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EMILY GERARD: FROM SCOTLAND TO TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT. ***Emily Gerard: From Scotland to Transnational Identity.*** This essay focuses on the transnational connections of Emily Gerard (1845-1905), a very interesting Scottish woman writer who lived most of her life in Austria-Hungary. Comparisons are made with Mary (Maria) Grant-Rossetti (another Scottish expatriate writer) and Emilia Lungu-Puhallo (a Romanian female writer). Gerard's most famous work, *The Land beyond the Forest,* as well as two of Gerard's novels located in Poland, are analyzed predominantly from the point of view of the author's transnational identifications. Our approach is meant to find the specific ways in which (post-) colonialism affects Gerard's female gaze.

Keywords**:** *Scotland, Poland, Transylvania, identity, transnational, Emily Gerard, Emilia Lungu-Puhallo, Mary Grant-Rossetti, journey, ethnicity*.

REZUMAT. ***Emily Gerard: din Scoţia, spre identitate transnaţională.*** Acest eseu se concentrează asupra legăturilor transnaţionale ale lui Emily Gerard (1845-1905), o foarte interesantă scriitoare scoţiană care a trăit mare parte a vieţii sale în Austro-Ungaria. Se fac comparaţii cu Mary (Maria) Grant-Rosetti (o altă scriitoare scoţiană expatriată) şi Emilia Lungu-Puhallo (o scriitoare românca). Se analizează, din punctul de vedere al identificărilor auctoriale transnaţionale, cea mai cunoscută lucrare a lui Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, precum şi două romane ale lui Gerard plasate în Polonia. Perspectiva noastră e menită a găsi modalităţile specifice prin care (post-) colonialismul influenţează privirea feminină a lui Gerard.

Cuvintele cheie: *Scoţia, Polonia, Transilvania, identitate, transnaţional, Emily Gerard, Emilia Lungu-Puhallo, Mary Grant-Rossetti, călătorie, etnicitate.*

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[1] The authors' contributions to this article are as follows: Sarka Lhotska analyzed *A Secret Mission*, Lenka Treutnerova wrote about *The Heron's Tower*, the remainder of the essay is by Mihaela Mudure. An earlier version of dr. Mudure's contribution was published in *Transnational Identities of Women Writers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire*. Ed. Ramona Mihăilă. New York: Addleton Academic Publishers, 2013, pp. 210-221. This project would not have been possible without the generous support of Technical University in Liberec, Czech Republic through a research grant. Mihaela Mudure, contact address: <mmudure@yahoo.com>; Sarka Lhotska, contact address: <sarka.lhotska@gmail.com>; Lenka Treutnerova, contact address <lenka.treutnerova@seznam.cz>.

Emily Gerard (1849-1905), a minor Victorian female writer, also known under the name of Madame de Laszowska, was born at Chesters, Jedburgh in a family that had contacts and relations with the Scottish nobility. A very important event in the family's life was the conversion of Emily Gerard's mother to Catholicism. Twice marginalized, as Scots in a country dominated by the English and as Catholics in a country that was intransigently Presbyterian, the Gerards became European expatriats.

From 1863 to 1866 Emily Gerard lived with her family in Venice. Then she spent three years at a monastery in the Tyrol. In 1869 she got married to Chevalier Miecislas de Laszowski, a Polish aristocrat and officer in the Austrian-Hungarian army. We do not know how the two young people met. But their condition connected them. Both were Catholics. And both of them came from countries submitted to the imperial expansion of neighbouring hegemonic powers. Scotland was already in the imperial orbit of England since 1707. In 1795 Poland had been divided for the third time by Prussia, Russia, and Austria. We do not know for sure from which area of Poland Chevalier Miecislas de Laszowski was. But it is plausible that he was from the Russian part of Poland. Consequently, he chose to serve in the Austrian army in order to hasten the defeat of Poland's enemies[2].

The couple experienced the mobile life of a military family. They moved from one garrison to another, unpacking and packing again, upon the Austrian Emperor's command. By the time when they made friends in one place, they had to move again. The Laszowskis were always on the move. They lived in Galicia and then moved to Transylvania where Chevalier de Laszowski was appointed to the command of the cavalry brigade. In the latter province the couple lived in Braşov and Sibiu, important Transylvanian towns.

In 1888, Emily Gerard published a travelogue inspired by her Transylvanian stay: *The Land beyond the Forest: Facts, Figures and Fancies from Transylvania*. This writing made Bram Stoker settle the plot of *Dracula* in Transylvania. Initially, Stoker had placed the novel in Styria but his notes show that reading Gerard's travelogue he came to the conclusion that Transylvania was a better scenery for his demonic character. A marginal himself, also born in a country victimized by empires and hegemonic ambitions, Stoker wanted to export his inhibitions to the Other extreme of Europe, often seen as a *hic sunt leones* place. In 1885, Chevalier de Laszowski retired from active service and the couple made Vienna their permanent residence till the end of their lives.

Emily Gerard began her literary career with collaborative novels, i.e. fictions written together with her sister Dorothea who had married Julius Longard de Longgardo, also an officer in the Austrian-Hungarian army, in 1886.

[2] In this case, Russia.

The partnership of the two sisters resulted in four novels: *Reata* (1880), *Beggar My Neighbour* (1882), *The Waters of Hercules* (1885) and *A Sensitive Plant* (1891).

The Gerard sisters lived both in Scotland and on the continent and took pleasure in situating their writings all over Europe. Transnationalism gave them a context that framed a story following well-known narrative patterns (the romance, the political thriller, etc.). This transnationalism follows the geographical perambulations of their husbands. For instance, Poland is a favourite background for Emily Gerard's novels. The writer identifies with her husband's patriotic feelings. In Gerard's novels, Poland's sufferings at the end of the nineteenth century are sublimated as a substitute for her Scottish feelings in relation to the domineering tendencies of England. Both in the case of Scotland and Poland (because of the eighteenth century impositions), hurt national feelings led to a (post-)colonial situation in the nineteenth century, namely dependence on a power centre (London, Vienna) that is admired (for its efficiency and power) and hated at the same time.

From the point of view of Gerard's transnational evolution probably the most interesting novel is *Beggar My Neighbour* whose title is a card game which presupposes the possibility to use any tricks until the opponent is completely destroyed. The two sisters identify with Chevalier de Laszowski's feelings for his Polish homeland. Subliminally, this is seen in a kind of sisterhood of countries historically victimized by the hegemonic power of the time. Scotland and Poland are both in this sisterhood which could also include other Eastern or Central European homelands. The main character of this novel is Kazimir Bielinski, who definitely reminds us of Emily's husband, a Polish officer obliged to serve in foreign armies. "Madame Bielinska, having at length realized that there were no immediate hopes of a new Polish kingdom, discovered that her eldest son[3], instead of learning to be a Polish hero, was simply serving the Emperor of Austria, like any other officer" (10). Kazimir will be taken in by his own brother, Lucien, who misinforms his elder brother about the situation of their properties. Finally, Lucien will take hold of both Kazimir's beloved and his inheritance. An important aide in Lucien's manoeuvres is Aitzig Majulik, the Jew whose business relies on his contacts with the Polish nobility. Although Aitzig is useful to the Christians in the neighbourhood, he is despised. The Gerard sisters are able to understand the mechanism of prejudice and stereotyping which oblige Aitzig to respond with prejudice to prejudice. The echoes from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* can be the object of an interesting intertextual exercise. The Gerard sisters make Aitzig complain that he is treated like a dog although he is a faithful servant of the Polish aristocrat. "'Aitzig is a dog?' whimpered the Jew; poor old Aitzig is a dog, to be

[3] Kazimir.

kicked and trodden. Thus does the noble Pan use his faithful servants" (346)[4]. Shakespeare's Jew also complains about the way he is treated by his fellow Christians but his ideological tenet is the Renaissance generous embrace of all people, regardless their religion. Social hierarchies do not matter for him so much, nor are they used by Shylock as a reproach to the prejudiced Antonio.

The novels written only by Emily Gerard are mostly romances where one can feel the Austenian influence on the game of feelings and the traditional moral lesson which reinforces the values of matrimony. What distinguishes Gerard from Austen, though, is the subtle and benevolent irony which the latter used when portraying the world of the provincial gentry. On the other hand, while Austen places her novels among the gentry of England which she knew so well, Gerard, a transnational writer, prefers international locations – such as Germany in The *Herons' Tower*, a romance published in 1904. The plot is set in the first half of the eighteenth century. The heroine of the story, Luitgard von Pfeilhofen, is the only heiress of the Pfeilhofens. Her parents (Othmar and Hedwig) behave indifferently to her and she is constantly told that it was she who should have died instead of her twin brother. Victim of a patriarchal family, she has no friends and knows nothing except the Castle and the park that surrounds it. Her favourite place in the park is the Herons' Tower. Unfortunately, the Tower is locked and nobody wants to say why. Something terrible happened to her mother when she was pregnant; consequently, everything about the Herons' Tower is taboo.

Life changes when Luitgard turns seventeen. The will of Eberhard von Pfeilhofen (their ancestor) is discovered. Othmar and Hedwig find out that they are not the rightful heirs to their property, the true heir being their relative, Marquis Gastone Frecciacorte, who usually lives in Italy but he happens to be in Buxenburg, the capital of their land. Hedwig devises a plan. Luitgard will marry Frecciacorte, in this way preserving their property, Frecciacorte will get what should have been his and they will not have to publish the will. The use of daughters as mere tools for the interest of the patriarchal family is implicitly criticized here by Emily Gerard.

All of a sudden, Luitgard becomes very important, her parents buy her the most modern dresses, and they call in Wulfhild, a girl from the capital, to act as

[4] "I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction" (Act III, scene I).

her companion. Luitgard does not understand the change. The problem is that before her mother devises this plan, Luitgard meets Delius (a boy of Greek origin) near the Herons' Tower. He becomes her secret friend and later also her lover.

When Luitgard realizes that she has to marry Gastone Frecciacorte, she is desperate. After some time, she convinces Gastone that she cannot marry him and he leaves for Buxenburg. Luitgard's mother discovers her daughter's secret lover and sends him away by paying him a certain sum of money. Then, by her cunning intrigues, she makes her daughter marry Frecciacorte. After the marriage, they live in Buxenburg. Luitgard is not happy. After some time she meets Delius again. They want to escape together, but her mother interferes again and reveals to Luitgard the bitter truth that Delius had been paid in order to run away from her. Luitgard confronts Delius, she decides to leave him, and wants to commit suicide by throwing herself from the Herons' Tower. Gastone saves her and Delius dies because of snakebites. This alert romance is, firstly, a critique of patriarchal matrimonial arrangements.

A very interesting character in this German novel produced by a Scottish writer living in the Austrian Empire is Othmar (Luitgard's father). He has always loved Hedwig and has also always been different than his ancestors. All his life he pretended to like hunting because it was a tradition in his family, whereas he was not interested in hunting at all, but in music. Hunting is supposed to be a masculine entertainment and Othmar has to follow the traditional patterns of masculinity if he wants to preserve the prestige of the family. Othmar likes Luitgard but is afraid to speak with her or to show her his feelings because of Hedwig, his wife. He is weak and turns into a puppet in Hedwig's hands. The reader understands him and sympathises with him. Finally, his good heart wins and he finds courage to do the right thing, even against Hedwig's will. Unfortunately, he is killed by a wild boar while hunting and the mercantile arrangements of his wife will be successful. The romance has feminist implications. Women are at a disadvantage when it comes to inheritance and they are used as merchandise for the pecuniary interests of the clan. The fact that Emily Gerard set her romance in Germany offers a transnational background to these feminist considerations. Women are in the same position everywhere, with patriarchy being the main structure of society.

Another genre cultivated by Emily Gerard, also in a transnational key, is the thriller. *A Secret Mission,* is a relevant example, in this respect. The plot begins in April 1887, in Stara-Wola, a Polish village near Warsaw. It is summer and inside the farmers' houses there are flies everywhere. Roman, a German officer comes to the house of Felicyan, his brother, where he has not been for many years. He comes with a secret mission which will change many things in the neighbourhood. Felicyan and his wife Hala live in Stara-Wola together with their children, Zosia and Kostus, and with Hala's sister, Luba, and their father, Pan Nicorowicz. Felicyan is a "tall, massively framed man turned forty" (1). He is a

farmer, and, according to his brother, "he is not clever, not good at any argument, nor were his opinions the result of any intellectual process" (p. 157). Hala makes a perfect wife for a man like Felicyan. She is "a simple country-bred girl, of pleasant appearance and affectionate disposition, sufficiently intelligent to be an agreeable companion, and of robust enough health to take her share of farm and household duties" (11). Luba, a single woman, falls in love with Roman, though he only loves her as a sister. She also gets to know some details about Roman's mission and helps him. She hopes this will bring her Roman's love, but it never happens. Roman, a handsome German officer, wearing clean and good-looking clothes, attracts the attention of more than one woman. Hala also finds Roman's appearance very attractive but she does not fall in love with him, rather appreciates, even enjoys his good looks and careful appearance. Her husband is a farmer whose clothes are old, dirty, and worn-out. Hala always reproaches her husband for looking like a tramp.

The Russian police discover that Roman is a spy and he is imprisoned for six weeks. There is no evidence of his guilt and he keeps denying any guilt. Then his brother, Felycian is accused of high treason and taken to Siberia for life. Everybody is devastated. Hala blames Roman for the misfortune of Felycian. To a great extent, it is his fault. At first, he denies it and wants Hala's forgiveness but he will not be forgiven. Roman leaves for Germany where he meets another spy, Biruta, who had escaped from Poland harmlessly. One day Roman and Biruta go to a museum and see a painting which reminds Roman of his brother who is in Siberia. He decides to return to Russia and save his brother. Finally, Roman succeeds in getting his brother out of the Siberian camp but he is killed. Brotherhood is more important than a spy's duty.

A Secret Mission is a novel full of cunningness, naivety, morality, affection, friendship, manipulation, bravery, and virulence. It is about how life can change in a second because of such absurd circumstance as one fly sitting on a picture and being hunted by an old sick man. Emily Gerard is very good at seeing Roman's psychological evolution when it comes to the suffering of his own family. On one hand, he wants to fulfil his mission, on the other hand, when the life of his brother and his family are at stake, he completely changes his attitude and belief and acts very bravely. The novel is very interesting as an image of Poland under Czarist rule. Emily Gerard identifies with her husband's feelings for Poland and this country's historical tragedy. By sublimation she transmits to the reader this fundamental truth: patriotism is a very important value because it gives one a belonging. Gerard's transnationalism is militant; she implicitly condemns the aggressive imperialist policies of some countries, such as the Czarist Empire. People's lives are destroyed because they are caught in the vortex of history, created by domineering empires.

Emily Gerard's best known work is her travelogue *The Land Beyond the Forest: Facts, Figures, and Fancies from Transylvania*, published in New York in

1888. Like many other eighteenth- or nineteenth- century female writers married to foreigners, she tried to cope with the problems arising from her matrimony with a foreigner by writing. Her writing became a subliminal escape activity that allowed her to forget her own alienation and gave her a purpose and an existential meaning. *The Land beyond the Forest* was one of the results of Emily Gerard's movements all over the Austrian Empire with her husband. During her two-year stay in Transylvania, she got very familiar with the Transylvanian people, the landscape, and the local folklore. She got inspired by these new realities she described them for the Western public, re-inventing the Eastern border of Europe as a place of Gothic horror and attraction.

Her work had a decisive influence upon Bram Stoker, who initially wanted to locate his vampire in Styria but upon reading Gerard's article "Transylvanian Superstitions", he decided to place his Dracula in Transylvania. Gerard mentions the vampire superstition and the method used by Romanian peasants when vampirism was suspected: a stake was driven through the heart of the corpse while its mouth was filled with garlic. These anti-vampire strategies are also mentioned in *The Land beyond the Forest* (I, 320) and all these paraphernalia appear in Stoker's gothic fiction. We know from Stoker's notebooks that he was not entirely satisfied with Gerard's treatment of the vampire issue, as he thought that her approach was too scientific and too anthropological: "Madame Gerard says nothing about the intense panics which vampirism is said to have periodically caused in Transylvania as in Hungary; and what is more to be regretted, she does not satisfy our curiosity as to how living vampires succeed in carrying on their operations" (Stoker, I, 45). Descriptions of nature in Stoker's novel were also influenced by Emily Gerard's descriptions of nature in the Carpathians: dark forests, waterfalls, wolves. The people whom she describes as living in these forests are very poor and their life standards are very far from civilization. The Romanians are recognized as the most numerous ethnic group in Transylvania and the poorest.

It seems that Emily Gerard was also the source of the well-known terror-inspiring term "Nosferatu", which would be a corrupt version of the Romanian word "Necuratu," meaning the devil. In *The Land beyond the Forest* she mentions that "[m]ore decidedly evil is the *nosferatu* or vampire, in which every Romanian peasant believes as firmly as he does in heaven or hell" (1888, I: 319).

In her famous book about Transylvania, Gerard also talks about Baron K., who lives there in seclusion (I, 81). There is no proof that Jules Verne read Gerard's travelogue but her aristocrat living in seclusion reminds one of Verne's novel *The Carpathian Castle* where an important character – also an aristocrat - withdraws into the mountains because of a sentimental disappointment. The novel was published in 1892 so it is not impossible that Verne may have read Gerard's travelogue. Nevertheless, the description of the Carpathians as a wild territory situated on the margins of civilization is common to both Verne's and Stoker's novels and it originates in Emily Gerard's travelogue.

Typical of the way in which literary history is constructed, Emily Gerard became a shadowy literary personality and the canon only retained Stoker and his novel. Gerard is another of those cases when literary history has been unfair to women writers, simply erasing their work and merits for the benefit of some more fortunate male colleagues. A similar case is Marie Nizet, a female Belgian writer who may have had influenced Bram Stoker through her novel *Capitaine Vampire (Captain Vampire).* Nizet lived from 1859 till 1922; she never travelled to Romania but she heard a lot about the country from her father's lodgers, Romanians studying in Brussels. There are some similarities between the main title characters of Stoker's and Nizet's novel. Both of them are aristocrats who suffer from a terrible disease: vampirism. In both novels this pathological behaviour is a punishment from God and the cross is an important instrument in the healing process. In Nizet's novel, the vampire is of Russian origin and he is an officer, part of the occupying forces of Wallachia.Unlike Stoker's vampire, this one has an intensive social life, he goes to the balls offered by the Romanian artistocratic elite for the Russian officers, he gets married. Captaine Vampire lures attractive Romanian women from all classes in order to quench his thirst for blood. On the other hand, vampirism gets political. Fighting against the monster is a good patriotic deed, it is fighting both for God and the country. The Belgian writer's transnationalism is an imaginary one (she never visited Romania) and it is based upon the Western complex of superiority and the belief that the Carpathians are a wild territory where man's killing instincts can manifest overtly. In spite of some common elements between the two novels, which could be the result of a certain Western power-inflicted perspective upon Eastern/Central Europe, we have no definite proof that Stoker had read Nizet but he does confess to have read Gerard[5].

In order to integrate Emily Gerard into a comparative transnational perspective two other women should be mentioned: Mary Grant-Rossetti (1819-1893) and Emilia Lungu Puhallo (1853-1932). Both of them were nomadic subjects and their husbands had a strong connection with their work and/or public activity. The former was of Scottish origin, like Gerard, and she came to Wallachia (now part of Romania) as a governess. She married into a very distinguished aristocratic family and identified with the Romanian revolutionary ideals of 1848[6]. She became the first female journalist in Romanian history; she published essays, poems, and plays for children. Mary Grant-Rossetti was

[5] In this respect, I strongly disagree with Matei Cazacu. Bram Stoker did not vampirize Marie Nizet. The analysis of the two novels does not support this claim. What connects Stoker and Nizet is their common inspiration from the vampire stock extant in the Western imaginary, at the moment they wrote, in connection with Easterm Europe.

[6] It is interesting that the Scottish Mary Rosetti posed to the Jewish-Austrian painter Constantin Daniel Rosenthal (1820-1851) for the famous painting "Revolutionary Romania". This painting became the emblem of the Romanian nationalist trend in the nineteenth century. Nationalist artifacts, therefore, are far from being the product of some ethnically pure consciousness. They are rather the *bricolage* of individuals who **identify with** a certain ideology.

interested in women's issues and promoted in Romania what might be considered the first wave feminism. One of her main tenet was the necessity to provide women with possibilities to get education. This kind of belated Enlightenment genderized according to the realities from Wallachia was extremely topical at that historical moment. Both Grant and Gerard left their homeland in Scotland and followed their husbands to the other extreme of Europe. Both of them identified with their husbands' agendas and turned into a sort of mimetic Eastern or Central Europeans. Their transnationalism is the result of their family trajectory. The change in their identity was the result of the patriarchal assumption that woman should follow man. But in time this change of identity triggered their creativity and energies in ways which would probably have remained latent had they stayed in Scotland for all the duration of their lives.

Emilia Lungu Puhallo came from Banat (Sânnicolau Mare), a province that belonged to the Austrian Empire in the nineteenth century. Like Emily Gerard she got married to a foreigner: in 1887, she married lieutenant Puhallo, the descendant of a noble Croatian family who served in the Austrian army (Cosma, 62). Like Emily Gerard, she fully experienced the vicissitudes of an officer's wife. She moved with her husband from garrison to garrison. The moment they made friends in one place, they had to move to another location. It is probably this imposed instability that made both Puhallo and Gerard bend more on their inner life and choose literature as the best confidante. First, Emilia Lungu Puhallo lived in Sarajevo, then in Mostar. In Sarajevo she published articles in the newspaper *Die Post*, edited by Milena Mrazevalz (Cosma, 62). 1891 was a very tragic year for Puhallo. It is during this interval that she lost both her husband and her only child. Struck with this overwhelming tragedy, she returned to Timişoara in Banat, and she dedicated all her life to literature and improving female education. Like Mary Grant-Rossetti, Puhallo also realized that this belated (by Western standards) Enlightenment was necessary for Romanian women. She published short stories, essays, a history of the Romanian schools from Timişoara (*Istoria şcoalelor româneşti din Timişoara*), a history of the first school for girls in Banat (*Istoria primei şcoale româneşti de fete din Banat*), and a very interesting study on the Romanian woman[7] where she reflected upon the causes of women's marginal status. From the point of view of this paper, most relevant is Puhallo's *The Voyage through Bosnia-Herzegovina*[8], written from the same subject position as Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest*. Both women women were officers' wives in the army of a hegemonic power that did not represent their national ideals. It is interesting that both of them identify with the master's look although they do not come from the centre of imperial power. Lungu was Romanian, Gerard was Scottish. Or both Romania and Scotland were objects of imperial desire and hegemony. Both of

[7] In the Romanian newspaper *Drapelul*, in 1904.
[8] Călătoria prin Bosnia-Herzegovina.

these two writers mimic cultural imperialism as an empowerment strategy. On the other hand, both are very sympathetic and eager to understand the realities of the countries where they lived at that moment. Gerard, particularly, shows that she is not only intelligent but also tries to find information about Transylvania and check if it corresponds to what she witnesses and sees in reality.

Disappointingly, Romanian scholars have scarcely been interested in Gerard so far. There is just one article by Radu Teuceanu, written from a historical perspective. It mentions the intertextual connection between Gerard and Stoker but only focuses upon the historical details of Gerard's stay in Sibiu and gives the reader a list of her works. Nor have British scholars been very keen on Emily Gerard. She is briefly mentioned in several literary dictionaries on the site Orlando, dedicated to British female writing, but no monographic study has been dedicated to Emily Gerard yet. Like Ouida[9], she belongs to that group of Victorian and not only Victorian middle class or upper middle class women for whom literature is an escape from a way of life conditioned by rules and prescriptions, a life circumscribed by the impositions of patriarchy. On the other hand, the literature of these women was not taken very seriously by the canon makers. They were seen rather as amateurs, dabbling in literature in order to forget about the boredom of their everyday spoilt lives.

We are going to analyze Gerard's work, *The Land Beyond the Forest*, predominantly as a text of a nomadic subject and we shall also try to define the peculiarities of Gerard's female gaze and the way her view was impregnated by (post-)colonialism.

Gerard begins her travelogue by juxtaposing the period she spent in Transylvania with other circumstances of her life. "In the spring of 1883 my husband was appointed to the command of the cavalry brigade in Transylvania, composed of two hussar regiments, stationed respectively at Hermanstadt and Kronstadt,—a very welcome nomination, as gratifying a long-cherished wish of mine to visit that part of the Austrian empire known as the Land beyond the Forest" (I, V). She distinguishes this period as an exceptional span of time in her life: "The two years spent in Transylvania were among the most agreeable of sixteen years' acquaintance with Austrian military life; and I shall always look back to this time as to something quaint and exceptional, totally different from all previous and subsequent experiences" (I, V).

Gerard's strategy is that of a reporter who records all the details minutely and in an almost scientific manner. On the other hand, she is also a chronicler that is plunged into a time before modernity, a time when witchcraft, demons, and monsters are still very much alive. Although Gerard does not have any

[9] See Mihaela Mudure. "Ouida: victorianism şi pasiune." *De la victorianism la postmodernism. In memoriam Ileana Galea*. Coordonator: Mihaela Mudure. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2013, pp. 133-144.

anthropological background, she tries to adopt a politically neutral attitude, an almost scientific perception as she feels the subterranean tensions in the province. Gerard also combines the discursive level with pictures, which turns her text into a complex structure foreshadowing the age of the visual in the twentieth century.

> Much interested in the wild beauty of the country, the strange admixture of races by which it is peopled, and their curious and varied folk-lore, I recorded some of my impressions in short independent papers, of which three appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' one in the 'Nineteenth Century,' and one in the 'Contemporary Review.' It is only after I had left the country, that, being desirous of preserving these sketches in more convenient form, I began rearranging the matter for publication. But the task of retracing my Transylvanian experiences was so pleasant that it led me on far beyond my original intention; one reminiscence awoke another, one chapter gave rise to another: and so, instead of one small volume, as had been at first contemplated, my manuscript almost unconsciously developed to its present dimensions. When the work was completed, the idea of illustrating it occurred to me: but this was a far more difficult matter; for, though offering a perfect treasure-mine to artists, Transylvania has not as yet received from them the attention it deserves; and had it not been for obliging assistance from several quarters, I should have debarred the satisfaction of elucidating this problem borne of my descriptions by appropriate sketches. (I, VI)

Gerard's work is, therefore, based upon memory and more precisely upon the sublimation of memory in time. The distance in time between the Gerard's Transylvanian experience and the moment she put down her emotions and adventures may have caused distortions and highlighted the extraordinary, the sensational in this province of the Empire where Western civilization entered slowly and later.

Romanticizing and submitting to the dangerous charm of the province, Emily Gerard let herself be carried away a bit by the general geographical aspect of Transylvania: a fortress surrounded by the Carpathians. The way Gerard describes Transylvania reminds the Romanian of Nicolae Bălcescu's famous description of Transylvania[10].

> Situated by nature within a formidable rampart of snow-tipped mountains, and shielded by heavy curtains of shrouding forests against the noise and the turmoil of the outer world, the very name of Transylvania tells us that it was formerly

[10] Nicolae Bălcescu (1819-1852) was a prominent representative of the Romanian Revolution of 1848. In one of his historical works, *Românii supt Mihai-Voievod Viteazul* (Romanians under the Rule *of Michael the Brave*) he gave a description of Transylvania which became classical in the literary repertory of Romanian nationalism. It is interesting the Bălcescu's description also relies on the rampart aspect of Transylvania and in this it coincides perfectly with Gerard's. Still, as Bălcescu's work has not been translated into English yet, Emily Gerard could not have read it directly. She may have heard about it or we are dealing here with a coincidence resulting from the striking geography of the place.

> regarded, as something apart, something out of reach, whose existence even for a time was enveloped in mystery. (I, 4)

Although Gerard introduces an element of exoticism and mystery in her description, it is remarkable that she also looked for scientific information about Transylvania. For instance, she was aware of the linguistic and historical debates about the old name of Transylvania, i.e. "Ardeal" (in Romanian). Historical linguistics has established that this toponym comes from "erd", probably as in Ardennes (French) or Erdely (Hungarian) and meaning the same thing: a plateau surrounded by mountains and forests. Or this structure of Transylvanian geography was noticed by many eyes (see Bălcescu and Gerard).

The Scottish writer's aim is: "giving to the world the only correct and trustworthy description of Transylvania which has yet appeared" (I, 6). She wants to "seize the general color and atmosphere of the land" (I, 8-9) for the English reader. Truthful but equally careful to give the reader the truth of her own way of seeing the world, she openly acknowledges the subjective essence of her method, "I have taken more pleasure in chronicling fancies than facts, and superstitions rather than statistics" (I, 9).

Gerard feels that she is in a sort of competition with time. Thanks to the train, "Transylvania will become in time as civilized and cultivated, and likewise as stereotyped and conventional, as the best-known parts of our first European states, - it will even cease one day to be an island ..." (I, 5). Gerard feels it a duty to leave a fair record of Transylvania as one of the last reservations of pristine, authentic nature[11]. Nowadays, Prince Charles sees Transylvania in exactly the same terms; tradition, authenticity, genuine natural beauty. Or the fact that two travellers coming from the British Isles, one of them a member of the royal house, the other a Scottish woman, have similar opinions clearly tells us that when abroad, Emily Gerard identifies with the imperial eye. Her provincial roots, her Scottishness seems to be forgotten. Apparently, she has no problem writing from an imperial(istic) subject position. This is an empowerment strategy that hides the writer's roots and relies on ambivalence. On the other hand, Gerard's Scottishness pushes her to sympathy and compassion towards the marginalized ethnicities from the Austrian Empire, namely the Romanians. In this respect, she makes an interesting remark: "… it is wiser to regard one's self as a tourist than as an exile!" (I, 29). She carefully avoids any possible political reading of her attitude (she was the wife of a military), but beneath the clear surface of her apparently detached presentation, the reader can feel her own predilections and torment. She is the representative of power, as the wife of a high officer, and also carries with her the trauma of having to leave her beloved Scotland because of religious prejudice.

[11] See "Transylvania's Authentic Charm" http://zalan.transylvaniancastle.com/

Emily Gerard begins her geographical presentation with demography. She mentions that in Transylvania live 600,000 Hungarians and 1,200,000 Romanians. In spite of these clear figures, she emphasizes the fact that the Hungarians are the dominant social group in the province. Cluj is one of their favourite towns: "the winter resort of the Magyar aristocracy of Transylvania" (I, 32).

The demographic superiority of the Romanians would entitle them to a better social status. Gerard's honest gaze notices the Romanians' poverty, the higher crime rate in their communities because of material deprivation, and their superstitions. In an Enlightenment spirit, Gerard explains all these by the Romanians' impossibility to get education. A combination of poverty and prejudice turn them into an "ardent, ignorant and superstitious race" (I, 70)[12]. She notices the ethnic prejudices against the Romanians: "to the Hungarian and the Saxon, the Romanian is but simple unqualified vermin" (I, 210). The privileged ethnic groups in the Transylvanian ethnic puzzle are the Hungarians and the Germans. To them, the Romanians are the "less civilized and also less educated neighbor" (I, 58). The majority of Transylvania's population, the Romanians, are biologically vital but lack the sophistication and refinement brought by high culture. On the other hand, Gerard insists on the potential of the Romanians because they are the most numerous and their families are the largest. "The Romanians will be men a few generations hence, when they have had time to shake off the habits of slavery and have learnt to recognize their own value" (I, 211).

On the other hand, it is very interesting that Emily Gerard is aware that there is also a Romanian cultural elite and she appreciates the richness of the traditional Romanian culture. She talks about a song of Horea or Iancu, important heroes for the Romanian people (I, 269-270). She translates some proverbs (I, 273- 274), a dirge (I, 313), as well as two very famous Romanian ballads: the song of Master Manole (I, 278-286) and *Mioritza* (I, 286). Professor Hugo von Meltzl from the University of Cluj also gave Gerard the text of the ballad about Negru Vodă, a legendary prince during the Romanian Middle Ages: (II, 135). Meltzl (1846-1908) was professor of comparative literature at the University of Cluj and the editor of the first journal of comparative literature in the world.

Important personalities of nineteenth century Romanian literature are mentioned, some of them living in Wallachia or Moldavia. Without mentioning this issue directly, Gerard is also aware that the Romanians live on both sides of the Carpathians, i.e. in Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia, that they are one

[12] Gerard's insistent use of the word "race" is historical and must be understood as part of the vocabulary of her time. The term "race" fell into disfavor after World War II because it justified the attempt to destroy "the Jewish race." Nowadays, we prefer to use "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" in similar contexts.

people and their culture is unitary. She mentions Vasile Alecsandri[13] and translates one of his works: *Fat Logofat* (I, 293). She talks about the cultural impact of Queen Carmen Sylva (1843-1916). "And as in dress, so in literature, does Carmen Sylva take the lead, and endeavor to teach her people to value national productions, above foreign importations" (I, 295). Gerard does know the "poems in which she [the Queen] endeavors to reflect the spirit and the heart of her people" (II, 200). Gerard's insistence upon Queen Carmen Sylva is highly relevant. A foreigner herself, Carmen Sylva was the wife of Romania's first king, Charles I. Like Gerard she was an adoptee in a foreign country where destiny and her duty as a wife brought her. Gerard compares the Romanian culture with the well-established, consolidated national cultures of the West and concludes that "Romanian literature is in a transition state at present, and, despite much talent and energy on the part of its representatives, has not as yet regained any fixed national character (I, 291). The fact that she herself was Scottish and belonged to a culture marginalized by a neighbouring empire helped her understand another marginal culture from Eastern Europe.

On the whole, Emily Gerard is extremely sympathetic to the Romanians, whom she characterizes as "these people by nature imaginative and poetically inclined" (I, 327). She is aware that for centuries the Transylvanian Romanians have been at the bottom of the social pyramid. The rough realities of the Romanian communities, their poverty and backwardness must be considered from this perspective if one wants to be honest. "The Romanians have often been called slavish and cringing, but, considering their past history, it is not possible that they should be otherwise, oppressed and trampled on, persecuted, and treated as vermin by the surrounding races…" (I, 297).

An accidental trip gave Gerard the opportunity to go on a trip to Romania, i.e. cross the Southern border of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and travel to northern Wallachia. In Romania "an air of Eastern luxury as well as of Eastern indolence pervaded everything" (II, 286). Orientalism in beautiful natural surroundings, this is what Emily Gerard sees on this side of the border. She went on a trip to the Făgăraș Mountains and the Bâlea Lake. The beauty of nature is amazing. The untouched nature of the Carpathian forests inspire both irony and romantic thoughts. "The pure light of the north star alone will point out my direction and neither Kant nor Hegel will rise from their graves to torment me here" (II, 328). The sublime of the Carpathians gave birth to a different culture where Kant's moral law and Hegel's law of history are not applicable.

The common people seem to experience only skin deep civilization (II, 328). Gerard talks about "the all-destroying Wallachians" (II, 307) incapable of

[13] Vasile Alecsandri (1821-1890), one of the most important Romanian writers of the nineteenth century.

preserving a chalet for common use. Still, she accepts a "wild Wallachian peasant" (II, 328) to do some service to her. The woman brushes Gerard's dress and cleanses her boots, on the other hand she is "uncouth, swartly, [sic], one-eyed" (II, 331). Abnormality goes hand in hand with lack of civilization. And on top of it all, the woman is not even white, but "swartly" (II, 331). A touch of racism deepens this gaze laden with (post-)colonial prejudice and superiority paradoxically coming from a woman that had been subalternized by her Scottishnes and her Catholicism in her home country. Gerard also remembers a shepherds' cottage hidden in the forest and a "boy of about fourteen, with large senseless eyes and a fixed idiotic stare, [who] looked no more than semi-human" (II, 332). Everything suggests decadence, poverty, low standards, closeness to animality. The superior gaze finds satisfaction in this lowly-ness. Only the memory of the Scottish glen, comparable with the beauty of the Romanian landscape tames (II, 332) this colonial haughtiness, a saddening strategy of empowerment.

When talking about the Transylvanian Saxons, Gerard makes deadly comparisons that may have been to the liking of Bram Stoker. The Saxons are found by Gerard not to have changed at all during history "like a corpse frozen in a glacier which comes to light unchanged after a long lapse of years" (I, 56). She is aware of the predicament of the new comers in this land where everything is historical: "it is difficult to realize what it feels like to be a grafted plant" (I, 60). And here she also probably thinks of Britain and its graftings, of Poland divided and grafted forcibly upon the body of the Austrian Empire, the Russian Empire, and Prussia. These graftings she talks about are ethnic groups that moved from their native place, or ethnic mixtures, or imperialistic impositions that led to provinces being taken from the mother land and grafted upon the body of the conquering empire. Emily Gerard pays special attention to Michelsberg, "one of the few Saxon villages which have as yet resisted all attempts from Romanians or gipsies [sic] to graft themselves on to the community" (I, 79).

Gerard also puts down the details about an interesting Saxon custom from Transylvania. "The infant must not be allowed to look at itself in the glass till after the baptism, nor should it be held near an open window" (I, 196). The explanation of this interdiction is that the child, whose self is weaker, more fragile, might lose it altogether if he looks into the mirror, this space, which can be regarded as the entrance into the other world. Lacan's discussion of the mirror stage, as a phase when the child becomes aware of the separation between his self and the others, has interesting coincidences with this traditional belief.

Comparisons between ethnic groups often have the crudity of direct observations unmitigated by diplomacy or false ethnic prudishness. "[F]or while many Romanian priests are drunken, dissolute men, open to every sort of bribery, the Saxon pastor is almost invariably a model of steadiness and

morality, and leads a quiet, industrious and contented life" (I, 117). Gerard is not able to understand that the so-called irregularities in the Romanian priests' behavior can be explained by poverty. She does not know about the century old discrimination against the Orthodox clergy in Transylvania and how this built solidarity and closeness between the priest and his flock. "Anywhere else, it would be a strange anomaly to see a clergyman putting himself on a level with a common peasant, attired in a coarse linen shirt and meekly carrying our bundles; but here this is of everyday occurrence!" (II, 336).

Special attention is paid to the Roma, a group that Gerard cannot help exoticizing. She sees them somehow doomed to their nomadism which is a sort of second nature for them. "[W]henever the Tziganes have endeavored to bring themselves to a settled mode of life and to adopt domestic habits, have they not invariably sooner or later returned to their hard couch on the cold ground, to their miserable rags, to their rough comrades and the brown beauty of their women? – to the somber shades of the virgin forests, to the murmur of unknown fountains, to their glowing camp-fires and their improvised concerts under a starlit sky – to their intoxicating dances in the lighting of a forest glade, to the merry knavery of their thievish pranks – in a word, to the hundred excitements they cannot do without?" (II, 77-78). With imperial majesty and (post-)colonial eye, Emily Gerard notices that the Roma are enduring. Acculturation fails with them. What a pity that no integrative strategies come to Gerard's mind! Haughty and imperialistic Madame de Laszowska identifies with the power structures when referring to the Roma and seems to forget that her own Scottish ancestors refused to submit and acculturate exactly like the incriminated Transylvanian Roma. "Instruction, authority, persuasion, and persecution have alike been powerless to reform, modify or exterminate the gipsies [sic]" (II, 73).

The Roma women are looked at with a kind of admiring racial bias that combines envy, wonder, pleasure, and admiration. These women prematurely ripen in what may be termed a tropical atmosphere of passion, they develop an almost supernatural power of clairvoyance, which enables them with incredible celerity to unravel hitherto undisclosed secrets by means only of intuitive deductions" (II, 112). Gerard also talks about Roma women's traditional gift of palm reading. In her opinion, this is only "a shrew's deciphering of character, coupled with logical deductions" (II, 116). The Western rationalism prevents her from giving any credit to such practices. Gerard is also very knowledgeable of the nineteenth century efforts to study and valorize Roma culture. For instance, she mentions Heinrich von Weislocki's collection of Roma folklore (II, 134) and even gives an example of Roma poetry which talks about the bond between the Roma musician and his fiddle.

I my father never knew,
Friend to me was never true,
Dead the mother that I loved
Faithless was my sweetheart proved
Still alone with me you fare,
Faithful fiddle, everywhere! (II, 138)

Gerard's discussion of the Transylvanian ethnic puzzle and her using the term "race" reminds the reader of the level of ethnic studies in Austria and Europe at the time and of the implied biological determinism of this terminology. But Gerard is not a naïve. She also realizes the excesses of the Austrian-Hungarian government's policy and delicately warns about the dangers of the future: "… the Government seeks to rob each one of his nationality" (I, 102).

The memory of Gerard's Polish connections leads to a comparison between Romanian and Polish manners. These Carpathian marginals seem to have some qualities, in spite of their poverty.

> The Romanians have, like the Poles, a certain inbred sense of courtesy totally wanting in their Saxon neighbor; it shows itself in many trifling acts - in the manner they rise and uncover in the presence of a superior, and the way they offer their assistance over the obstacles of the path. (II, 334)

Emily Gerard is aware of the complexity of the Transylvanian ethnic puzzle. The study of ethnicity absorbs her completely. But it is interesting that she seems unable to see two Transylvanian ethnic groups: the Armenians and the Jews. She can see the privileged ethnic groups in Transylvania, she can see the problems of the most numerous ethnic group: the Romanians, poor and lacking sufficient access to education. The Armenians and the Jews, connected to business, trade, making money in a very capitalistic way, are invisible to her. How can one explain this bias? In our opinion, the explanation lies in the connection between these ethnic groups and the development of a modern, market based economy. The activities of the Jews and the Armenians show that Transylvania was connected to modern capitalism even at the time of Gerard's stay in Transylvania. Although Madame de Laszowska is a keen observer, she has her own priorities. Romanticizing, exoticizing, orientalizing are her primary goals and her preferred strategy in order to construct an apparently coherent superiority of the Western gaze. Although not coming from the centre of Western power, she longs to be part of that power. Some identity trauma lies under the apparently calm waters of triumphant Occidentalism.

Gender is a category that Gerard looks at with very conservative, traditional eyes. One can find in this travelogue the same traditionalism as in

her novels[14]. During her outing in the Southern Carpathians, for instance, she had to resign to a "temporary degradation of sex" (II, 303) and ride as men do because there were no women's saddles. Women must always follow the rules of modesty in very strict ways.

Ecological concerns - masters are reprimanded if dogs are "wantonly beaten by their masters" (I, 139) – and the mild irony directed against the Protestant priests give a interesting specificity to the Gerardian discourse. For instance, she notices that a German priest is very concerned about women, especially about women observing rules and wearing sober clothes. "The worthy prelate who issued all these stern injunctions appears to have been so uncommonly well versed in all the intricacies of female costume, as to make us wonder whether he had not missed his vocation as a man-milliner" (I, 146). Can we forget that this irony comes from a Catholic obliged to leave the predominantly Presbyterian Scotland?

Isolation and exceptionalism are the features that the Scottish Gerard borrows from a famous character of British literary history: Robinson Crusoe. "Leaving Transylvania after a two years' residence, I felt somehow like Robinson Crusoe unexpectedly restored to the world from his desert island. Despite the evidence of my own senses, and in flat contradiction to the atlas, I cannot wholly divest myself of the idea that it is in truth an island I have left behind me – an island peopled with strange and incongruous companions, from whom I part with a mixture of regret and relief, difficult to express even to myself" (I, 1). The (post)colonial implications of this subject position must be considered with caution and restraint. Although she represents the force and the power of the imperial centre as the wife of a high Austrian-Hungarian officer, Emily Gerard introduces some nuances in a dichotomy that is not so stable and firm as it should be, according to the hierarchy. Coming from a margin of the British Empire she is able to understand the complicated ethnic structure of Transylvania and is not deceived by appearances or slogans. Probably something like "sympathetic" (post-)colonialism would be the best characterization of her ambiguous feelings and attitude.

Her nomadism prevents her from taking narrow, partisan positions because she knows better and hopes intensely that today's centers may be tomorrow's peripheries and vice versa. Life in Sibiu is described in poetical fragments which rely exactly on this versatility of dimensions and importance. "Life at Hermannstadt always gave me the impression of living inside one of those exquisitely minute Dutch paintings of still-life, in which the anatomy of a

[14] A good example is the novel *Extermination of Love* where the main characters discover the pleasures of sex only after they have been put to several tests. As in the fairy tales, matrimony is the great prize offered to the Happy Prince and the beautiful young woman.

lobster or the veins of a vine-leaf, are rendered with microscopic fidelity, and where such insignificant objects as half lemons or mouldy cheese-rinds are exalted to the rank of centre-pieces" (II, 215). On the other hand, Sibiu is a marginal city in a huge empire and Gerard really gives the measure of her capacity of realistic depiction when talking about the monotony of provincial life: "everywhere … the identical brown sauce, the same slices of lemon, the self-same dresses, cards and conversations!" (II, 231).

Exactly, as the subject and object positions in Gerard's (post-)colonial discourse are contaminated by her profound knowledge of the subjective histories and geographies of Europe, so are her literary strategies. It is difficult to classify *The Land Beyond the Forest* from the point of view of the literary genres. It is both a travelogue, personal prose of the diaristic type, reminiscence, and reportage. Contamination also exists at the level of her communication tools: images and words are put to work in order to render the specificity of the Transylvanian landscape and inhabitants. On the other hand, the fragments that often follow a chronological evolution seek for the precision of the scientific discourse. The impurity of the discourse makes it dangerous and fearing for the common minds. As a traveler who spent more time in Transylvania, Emily Gerard benefited from the generous and ambiguous duplicity of an inside out position. In her work, she recreated a Transylvania that does not correspond to the patterns of imperial subjection but to the ambivalent richness of a fascinating contact zone.

Undoubtedly, Emily Gerard's nomadism, her transmutations and transnational developments deserve to be better known and her contributions to European literature better acknowledged. Putting Gerard against a national(ist) frame is limiting. Her complex travelogue troubles the narratives of the nation-state and can only be understood within transnationalism and transnational identity stories.

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