Enchanting Transylvanian Lands in Emily Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest*

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1. Introduction

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines travel as the following: “to move or undergo transmission from one place to another” (“Definition of Travel”). But in the eyes of history, it means much more than that.

Early humans started out as hunters-gatherers, following the migration paths of various prey, venturing to warmer climates when food was scarce in their region. Later, they started to sail out, explore the waters, and find new shores. As Angela Gannon puts in one of her papers “the Neolithic would never have happened if people had stayed still” (2016). Traveling meant survival, it meant life.

It is not a surprise that their adventures and journeys are amongst the earliest themes of storytelling and literature. “Travel narratives have existed for millennia: so long as people have journeyed, they have told stories about their travels. The two activities go hand in hand,” the editors of *The Cambridge History of Travel Writing* write in their introduction. (Das and Youngs, 1). As time went on and being literate began to be common amongst people, many wrote down their experiences in their journals.

These diaries later became precious documents alongside letters, reports, and autobiographies, because they hold lengthy geographical information about a region, but beyond that, gave an insight into the cultural situation in both the traveled lands and in the traveler’s own homeland.

According to Percy G. Adams, people wanted to read about others’ journeys out of the simplest reason: they needed information about the roads, the inns, the possible threats their next travel might pose (39-40). Analyzing some of the popular books during the decades, which have travelling as an important aspect, he states the following about a Chinese book from the 7th Century: “it demonstrates the permanence and universality of that kind of travel book that is so close to the novel” (40), all because Hsüan-Tsang did not simply give an objective description about his lengthy travel in Asia but wrote down his own experience.

Until the 19th Century, quoting Carl Thompson, “travel writing mostly remained, as Ina Ferris and Robin Jarvis have stressed, a ‘knowledge genre’, principally committed to relaying useful observations about other peoples and places” (Thompson, 2019, 111). They

poised geographical knowledge with some historical and ethnographic studies. Only in the latest decades of the 18th century has Romanticism affected travel writing, authors now seeing their journeys as an opportunity to self-reflect and self-discover (Thompson, 2019, 111).

Carl Thompson states that from the late 18th century, the picturesque became a popular theme amongst readers and writers of both non-fiction and fiction. "The late eighteenth-century vogue for 'picturesque' scenery continued, producing greater aesthetic appreciation of landscapes than in earlier eras, and generating numerous accounts which made the picturesque, both at home and abroad, their principal theme" (Thompson, 2019, 110). And because of this increasing appreciation for wild landscapes, secluded civilizations, and unfamiliar cultures, in many travelogues we can find that descriptions were consciously written in a way that sparks in the readers an admiration for these regions and their people, even with all their dark sides.

Percy G. Adams in one of his papers goes on to distinguish three kinds of travel narratives: letters, journals or diaries and stories, "simple narratives" (43-44). Relevant to this research is the second category, the one of diaries. Adams's brief description defines the diary-like travelogue as a book that recounts a journey in an elaborately detailed way, which could be interrupted by the author to include "an essay on the history and manners of a place visited or a description of plant or animal life" (44). These were often written by authors with no previous knowledge of the ways of creating fastidious literature and the genre had its share of sensationalist texts (Das and Youngs, 112).

Nearing the 19th century, women had easier access to education, thus increasing the number of women who tried their hand at writing and making them question the authority of the patriarchal system common in Europe and America (Bomarito and Hunter, vol 2, 89).

The literatures written by women were heavily attacked and dismissed as mere emotional scribblings lacking any rationality and careful editing (Bomarito and Hunter, vol 2, 89), and it can be said that the structure of their novels often did not tend to be simple: "Their journals also often lacked an organizing principle other than the flow of days which ordered the journey itself," writes Angela D. Jones in her paper regarding women's travel writing (499). Women who had the courage to venture to new lands and then decided to publish their experiences were attacked from multiple sides: they were women authors; they left their homes and households behind, which was a scandalous act in the 19th century; and their publishing contained personal accounts thus, paraphrasing Thompson, they stepped out of the crowd where the eye of the public saw them clearly (2011, 180). On this note, Nina Gerassi-

Navarro points out that not only were women travel writers judged and frowned upon by the public, but even "critical studies of women's travel narratives have centered on the authors as individuals, meaning their texts have been read primarily as autobiographical accounts" (3).

Emily Gerard, a Scottish woman had the opportunity to travel around Transylvania and some parts of Romania, accompanying her husband who was sent in 1883 to Eastern-European lands. Gerard was by then an already published author alongside her sister, Dorothea Gerard[1]. Their writings were liked by the public, same as the much later published book *The Land Beyond the Forest* (Heiss, 174-86).

Having previous experience with writing a novel, Gerard was familiar with the ways of writing in a likeable and easily understandable way, which made her travelogue just as pleasurably readable as any other novel. But these were not unique to her own writing style in which she recorded her travels, but a fair amount of travel writers in the 19th century started to romanticize the new lands they explored. Thompson accounts this tendency of fantasizing about and idealizing the foreign regions of the globe mainly to the imperialism found in 19th century English mentality. Travel writers were driven by "a Romantic desire to visit sites of unspoilt natural beauty, and/or cultures seemingly untouched by modernity" (Thompson, 2011, 54). He mentions names such as A. W. Kinglake *(Eothen),* Isabella Bird *(A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains)* or Harriet Beecher Stowe *(Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands).* The latter is discussed in length in a later chapter and supports the idea that many writers tried to romanticize their adventures using elements of the picturesque, just as Emily Gerard did: "The letters in Sunny Memories, each of which is conveniently the length of a book-chapter, have clearly been carefully crafted by Stowe, and reveal great expertise in the use of dialogue and other literary devices" (Thompson, 2011, 180). It is also Thompson who says the following about travel writing: "Insofar as they utilise such literary devices, travel writers are arguably not so much reconstructing as constructing their experiences; inevitably what they offer their readers is a somewhat fictionalised rendering of their journeys" (2011, 25).

With this, the context is set to analyze *The Land Beyond the Forest* as a travelogue that is written in a style of a diary, making use of elements of the Romantic view on travelling and journeys, which was written by a woman who was already familiar with fiction writing.

This paper proposes to investigate the ways in which Gerard used the elements of the picturesque as a means of softening culture shocks and to de-alienate the foreign land of

[1] After her marriage her new novels were published as Dorothea Longard de Longgarde

Transylvania for her English readers. As already mentioned, the idea of romanticization popular amongst travel writers from the 19th century can be linked to the affinity to see unexplored lands as something out of a fairy-tale. When Gerard romanticizes her encounters with locals, she creates an image where even the culturally shocking becomes fascinating not only to her, but to her readers as well: she got them to see Transylvania through her own eyes, and she saw it as something utterly beautiful.

The meaning of 'picturesque' overlaps with that of the 'aesthetic', but while the latter creates an atmosphere where both the narrator and the reader are distanced from the landscape– be it a building or a well-trodden path in the forest – and are simply spectators (Forsdick, Kinsley and Walchester, 3), the picturesque relies more on the pleasure of discovery as an active viewer and familiarity (Jones, 500). In Zoë Kinsley's words: "The picturesque offered travellers a way of familiarizing the foreign" (Forsdick, Kinsley and Walchester, 185).

The vocabulary of the picturesque narration is similar to the one Romantic fiction writers, more exactly poets, used. "The theme of travel, and the traveller persona, are also central to many Romantic poems" (Thompson, 2011, 52). The picturesque storyteller focuses on creating an idyllic atmosphere for the landscapes s/he describes, not shying away from exaggerating or using similes in abundance, connecting again to the theme of familiarization.

2. Emily Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest*

Amongst women travel writers, only a few were lone travelers; it was much more common for them to accompany men or be a part of a larger group that ventured to new lands. But even knowing this does not mean that women travelers were spared of any judgement and were respected for accompanying their spouses (Mills, 32). The strange state in which women's travelogues dealt with the subject of male companions is accurately worded by Means and Sintobin: "Some of them travelled on their own, but stressed their ability to open up new territories, often meaning the private domain of a "strange" culture. In other cases, female travellers emphasised the harmless, often religious character of their male companions, thereby desexualising them" (Meens and Sintobin, 4). Exploring Gerard's text, one can see that she is also somewhat distancing herself from her husband in her travelogue, mentioning him only three times, never addressing him directly. "And when I had mentioned the name and position of my husband, I found him to be well informed as to all the military arrangements of the country" (Gerard, 305).

Giving the motivation behind Gerard's journey to Transylvania is necessary for contextualizing her text in the world of travel writing, especially the one of women's. Gerard's story has traits from both groups: the one of individualistic adventurers and the one of traveling with companions. She left with her husband to travel to Transylvania and returned home to Vienna only two years later. For the most part of the journey she was close to her husband, but in her narrative there are examples of her having some freedom in mobility: living in cities, in Sibiu then in Brașov respectively, she was able to set out on her own for smaller strolls around the city, and, as later discussed in detail, even leaves the outskirts to explore the region without any fear. Although the number of instances where she was with her husband and even accompanied by guides is far larger than the days where she journeyed out by herself, there are some examples where she left the premises of their lodge and interacted with locals while being unescorted. Even if Gerard's own interest in joining her husband is not mentioned in her book, there was a 'duty' that, when possible, wives must accompany their husbands on longer journeys of professional motivation (Meens and Sintobin, 113). Siegel's introductory text (2-3) discussing women's travel writing suggests the existence of a tendency amongst this group of authors to try to balance out, to diminish the outrage caused by them travelling alone, or travelling at all. Their way of doing so can be found in them retaining their femininity and minimizing their deviance from the social norms their homeland held.

In Gerard's travelogue the chapters could be set up in two distinct categories. Adams's note on Dampier and Anson's Chaplain Walter journal can be applied to Gerard's case as well: the account of her own experience during her own stay in Transylvania is often interrupted by articles, definitions, scientific descriptions, and even the recorded stories and local customs could be included into this category.

During these paragraphs, where she steps out of being the narrator of their own journey, she often steps out of the general characteristics of the travelogue which was influenced by Romanticism, and tries to create a somewhat objective image on a region or culture. Although her willingness to be impartial is supported by this handful of instances, the text still bears the effect of prejudice from the original authors.

Sara Mills states that "women writers tended to concentrate on descriptions of people as individuals, rather than on statements about the race as a whole" (3). Linking this to Gerard's case, she was attentive enough that she knew not to generalize based on an individual's actions and behaviors, and even gone to the lengths of translating and including whole pages from different papers and writings, thus creating chapters like "The Tziganes:

Liszt and Lenau" where the words of Gerard are constricted to only three paragraphs, the others being the words of Ferenc Liszt and Nikolaus Lenau (Gerard, 237-43).

Although Adams's statement is linked to male writers, it is confirmed that Gerard also had a scientific inclination during her travels, although her documentation of Transylvania mostly contains valuable data for the expertise of ethnography and linguistics, because the geographical and biological aspects were not as carefully constructed – descriptions of flora and fauna can be found, but in most cases, these are not noteworthy. This preference towards culture and language is not surprising in her case, as she was a published literary author and had studied European languages for three years.

Her style of narration could be described by collating her text with Mary Louise Pratt's categorizing of narrators in travelogues. In Sara Mills's words: "[Pratt] terms the 'manners and customs' figure, and the 'sentimental' figure, the main difference being that the former is largely impersonal, where the narrator is absent, and the latter foregrounds the narrator)" (Pratt qtd in Mills 74). Based on Pratt's work (Mills, 74-76; Pratt 119-141), it is safe to say that Gerard managed to poise both categories in her book: she wrote chapters where the 'I' is lacking[2], this being the most prominent trait of the 'manners and customs' style narrator, but, on the other hand, the lengthy recounting of her own experience suggests that she mostly fits the latter category, and only occasionally steps out of her subjectivity to be merely informational. Pratt links the "sentimental, experiential voice" to the "critical sector of the bourgeois world, the private sphere, home of the solitary, introspecting Individual." (Pratt, 133), and Mills comments that women's close connection to the private sphere gives the explanation to why so "many of the women travellers chose this narrative figure for their texts" (Mills, 76).

It is also Mills who stresses that even Charles Batten's study from 1978 shows that generally, male travel writers tended to omit personal matter from their accounts (Mills, 49).

Women travel writing on the other hand, in Kristi Siegel's words "demonstrates unique characteristics: compared to travel writing by men, it is less directed, less goal-oriented, less imperialistic, and more concerned with people than place" (5). It must be stressed, and even Siegel underlines this, that these claims are not generally true to all travelogues written by female writers and she goes on to defend them by saying that it was rare for a woman to "put their life on display" (5).

[2] see the chapter „Roumanian superstition – continued: animals, weather, mixed superstitions, spirits, shadows, etc."

2.1. Elements of the picturesque

2.1.1. Comparison of the Western and the Eastern European Cultures

In *The Land Beyond the Forest*, as in any other travelogue, descriptions serve as the best means of retelling her encounters with the culturally and ethnically wide range of people. While Gerard could not take pictures, she had to rely on words alongside the small number of drawings she used in her book. She found a way to help her readers imagine her experiences: she used comparisons on many occasions, especially to something already familiar amongst her audience, like comparing the powerful sunlight to the burning light from a magnifying glass: "The pure ozone of these upper regions seems to act like the lens of a powerful microscope, bringing out into strong relief whatever is mean or paltry" (Gerard, 368). This phenomenon of narrative convention is best described by the following quote: "[A] strategy of conveying information and opinion are comparisons of unknown places and people to other ones that are known to target audiences." (Haas, 252). In many instances Gerard casually mentions famous names or creates a picture that brings into the Transylvanian scenery things from other cultures that the English from back home are already familiar with. For example, in the chapter "Sinaïa", she introduces elements of the arabesque, which is a widely adored style in 19th century England. This exoticism is found in multiple descriptions even in Gerard's book, like when she goes through a market and explicitly calls it a 'bazaar', a word generally used in topics concerning the Middle-Eastern culture.

> I spent some time at a very fascinating bazaar, where I purchased a few specimens of Roumanian pottery, dainty little red-and-gold cups for black coffee, some grotesque birds, and an impossible dog, which have somewhat the appearance of ancient heathen household gods. There were also carpets for sale, but mostly over-staring in pattern, and of terrifically high prices. (Gerard, 364)

Black coffee famously originated from the Middle East, just as the colorful and complex patterned carpets belong to the same culture. Gerard even manages to slip in a small part of the ancient Greek and Roman mythology with mentioning the "ancient heathen household gods."

This exoticism goes beyond the fascination caused by objects and architecture, Bird writes the following in his work about the exoticist traveller's view on native people, almost objectifying the locals as mere decorations in the grand picture of the foreign land: "Jennifer Yee (2000, 45) considers the role of visual representations of native people, in particular the

cliché of the ‘exotic woman’ in postcards and photographs, as constructing an ethnographic narrative of racial superiority” (qtd in Bird, 44). This objectification of locals appears in Gerard’s book as well. One of the most prominent cases can be found in the following quote:

> Our beautiful dark-eyed hostess, whose graceful élancée figure seemed made to show off to perfection all the fascinations of the national costume, was kind enough to dress expressly for my benefit before dinner, putting on a profusion of jewellery to heighten the effect of robes fit for Lalla Rookh or Princess Scheherezade” (Gerard, 364)

Here Gerard deliberately asks her hostess to show off her national costume. There is a fine threshold between this objectification both Bird and Yee mention and the pure fascination and curiosity in how the traveler approaches locals. The context of the aforementioned quote saves Gerard from getting judged for having ill intent behind her request. An Austrian officer invited them to dinner, which situation justifies that his wife would want to dress up in some elegant gowns and Gerard’s recounting of the situation does not mention any unwillingness on the wife’s behalf.

This fascination of the exotic appears in another chapter, titled “The Bruckenthals”, where Gerard tries to convey what the name ‘Bruckenthal’ means to the people of Sibiu, so she comes up with the comparison of the family to the Sphinx and the Pyramids, which are already familiar names with her readers.

> Though the name of Bruckenthal is probably but little known outside Transylvania, and I have failed to find it in several German encyclopædias, yet here it is a word pregnant with meaning; and people at Hermanstadt are wont to swear by the Bruckenthal palace as the most stable and immutable object within their range of knowledge, just as an Egyptian might swear by the Pyramids or the Sphinx. (317)

There are instances where Gerard’s subject is standing in front of her, thus, instead of comparing a family line she never got close to, she speaks about a local she met and interacted with. In a later chapter nearing the end of her travelogue she reminisces about an encounter she had with a young Tzigane girl. She gives a detailed description of the youngster: “a young woman of about twenty-five, with splendid eyes, skin of mahogany brown, and straight-cut regular features like those of an Indian chieftainess” (308). Even after precisely recounting her features, Gerard decided to compare her to an Indian chieftainess, again bringing up a world which is more familiar for the English and besides that, in this way she achieves to give an exotic atmosphere to the whole scene and even to the Gypsy culture. Although many travellers showed the inclination in their diaries to reinforce

the feeling of them being superior to locals, Gerard's descriptions and comparisons are not filled with this intent, they rather show her fascination of the locals.

Gerard later provided a description of the girl's movements, again comparing her to names that sound familiar to a wide range of English readers: Lady Macbeth from William Shakespeare's work *Macbeth* and Azucena from *Il trovatore* by Giuseppe Verdi.

> Her gestures had an inbred majesty, and her attitude was that of an inspired sibyl. I thought what a glorious tragic actress she would have made—perfect as Lady Macbeth, and divine as Azucena in the "Trovatore. (Gerard, 308)

Gerard's exact wording is important in this paragraph, because she does not outright compare the Gypsy woman to the aforementioned characters, but to an actress that could very well deliver these tragic female figures. In one of his works, Robert Munro compares Lady Macbeth to a chieftainess just as Gerard did with the same girl whom she compared later to the king-killing woman. She is right: according to Munro, a believable Lady Macbeth must be played by someone who is gracious enough and manages to seem cold and measured all while being ill-willed on the inside (30-36).

These comparisons between cultures bring out both the new and the familiar in the subjects: for Gerard, Gypsy culture is something foreign, but at the same time, she finds details in them that are reminiscent of elements of her own culture. The literary device of comparing thus fulfills the task of information giving and brings closer the unknown to the British audience.

2.1.2. Artistic Elements

The selective language and the frequent use of artistic elements are Gerard's main way of creating the aforementioned picturesque atmosphere in her travelogue. With the use of nouns and adjectives in abundance, her book mostly consists of still images which have a positive and approachable feeling to them, which could be seen as an aesthetic trait because of the distant viewer (Forsdick, Kinsley and Walchester, 7). This, as well as her love and curiosity for new cultures make Gerard an active participator, and, most importantly, someone who shares her intense emotions caused by the land she sees. Bohls connects this ability to "paint verbal pictures" to women of aristocracy and middle class having the time and resources to develop a taste in landscape, as well as having the ability to describe them in detail and with emotion (66). The following quote from Gerard's book is a prime example of

the selective voice of the picturesque, of the romanticizing traveler, where she explicitly uses words with positive intonation like ‘sweet’, ‘feminine’, ‘grace’ and ‘majesty’:

> Sweetly feminine airs and graces which have so entranced us in the ball-room develop to positive monstrosities when transplanted to the mountain-top; an intellect which amply sufficed for the requirements of small-talk on the promenade or at morning calls shows pitiably barren when brought face to face with the majesty of nature. (Gerard, 368)

> If you find an old statue chipped and moss-grown, dreaming away in the shade of a rosebush which soon will stifle it in thorny embrace, you may take for granted that you are standing on the site of a former Bruckenthal garden. (Gerard, 317)

Emily Gerard spent with her husband one year at Hermanstadt[3] (Heiss, 175) where she frequently passed a pawnbroker. In the chapter titled “The Bruckenthals” she wrote the following:

> Some of these old portraits, which I passed almost daily in my peregrinations about the town, seemed to look at me so plaintively with their canvas eyes, as though imploring me to release them from their ignoble position, that I had to take pity upon them at last and offer them an asylum in my house. (318)

With this, Gerard now introduces the element of personification and creates a picturesque image about the seemingly mundane objects. Given the context, even this unreal description does not seem stark, it even deepens the feeling that the reader is now getting familiar with a land of fairy-tales, with something enchanting.

The following paragraphs can be linked back to the world of fables via a superstition mentioned in the chapter “Saxon superstition – continued: animals, plants, days.”: “To the lime-tree are also attached magic qualities, and in some villages it is usual to plant a lime-tree before the house to keep witches from entering” (Gerard, 216). Later Gerard describes the Bruckenthal garden as having some large lime trees fencing their avenue.

From another point of view, the quote also ties into the topic of comparing the familiar and unfamiliar: the mentioned quadrille is a fashionable type of dance in her time in the 19th century and her readers must have been very familiar with.

> If in your country walks you come upon a double row of massive lime-trees, twelve or sixteen perhaps, standing forlorn on the grass, with nothing to explain their presence on a lonely meadow, you are surely informed that these are the last

[3] Or *Hermannstadt. The* current name in Romanian is *Sibiu*, in Hungarian *Nagyszeben.*

> survivors of a stately avenue leading to spacious orangeries in the Bruckenthal time. The orangeries have now disappeared, yet these few old trees linger on with senseless persistency—their snowy blossoms reminding one of powdered heads, their circling branches suggesting widehooped skirts setting to each other in the evening breeze, like an ancient quadrille party forgotten in the ball-room, long after the other guests have departed. (317)

Gerard's description mainly focuses on sight, exaggerating the size of the dozen or so fruit trees, and, with mentioning their blossoms, the olfactory sensations are brought into the scene. This quote could also appear in the previous chapter, as she continues to refer back to topics which are already familiar to her, bringing nostalgia into the scene on multiple levels. She reminisces on the quadrille type dance from her home and mentions the past glory of the Bruckenthals. As said, in this quote she connects the unfamiliar with the familiar: the Transylvanian garden with a highly known type of an enchanting dance. The tale-like aspect of this paragraph is also reinforced by the paradox that appears near the end: in the ballroom only the dance remains, without its dancers. The painting-like illustrations are frequently used in picturesque travel writing. Bohls comments on this matter the following: "The ability to compare a place with another place, a painting, or a set of compositional rules is a precondition for such an aesthetics" (172).

In the quote there is a point where the external switches to the internal: Gerard's description of the lime trees turn into an internal imagination, into a dream. This internalization of the exterior happens in such a way that the Bruckenthal garden 'steps into' her own mind and gets translated into a picture which seems as if it is one of her own memories. The opposite of this – externalization of the interior – also occurs in her travelogue. One instance was already mentioned[4], but it also appears in the few paragraphs about Schässburg[5]. Gerard writes: "Towers and ramparts peep out tantalizingly from luxurious vegetation, making us long to get out and explore the place" (339), making the term *watchtower* something literal in her writing, giving the building eyes with which they can see and watch over the land. This externalization means that Gerard takes an internal trait or a human feature and bestows it upon her surroundings.

This switch from the outside to the inside is pointed out in the book *Travel Writing* as well: "By shifting attention away from the scenes being witnessed and on to the narratorial

[4] quote from page 318
[5] or *Schäßburg*, current name in Romanian *Sighișoara*, in Hungarian *Segesvár*

self that was doing the witnessing, many Victorian travel writers sought to signal a sensibility, and an intellectual and emotional cultivation, superior to that of other tourists" (Thompson, 2011, 54-55). The externalization of Gerard's inner world shows her own process of internalizing, analyzing and understanding the land being witnessed, connecting the two worlds constantly. This persistent comparison aids her to understand the alien lands, all while pointing out her intimate way of how her thought processes work. The creation of a tale-like atmosphere continues in the following quotes as well, which are from the chapter "Bulea See"[6], nearing the end of her travelogue:

> Here were neither moss nor ferns, neither beech nor pine woods—only a deep and lonely valley shut in by pointed rocks on either side, and thickly strewn throughout with massive bowlder-stones, each of which would seem to mark the resting-place of a giant. The only form of vegetation here visible, besides the short scraggy grass sprouting in detached patches betwixt the stones, were the stunted irregular fir-bushes (called *krummholz*), which, blown by ever-recurring gales into all sorts of fantastic shapes, resemble as many wizened goblins playing at hide-and-seek among the giant tombstones, crawling and creeping into every hollow which can afford them shelter from the inclemency of the winter storm; (373)
>
> Of the third step of this giant ladder—namely, the beech forest—we could see only the billowy tops of the close-grown trees, a mass of waving green, touched here and there by the hand of autumn into russet and golden tints; then far, far below lay stretched the smiling plain, streaked with occasional dark patches we knew to be forests, and sundry white dots we guessed at as villages, and the serpentine curves of the river Alt[7], winding like a golden ribbon between them. (377)

At this point in their journey, Gerard's party is trekking through the mountains of Făgăraș. While describing the scenery to her readers, in these two quotes, she only uses the means of sight as recreating the landscape on paper. The quote starts off as a still image with Gerard comparing boulders to the tombstone of giants – a creature of fables; but quickly turns into a scene full of motion, as the bushes get compared to small goblins playing amongst the massive 'tombstones'.

In the second quote from this chapter, Gerard uses excessively poetic language when describing the river Olt surrounded by the forest during early autumn, painting a tableau of

[6] or *Bâlea-See*, in Romanian *Lacul Bâlea*, in Hungarian *Bilea-tó*, a glacier lake in Făgăraș Mountains
[7] both in Romanian and Hungarian *Olt*

green, dotted by colors such as ‘russet’, and ‘golden’. The picturesque style’s trait of always intending to make the traveler’s experience seem favorable comes back in the personification regarding the plains and the scenery.

2.2. The Romantic and the Picturesque when describing cultures

The Land Beyond the Forest gives its readers a way more complex image about Transylvania than the travelogues Mills calls books that can be ‘readable as autobiographies’ (Mills, 20). Gerard actively set out to research the region’s ethnicities, but beyond that, she put the energy into preserving customs, habits, superstitions, legends and the occasional piece of history for her readers and the upcoming generations. She was aware that the different ethnic groups located in the region behave in different ways towards each other and found it important to lay out this topic in her book. There are plenty of examples in her travelogue where she sheds light upon the delicate and complex web of how various ethnicities were related to each other when they had to live in close proximity to one another. She captured such intercultural relations not only through her first-hand experiences, but also through the customs and superstitions she gathered from locals.

Gerard approaches the topic of Transylvanian ethnicities and cultures very openly, trying to understand it by the means of finding connections to and differences between her own Scottish cultural background and the Eastern European lifestyle. The instances where she is actually experiencing cultural shocks are rare, and even during the recounting of these instances – being a well-mannered lady of the times – she tries to be as polite as possible about it, as in this quote from the “A week in the pine region” chapter: „They brought us of their sheep’s milk and cheese. The latter, called here *brindza*, was very palatable, and the milk much thicker and richer than cow’s milk, but of a peculiar taste which I failed to appreciate” (Gerard, 384).

In a much earlier chapter about Romanian superstitions, she again uses a well-selected language to soften the judgment of Western cultures upon Eastern European ones – this is particularly prominent in the word usage of “curious crooked plant of delusion.” The image created here seems as all of the creatures from once popular legends and myths took refuge in the forests of Transylvania. The ending of the paragraphs suggests that their reign will soon end, which view can be tied to the colonialist tendency of the times: “The nineteenth century saw British travel writing assume an unprecedented reach across the world as ‘discoveries’ and colonial and imperialist activity increased on a huge scale” (Das and Youngs, 7).

> In Transylvania, however, the task of classifying all the superstitions that come under our notice is a peculiarly hard one, for perhaps nowhere else does this curious crooked plant of delusion flourish so persistently and in such bewildering variety as in the land beyond the forest; and it would almost seem as though the whole species of demons, pixies, witches, and hobgoblins, driven from the rest of Europe by the wand of science, had taken refuge within this mountain rampart, aware that here they would find secure lurking-places whence to defy their persecutors yet a while. (Gerard, 189)

But the courteousness of women is not the only thing that lays behind Gerard's intent to paint a positive picture about Transylvania: she used romanticization as a means of softening the culture shocks she came across during her stay, both in herself and her readers.

2.2.1. Superstitions that speak of prejudice

Gerard recorded a handful of superstitions that include not only the imagery of animals but have a connection to different nationalities. Elizabeth Leane wrote about the significance of animals in travelogues, and sheds light on the fact that these superstitions speak more about the way the group of people see and treat each other. "While figurative uses of animals can of course be relevant to actual animals, readings such as these put their emphasis on what the animal imagery says about intra-human relationships, rather than human-animal relationships" (Leane, 305). Often when people compare others to animals, they do this in means of degradation and belittling them, as they see the Others as inferior, or primitive compared to them.

Gerard writes in the chapter "Roumanian superstition – continued: Animals, Weather, Mixed Superstitions, Spirits, Shadows, etc.:" "Black fowls are always viewed with suspicion, as possibly standing in the service of a witch; and the Brahmapootra fowl is, curiously enough, believed to be the offspring of the devil and a Jewish girl" (198). In this quote the superstition's wording makes it seem like the subject is this particular type of poultry. The reason for deciding on this particular phrasing is that they wanted to hide the true meaning of the superstition in order to deescalate the aggression toward the other culture they saw as the enemy, because the emphasis is not on of how Romanians treated the Brahmapootra fowl, but rather on the hatred and prejudice they had for Jews in the region in the 19th century. This cultural comparison is seemingly hidden, but gives precious information about the relationship between two cultures in the area.

A similar type of superstition can be found in the same chapter, where the image of an animal is absent, but the phrase still holds value about intra-human relationships. One of these quotes mentions an old woman and a Roumanian popa, or orthodox priest: “It is unfortunate to meet an old woman or a Roumanian popa, but the meeting of a Catholic or Protestant clergyman is indifferent, and brings neither good nor evil” (199).

The statement’s inclusion holds valuable ethnographical and historical information, but can be read as Gerard introducing to her readers the Orthodox church as something avoidable, and she seemingly leans into accepting this prejudice, as in a later chapter she writes the following:

> „The devil take the popa!” was their hearty and unanimous exclamation when we had related our adventure; “who could be fool enough to follow the priest? Did we not know that it was bad-luck even to meet a popa?” they asked us pityingly; and certainly, under the circumstances, we felt inclined for once to attach some weight to popular superstition, and inwardly to resolve never again to trust ourselves to the guidance of a Roumanian popa. (388)

2.2.2. Differences in viewing Gypsy people

Gerard had little or no prejudice when it came to new ethnic groups she encountered herself, so it is safe to say that her view isn’t overshadowed by a negative preconception. In the six chapters where she focuses on Gypsy people, besides putting on paper her own view on them, she started to write down stories from locals and even translated already published articles in order to create a work that includes many approaches to a certain ethnicity.

The 32nd chapter contains a lengthy translation of Liszt’s work, in which he describes Gypsy music. Although the inclusion of his words does not mean that Gerard fully agrees with him, she does mention at the beginning of the chapter that she appreciates Liszt’s work: “Among the many writers who have made of this singular race their special study, none, to my thinking, has succeeded in understanding them so perfectly as Liszt” (Gerard, 237). In the same paragraph she underlines the motive behind liking his work: the other authors treated Gypsy people with prejudice or with such idealization that created a deformed picture of them, and only Liszt, who called himself Hungarian, managed to write about the Gypsies in a way that is true to reality. Gerard says the following argument: “Perhaps it needed a Hungarian to do justice to this subject, for the Hungarian is the only man who, to some extent, is united by sympathetic bonds to the Tzigane; he alone has succeeded in identifying

himself with the gypsy mind, and comprehending all the strange contradictions of this living paradox" (Gerard, 237).

After giving a brief history lesson in the 33rd chapter, Gerard starts to list out the different sayings she found and in which Gypsy people are mentioned. Almost all of them are used in a pejorative manner, ""False as a Tzigane," "Dirty as a Tzigane,"" (253).

With this in mind, we can see even in the later chapters how Hungarians seem to connect with Gypsy people on another level, according to Gerard's own research and experiences. Her chosen wording causes the heavy romanticization regarding this connection between the Hungarian music and Gypsy people, as it will be seen in the quotes below.

2.2.2.1. How Hungarians see the Gypsies

In *The Land Beyond the Forest*, the introductory chapter to Gypsies already mentions their love of life and freedom, and especially of nature and music. Liszt's included paragraphs created a picture where the Gypsies are seen as people whose connection to nature became unchanged for the last centuries.

When Gerard's voice takes over in the next chapter, she starts with informing the readers about how the law treated Gypsies in the 18th and 19th centuries. Soon, she mentions Hungary as the "[only place] the gypsy can be said to feel at home anywhere on the face of the globe" (243).

Gerard provides the reader a lengthy description of the relationship between three cultures, and in her book the Hungarian-Romani (Gypsy) relationship gets painted in the most positive light. When not reciting superstitions or customs, Gerard lets out her lyrical voice when describing situations regarding the relation between the two ethnicities. She writes: "Hungarian music and the Tzigane player are indispensable conditions of each other's existence. Hungarian music can only be rightly interpreted by the Tzigane musician, who for his part can play none other so well as the Hungarian music, into whose execution he throws all his heart and his soul (…)" (267).

This wording holds the underlining suggestion that the two cultures seemingly cannot survive without each other, and even without music. The description is heavily Romanticized, just as the fable included in the same chapter, which contains plenty of picturesque elements.

> Thus, whirling past in the mazes of your favorite valse, with the girl you adore on your arm, you may catch the dark eye of the Tzigane player fixed expressively upon

> you, and in the next moment the music has changed; it is a long-forgotten melody they are playing now—a melody once familiar to your ears at a by-gone time, when you had other thoughts, other hopes, another partner on your arm; when wood-violet, not patchouly, was perchance the scent you loved best, and fair ringlets had more charm than raven tresses. For a moment the present scene has faded from your eyes, and in its place you see a vanished face and hear a voice grown strange to your ears. That valse, once to you the most entrancing music on earth, now sounds like the gibings of some tormenting spirit, and you breathe an involuntary sigh for a time that is no more! (273)

The two paragraphs could be very well taken out of a fictional book, especially when considering that Romantic literature often included images of painful romances and longing for the long-gone.

2.2.2.2. How Romanians see the Gypsies

Gerard rarely mentions the connection between Gypsies and Romanians, apart from these, their relationship could be understood by the superstitions and stories she heard and noted down.

Where she does outright analyze their relevance to each other, she paints a picture of a situation where Romanians in the 19th century Transylvania hated Gypsies and often called them good-for-nothings, bad omens and even the devil's accomplices. Gerard provides an account of their frequent quarrels, and mentions that Romanians believed in the power of the Gypsies to control the supernatural.

> When the land is suffering from protracted and obstinate droughts, the Roumanian not unfrequently ascribes the evil to the Tziganes, who by occult means procure the dry weather in order to favor their own trade of brickmaking. In such cases, when the necessary rain has not been produced by soundly beating the guilty Tziganes, the peasants sometimes resort to the papaluga, or rain-maiden. (204)

Amongst the many superstitions, customs and legends, many of them hold traces of mythology and fairy tales. The quote above connects Gypsies to the world of fables when Gerard mentions the *papaluga,* and including the name 'rain-maiden', she gives an explanation for her readers of the foreign word. The following paragraph also ties the culture to something occult, to something from another world and to beings that hold the ability to control the supernatural:

> There is no doubt that the gypsy fortune-tellers in Transylvania exercise considerable influence on their Saxon and Roumanian neighbors, and it is a paradoxical fact that the selfsame people who regard the Tziganes as undoubted thieves, liars, and cheats in all the common transactions of daily life, do not hesitate to confide in them blindly for charmed medicines and love-potions, and are ready to attribute to them unerring power in deciphering the mysteries of the future. (265)

Gerard's lengthiest recount of an encounter with a Gypsy person appears in the 17th chapter. In around two pages one learns how Gerard leaned towards a positive attitude when it came to Gypsies, or rather attempts to have an unprejudiced view on others. As Ruth Y. Jenkins says, female travel writers often paralleled other women they met. She mentions that there are "ironies and tensions that result when British women encounter other women, regardless of race" (16). Gerard's behavior, however, seems to contradict Jenkins's claim, as she cared about the Gypsy girl she met during one of her lone strolls, and even while socializing with locals, there is no tension to be found towards local women, more so an appreciation towards their lifestyle, this being another element of romanticization, of using the picturesque style to bring closer the exotic to herself and to her home. This phenomenon is compared by Dömötör to the relationship between a mother and her child. In one of her research papers she writes: "It is as if these women viewed their respective travel destination through the eyes of a mother and treated the fledgling countries as if they were their children" (Domotor, 93). Gerard's attitude supports this correlation, as she is often seen being fascinated by the local women, treating them in a protective and almost pampering manner.

Gerard bravely approaches one of the Gypsy camps she found, giving the following motivation for her action: "for these roving caravans have always had a peculiar fascination for me, and I rarely pass one by without nearer investigation" (307), revealing once again her profound appreciation for this foreign lifestyle. With this, she also exposes her individualistic nature, as she becomes an active explorer of her surroundings, a 'sentimental' narrator.

Thompson writes regarding the 19th Century that this era had a widely preached mentality of seeing the European society as the bearer of "innate superiority" and bringing "civilisation, enlightenment and progress to supposedly primitive peoples" (2011, 53). Later in the same book, he discusses the same matter regarding women travel writers and concludes that for the majority, their writings lack the aspect of seeing natives as inferior people and are more humanitarian than their male writer counterparts and could be inspired by the connection to new cultures to reconsider their rights back at home (2011, 193-94).

This can be linked to Gerard's work because she neither romanticizes nor undermines the Gypsy culture while describing the encampment's poor condition. She remains as objective as she can, approaching the camp without any disgust shown towards natives.

> This particular encampment turned out to be of the very poorest and most abject description: one miserable tent, riddled with holes, and patched with many-colored rags, was propped up against a neighboring bank. Alongside, a semi-starved donkey, laden with some tattered blankets and coverings, was standing immovable, and in the foreground a smoking camp-fire, over which was slung a battered kettle. (307)

The story laid out is quite simple, someone accused a Gypsy girl of stealing some coins, thus sending gendarmes to their camp. Gerard then proceeds on with her stroll, but later in the evening she encounters a cart and stops to give some copper coins to the begging children. The act of taking pity upon the children and providing them with money, paired with how the scene ends, tells lengths about Gerard's pure-heartedness. She spoke aloud the name 'Hinka' which she heard from the gendarmes, and the young mother's face told her that she was on the right track. Instead of turning in the girl as the law must have wanted it, Gerard warned the woman in German not to go back to their camp tonight.

The ending of the chapter must be analyzed as well to understand the general view in England on these Eastern European cultures. Gerard writes the following:

> Several very worthy friends of mine have since pronounced my behavior in this circumstance to have been highly reprehensible: I had sided with the malefactor, and possibly defeated the ends of justice by screening the culprit. Perhaps they are right, and it can only be owing to some vital defect in my moral constitution that I have never succeeded in feeling remorse for this action. On the contrary, it was with a feeling of peculiar satisfaction that I thought that evening of the three brutal gendarmes waiting in vain for the return of the guilty Hinka. (309)

Gerard here explains her friends' disdain towards her actions, but she does not feel that it was wrong to not call the gendarmes and possibly end the life of a young mother. This scene is the strongest argument against Jenkins' claim mentioned before, which excludes Gerard from the critic's generalization.

In a later chapter, named "The Gypsy Fortune-teller" she does claim that although she had little to no interest in doing so, she did have a fortune-teller tell her future. This act can be accounted as the traveler's curiosity for the alien and even the supernatural, for something that is unfamiliar to her.

> For my own part, I have seldom had inclination to confide the deciphering of my fate to one of these wandering sibyls, and can therefore only affirm that on the solitary occasion when, half in jest, I chose to interrogate the future, I was favored with a piece of intelligence so startling and improbable as could only be received with a laugh of derision; yet before many days had elapsed this startling and improbable event had actually come to pass, and the gypsy's prophecy was accomplished in the most unlooked-for manner.
>
> Chance, probably, or coincidence, most people will say; and indeed I do not myself see how it could have been anything but the veriest coincidence. I merely state this fact as it occurred, and without attempting to draw any general conclusions from the isolated instance within my own personal range of observation. (266)

Gerard throughout her travelogue seems to draw back from giving any justification for superstitions or customs that include the supernatural, something beyond the logic of the world, and treats these as a cultural phenomenon, investigating the effects they might have on people. She does the same in the quote above, where she deliberately says that she refuses to take a side in dismissing or believing that the prophecy's fulfillment is evidence of the Gypsy's ability to tell the future.

3. Conclusion

In Emily Gerard's book, as in many other travelogues from the 19th century, the romanticization of the seemingly 'uncivilized' occurs through the use of the picturesque style, making use of positive and selective language. The non-fictional descriptions of locals, scenery, city landscapes and encounters are often compared to something that is already familiar both to Gerard and to her readers from Western Europe. As an already published author with education, she was already familiar with literary devices used in the time period, thus her travelogue contains her own experiences, intensifying them for her reader through her vocabulary. As discussed, she created a fable-like atmosphere surrounding Transylvania, which was a common method for exoticism regarding the undiscovered. This familiarization and creation of an enchanting environment causes the softening of culture shocks in her readers.

Gerard's ability to gather a large number of superstitions, legends, customs and local stories gives the reader a glimpse into the world of Transylvania, to its colorful palette of cultures, all while sympathizing with the people considered 'inferior' and less significant than

the English themselves, as the large audience of both readers and travelers treated the locals of undocumented lands. Thompson discusses in his book the idea that “a great variety of styles of travel writing exists”, and “some offered fairly lightweight, superficial ‘sketches’ or ‘recollections’ of picturesque or exotic regions; others sought to reflect more insightfully on the destinations they had visited” (Thompson, 2011, 54). As of his definition, Gerard is definitely in the latter group, giving plenty information about the region while retaining the personal and sentimental narration throughout her book.

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