediaeval history of Târgovişte.The first part of the paper deals with the main historical monuments of the Princely Court Museum Complex and some facts about their history. Next, we shall present a few contemporary stories about Vlad the Impaler and Michael the Brave by first analysing some aspects of contemporary historical narratives.*

Key-words: *Princely Court, folk narrative, anecdote, Vlad the Impaler, Michael the Brave.*

I have taken over the title of this article from Mircea Horia Simionescu, *Târgovişte, scurt excurs sentimental*. He is also the author of the famous expression "Târgovişte - the Wallachian Florence".

The most important museum core in Târgovişte is the Monumental Complex "The Princely Court", which includes several edifices presented below.

The core of the Princely Court was built during the reign of Mircea cel Bătrân 'the Elder', including a complex of constructions used as residence by the princely family, by the Court dignitaries and by their servants.

From this epoch and from that of its direct successors have been preserved the defence ditch, the first precincts wall, the church with a simple trefoil shape in the north of the Court and the old princely house (only the walls of the cellars and, partially, of the floor level)[2].

It is part of the National Museum Complex "Curtea Domnească" – Târgovişte, which includes 13 museums and Memorial Houses: the Monumental Complex "The Princely Court", The Museum of Dâmboviţa County's Writers, The Museum of the Romanian Printing Press and Old Book, The Stelea Galleries, The Art Musem, The "Gheorghe Petraşcu" Workshop House, The Museum of Pucioasa City, The Brancoven Complex of Potlogi, The "Gabriel Popescu" Workshop House

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[2] *Târgovişte, la cour princière*, p. 1.

of Vulcana Pandele, The "I. L. Caragiale" Memorial House, The Museum of Pietroşiţa Commune.

Out of all the historical monuments of Dâmboviţa County, the Monumental Complex "the Princely Court" – Târgovişte is attracting the tourists' special interest. Due to its exceptional historical value, this interest is fully justified, the Princely Court receiving numerous visitors each year.

Covering an area of 29,000 m^2, the Princely Court represents the best preserved aulic mediaeval complex on the territory of Romania.

It functioned intermittently, for over three centuries (1396-1714), as princely residence for 33 voivodes, starting with Mircea the Elder and ending with Constantin Brâncoveanu. Its core was built during Mircea the Elder's reign, being made up of a complex of constructions, meant for the ruling family residence, for the Court dignitaries and their servants. During Vlad the Impaler's reign, the Princely Court spreads out and new edifices emerge. The most important of them is the observation and defence tower, known as the Chindia Tower.

Between the years 1583-1585, a series of works of fortifications and constructions were initiated, at the request and under the direct supervision of the Voivode Petru Cercel who had a new palace built, along with the Big Church of the Court and the first aqueduct, and, on the outside, towards the Ialomiţa River "the princely gardens".

Another important stage in the development of the Princely Court is recorded during Matei Basarab's reign, when the princely houses were repaired, the precincts wall was doubled and a Turkish bath was built. The ruler who ordered the last significant repairs and extensions at the Princely Court was at the same time the one who would conclude the series of reigns at Târgovişte, Constantin Brâncoveanu. The Big Church was painted during his reign (1698), the original painting, of an exceptional value, being preserved to our days.

The Court monuments are: the Southern Gate; the First Princely House; the Princely House of the mid-15th century; the Princely Palace of the 16th century; the Big Princely Church; Chindia Tower; Chindia Park and the Zoological Garden; Saint Paraskeva Church; Bălaşa House.

The Southern Gate – its entrance, used to this day, was situated under the tower constructed in 1584, along with the new precincts. Initially it had one floor, used as belfry of the Big Princely Church[1].

The First Princely House – erected by Mircea the Elder who, after 1400, had a new residence built, probably for his son Mihail, and later on had the church built.

The Princely House of the mid-15th century – the building, begun during the reign of Mircea the Elder and finished, most likely, by the ruler Vlad Dracul, is the largest Romanian aulic construction of the 15th century. The cellar was situated

[1] Ibidem, p. 3.

under the whole surface of the building, and it has been preserved to this day, and over it one could find the floor level, consisting in a large ceremonial room and the princely court but also rooms for the reigning prince and his family[1].

The Princely Palace of the 16th century – was built in 1584, on the order of Petru Cercel, in the Renaissance style. For the first time, we find in our architecture a building on three levels, namely cellar, ground floor and first floor. The cellars, preserved in their initial form, can still be visited to this day. The ground floor, made up of 10 rooms, hosted the princely chancery. The first floor, meant only for the princely family, completely separated from the ground floor, was accessible only by an external ladder. Also on the outside, a corridor would ensure the direct connection with the Big Church. It was for the first time that glazed tiles were used for the roof and for the church. The palace was remade both by Matei Basarab and by Constantin Brâncoveanu[2].

The Big Princely Church – founded by Petru Cercel (1583-1585), with the dedication day "The Assumption of the Theotokos", was achieved according to the scheme of the "Metropolitan Church" of Târgovişte. It stands out among the contemporary churches by its unparalleled proportions (14 x 30 m). Out of the church inventory, only two tomb stones have been preserved, from 1652 and 1653, namely that of Lady Elina, the wife of Matei Basarab and that of their son, Mateiaş. The inside of the church was painted integrally, between the years 1696-1698, by Constantin Brâncoveanu's painter, Constantinos. In the pronaos, on the western wall, there are princely portraits (Petru Cercel and Constantin Brâncoveanu, as founders, holding the shrine of the church, but also Neagoe Basarab, Mihai Viteazul, Radu Şerban, Constantin Şerban, Şerban Cantacuzino and Mihnea III), the amplest gallery of images of Wallachian reigning princes[3].

The Chindia Tower**,** built on the order of Vlad Ţepeş, dominated for centuries on end the Princely Court and the town. Today, it is 27 m high, 9 m in diameter, and it has a basis shaped as a pyramid trunk, the construction including three floors and the ground floor[4].

Chindia Park and the Zoological Garden

In 1970, the inhabitants of Târgovişte were offered a wonderful place for their leisure activities. Chindia Park was arranged on the place of the former princely garden, which was situated behind the Princely Court. The park includes a lake where one can go around by boat and hydrobicycle and a summer garden with cinema and theatre scene.

One of the most beautiful attractions of the park is the Zoological Garden, situated on the place where, in 1584, the ruler Petru Cercel arranged the first

[1] Ibidem, p. 5.
[2] Ibidem, p. 4.
[3] Ibidem, p. 9.
[4] Ibidem.

zoological place in the country. This Zoological Garden is the oldest and one of the largest in the country, covering an area of 3 ha. Here live over 500 mammals, birds and reptiles, belonging to about 80 species.

Saint Paraskeva Church

This church existed in 1517, according to the founding inscription on the southern wall. It is the only monument known so far in the Wallachian architecture, built by mid-15th century, preserved in its original form[1].

Bălaşa House was built in 1656, near Saint Paraskeva Church, by Bălaşa, the wife of Constantin Şerban. According to the existing inscription, the building was destined to the rest of the Christians in need.

The people of Târgovişte are proud of the history of their town and of the beautiful historical monuments. A series of legends, anecdotes and stories have been preserved especially since the time of Vlad the Impaler.

According to Mihaela Mancaş[2], there are two possibilities of formally describing the narrative text; both refer to the fact that the narrative represents a special structure of prose. "The first way is a semantic analysis of the text. In its initial form, applying particularly to folkloric and mythological narrative, it starts from the assumption that the narration is a sequence of numerically limited functions (or, according to another terminology, motifs) which regularly intervene in the epic development and which make up the narrative text structure when combined with inferior units according to generally constant schemes.

This type of analysis was first used in V. Propp's Morphology of the Folktale[3] and, as a result of studies conducted by the researchers of the contemporary French school, underwent a number of changes and refinements of the initial pattern[4]. A first definition of the narration, formulated in terms of the Propp-Bremond system and inferred from it: any account consists of a speech process which integrates a sequence of elements of human interest into the same plot. The conditions of narration, thus formulated by Claude Bremond, may be retained for their formal implications to which we shall return[5] : indeed, where

[1] Ibidem, p. 8.

[2] Mihaela, Mancaş, "Structura naraţiei în perioada romantic", pp. 179-181.

[3] *Morfologhia skazki*, Leningrad, 1928; Romanian translation *Morfologia basmului*, Bucureşti, EU, 1970; Propp completed his theory in subsequent studies, such as: *Les transformations des contes fantastiques,* in *Théorie de la littérature. Textes des Formalistes russes réunis, présentés et traduits par Tzvetan Todorov,* Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1965, pp. 234-262, apud Mihaela Mancaş, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180.

[4] Cf. especially, Claude Bremond, *Le message narratif,* "Communications", 4, Paris, Seuil, 1964, and *La logique des possibles narratifs,* "Communications", 8, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 60-76; A. J. Greimas, *Éléments pour une théorie de l'interprétation du récit mythique,* ibid., pp. 28-59, apud Mihaela Mancaş, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[5] *La logique des possibles narratifs, loc. cit.*, p. 62, apud Mihaela Mancaş, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-181.

there is no sequence, there is no narration but description, deduction, lyrical effusion; where there is no integration into the same unity of plot, there is still no narration but a mere chronology, the enouncement of uncoordinated facts; finally, some researchers believe that, in a succession that does not rely on reporting some events of human interest, there can be no narration, for temporal and spatial structuring can occur only in relation to human beings[1]. This definition, formulated solely for the folkloric narrative, integrates the process of narration into the larger sphere of anthropological processes. As far as we are concerned, we retain it for two of the formal elements it introduces which we shall use in describing the Romanian romantic narrative: the idea of structural unity of the narrative text and the obligatory condition of the narration, the sequence of its minimal constitutive units.

This first way of analysis focuses, as can be noticed, particularly on the substance of the narration: its content elements, the logic of actions and the syntax of characters (relations among them or the oppositions by which they can be introduced)[2].

The second possible way of analysing the narration integrates the narrative process into the larger sphere of the process of enunciation, therefore considering, first of all, the totality of formal traits of expression of the narration. Given that this idea views narration as a particular case of statement, such a description grounds its conclusions on the analysis of moods, tenses, aspect and sequence of verbal and pronominal persons, in other words, it takes into consideration what we shall call the narrative plan".[3]

The narrative describes actions that are carried out by the teller or events/happenings to which he was a witness. Starting from the observation that folklore is not confined to presenting imaginary acts or events that occurred in a distant past, O. Densusianu was the first to publish accounts of the peasants' everyday life, historical recollections, etc. Thus, in 1906, the folkloric species became the object of folklorists' investigations (I. A. Candrea, O. Densusianu, Th. Speranţia, *Graiul nostru*).

This category includes narratives which describe a mostly unique or remarkable personal experience which is worth being retained and transmitted further. The mere act of word-of-mouth transmission places this kind of accounts into the realm of folklore. One may object that, in terms of content, these narratives are non-traditional, that many of them cannot fall into existing typologies, that these narratives belong only to the repertory of those who have gone through the experience reported and have an essentially personal nature[4].

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[1] Apparent exceptions from this desideratum, formulated in the definition of the narrative, seem to be the fables or the fantastic narratives, whose heroes are animals or supernatural beings; yet, in these situations, however, the narrative operates using an artifice, as at the basis of the fantastic literature is always the *symbol* or the *allegory*.

[2] Mihaela Mancaş, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

[3] Mihaela Mancaş, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

[4] C. Eretescu, *Folclorul literar al românilor. O privire contemporană*, p. 250.

In Târgovişte, time returns obstinately (prehistoric Time[1], ancient Time[2], mediaeval Time[3], Renaissance Time[4], modern Time[5]), understood according to the definition given by St. Augustine as *mobile image of eternity.* Just as the people of the Antiquity symbolically imagined time as a circle, on which they placed the 12 astrological signs and whose centre symbolized the eternity of the being, Târgovişte is that *eternal city of the Eastern Latinity*.

The symbolical passage from the temporal to the spatial involves the material evidence, viewed as an enemy to extinction in the fight for eternity of the human being, a concept that has accompanied the terrestrial representation of the existence, so present in the area of Târgovişte.

The narrative aroused the interest of our gatherers of folk literature only sporadically and unsystematically. Artur and Raul Stavri included such a text in a corpus entitled *Din povestirile lui Ilie Pietrariul* (in *Povestea vorbei*, 1896-1897), and later on other numerous narratives were to enrich the folklore. The topics most dear to storytellers are exceptional life experiences or extraordinary occurrences. Many narratives depict the Transylvanian peasants' participation in World War I. Removed from a familiar environment, the soldiers are enlisted under the flag of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and taken outside the borders of the country to fight in foreign places for a cause whose meaning they do not understand. Long after the war finished, former combatants recount, shaken by emotion, sometimes until the end of their lives, their sad journey through the trenches of Italy[6].

The unusual nature of the events depicted leads to a preference, among storytellers, of such topics as encounters with wild animals, adventures that the narrator has gone through or claims to have gone through in order to increase their prestige in front of the audience, amazing occurrences from their native village (suicide, murders, etc.)

Such narratives, resulted from people's need to communicate various life experiences to their fellowmen and to share situations from which lessons can be drawn, are extremely old. Most of them die with the disappearance of the teller, a witness to the event he was impressed by. Some topics however are taken over by the community, transformed and adapted to continually changing situations and circumstances and thus become a common good[7].

Researchers have currently noted an increasing importance, in oral epic repertories, of this narrative category. Personal narratives are a contemporary yet not new species. As previously shown, Ovid Densusianu was the first to record them for dialectological or ethnographic purposes.

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[1] G. Coandă*, Istoria Târgovişteı. Cronologie enciclopedică*, 2005, p. 29.
[2] Ibidem, p. 39.
[3] Ibidem, p. 45.
[4] Ibidem, p. 81.
[5] Ibidem, p.169.
[6] C. Eretescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251.
[7] Ibidem, p. 251.

The story is a living phenomenon within the spiritual profile of the Romanian space. Even if its power sometimes weakens, the story and storytelling define the character of present-day field research.

The storytelling phenomenon, extremely alive in the area of Târgovişte city and thematically shaped in this area which is narrated by veterans, is characterised by old, often contradictory and fuzzy images, alongside of new images that are blurred by life's disappointments. These disillusionments prove that in terms of the reality of the story virtuality is most of the times preferable to reality.

Anecdotes about Vlad the Impaler that are known to this day have been in circulation. Written in 1462, they must have aroused the interest of readers in Târgovişte who had certainly heard about the Wallachian voivode's deeds. The chronicle mentions:

> And there was another thing that [Vlad the Impaler] did to the citizens of Târgovişte, for a much greater fault against one of Prince Vlad's brothers. On Easter Day, when all citizens were feasting and the young ones were at the dance, he caught them unawares and had the elder impaled and carried throughout the city, whereas the young with their wives and daughters were taken to Poienari, dressed as they were in their festive clothes, and they worked on the castle until their arrays were all worn out and they remained without a stitch on.[1]

The legend mentions that the Impaler's brother had been booed by the people of Târgovişte, for having forced himself upon a boyar daughter[2].

Anecdotes about the Voivode mentioned several events, which thus show how the prince valued learning. He had instantly executed any envoy that did not give the right answer blaming the one who had sent such an insufficiently educated man.

The Voivode was also concerned with instilling the love of country and fighting spirit into his soldiers. "He who thinks about death let not him come with me"[3], he would say to his soldiers before going to war.

It is said that, after the battle, Vlad the Impaler would punish those with wounds on their backs (who had fled from the enemy) and reward those with injuries on the front part of the body.

The legend according to which women that were accused of adultery were tied to the pillory still lives in the memory of the people of Târgovişte and even of those in the county; no wonder that one of the informants mentioned it in his answer to the questionnaire.

A lot has been written about Michael the Brave and the image of the Voivode with his great dreams and achievements is not to be effaced from the minds of the dwellers of Târgovişte. With an army that also included Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, the Voivode's figure, his epic, became part of the Balkan folklore as

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[1] *Istoria Ţării Româneşti. Letopiseţul Cantacuzinesc*, apud Gheorghe Pârnuţă, *Începuturile culturii şi învăţământului în judeţul Dâmboviţa*, p. 24.

[2] Ibidem.

[3] Ibidem.

depicting a legendary hero and his reign is viewed as a moment in the history of the entire European south-east[1].

His name appears in songs throughout the three Romanian provinces.

In the military units of Târgoviște, in the battle camps, in the city streets, the people's victories under the Voivodes would be glorified in songs, legendary accounts, transmitted word of mouth, in verse or prose; they would be memorised and passed on from one generation to another, inspiring the people to new triumphs.

Only educated in this way could the Romanian people defeat such numerous and well armed enemy troops. Prince and boyars, leaders and soldiers were all animated by the same thought, same feelings, the same wish to see their national unity fulfilled, to be free and masters of their own country. That was their patriotism. That was the school of patriotic education, the unwritten pedagogy of the people.

Orally transmitted by eyewitnesses, known from chronicles and deeds by the foreigners who had come to the princely court, the epic of Michael the Brave has become a part of the universal history.

The Voivode's deeds, his great figure, his life's so tragic end have made a strong impression on the people of Târgoviște who still tell stories about the great Voivode whenever they have the chance. All these deeds are to be found in songs, proverbs, fairytales or legends. They are proud of the history of their city.

Some of our informants' stories refer to the construction of a new palace, of Chindia Tower and of the princely church, known today as the Princely Court. Other accounts speak about the tragic death of the prince who set out to build a powerful state, for he was convinced that he would thus help regain the freedom not only of his country and people, but also of the entire Christian world.

The narrative is an act of communication by which partners, i.e. narrators and listeners, share information by means of formalised discourses. In oral culture, the narrative always occurs by word of mouth. It is an act of speech which, unlike colloquial acts, is artistically connoted.

The means by which messages are transmitted is always oral; communication between the narrator and the listener is unmediated. The act of narration is a synchronous act in which performance and reception occur simultaneously and the presence of both partners is absolutely necessary.

Just like the study of other acts of communication, the study of narration must pay heed to the subjects who recount because the narration mediates the relationships among the groups of subjects. Field research has shown that the narration phenomenon is different within some regional groups, as dialects are in linguistics. They have generally highlighted the narrators' personality. Field investigations have also revealed that within traditional cultures only some people narrate and the majority listens. In relation to this aspect, there are relatively old data on narrators who characterise moments in the history of the phenomenon and various trends of its study. Thus, Ovidiu Bîrlea's collection of Romanian

[1] G. Ivaşcu, *Istoria literaturii române*, vol. I, p. 120.

fairytales gives plenty of information regarding the Romanian narrators in the years immediately following World War II[1].

The larger the scope of the data, the greater the need to make up a typology in narratology as well. A typological systematisation which should not only record the preferences for certain genres but also explain these preferences, their cultural, social status, the role they play in the groups' life. A taxonomy which should comprise the listeners not only as receivers but also as potential new narrators.

Investigations have considered the circumstances of narration. However, recording the occasions is just a general approach to the issue of contexts of performing and receiving narratives. They are only the general framework of place and time of narration. In order to better understand what entails a particular act of communication, we need to get to a nuanced knowledge of the contexts. They are socially and culturally connoted and, should we go deeper into the structure of groups, by individuals, psychologically connoted as well. They determine the place and time of narration and even the situations in which the narrative occurs, as well as the narrator's purpose. All this contributes to understanding this phenomenon both in terms of performance and reception.

A concrete, nuanced knowledge of contexts allows the correlation of narration with the other cultural acts of the groups, establishing it as a pertinent element within the paradigms that characterise the culture of a community at a certain stage of its development.

Comparing narration in particular contextual situations leads to an understanding of the changes that occur from one act to another in different narratives, of the process of creating variants and of functional mutations among the various categories.

Narratives contain explicit and implicit information and, as any relational act, communicate and conceal. In relation to contexts, particularly to the situational and psychological ones, narrators and audience operate selections in the game of enciphering and decoding, in the adequacy of what is being told and what is being said to the partners' intentions.

The issue of an accurate, distorted or reverted reception takes into consideration particularly the symbolic vocabulary as operator in the process of transformations. It is along the distance between acts that the process of creating variants and the phenomenon of transferring the meanings of symbolically laden signs from one genre to another are placed.

In the cultural life dynamics, narration brings into topicality a quantity of information it can always spread, using it in the different discourses it performs.

Narration is one of the folk culture manifestations that even today are worth the attention of researches.

[1] O. Bîrlea, *Introducere* to *Antologie de proză populară epică*, I, pp.11-31.

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