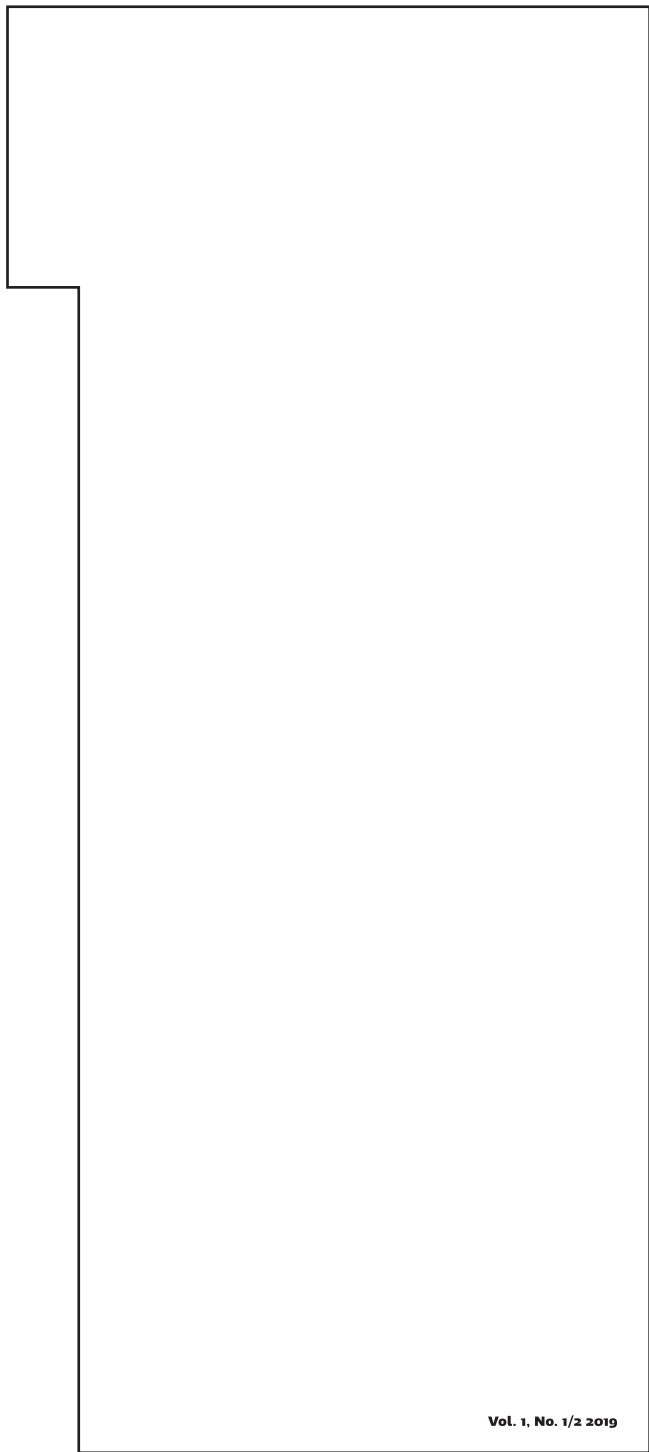


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# **Studia Mediterranea**



# Brutal Highlanders and Crooked Seasiders: Two Opposing Mediterranean Literary Archetypes

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## Abstract

This paper presents a philological and imagological analysis of the mutual contradictions of two types of characters in the corpus of Mediterranean literature. The highlander and the sesider, one brutal and the other imbedded in the hetero-conception of the other, belong to standard Mediterranean literary types, namely archetypes, from myths to the present. Literature on the Mediterranean and about the Mediterranean is abundant with typified descriptions of the highlander being a tough guy, violent, and the sesider as cunning, envious or a serial seducer. The imagology of these types and their mutual opposition is the topic of this philological analysis. The paper focuses on a comparative analysis of this imagotype/stereotype existing throughout the Mediterranean and transmitted from one literature to another throughout the centuries. The aim of the work is to review and summarize the literature concerning the archetypes of the highlander and the sesider in order to have a better understanding of the patterns of imagotypes and archetypes in the collective imaginary represented by Mediterranean literature.

**Keywords:** Mediterranean, literature, imagology, highlander, sesider.

## 1. Imagotype and Stereotype

The highlander and the sesider are, in the Mediterranean tradition of narration, a pair of not only different but also specular types. One is to the other an inevitable area of otherness, the identity of one is almost fed by the alterity of the other, in fact, the Other by definition, *per antonomasia*. One creates conceptions based on the other, that is, on hetero-conceptions, and spreads them further around its ecumene.

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Both of them, in their specific narratives, offer an auto-image about themselves and a hetero-image<sup>1</sup> about their other. Each fills their oral tradition with these conceptions, builds some of their own myths on them, perpetuates them through literature, and permeates topics with those myths.

Literature, with its cultural transversality, spreads and reconfigures those, in essence, cultural identities and alterities as images of itself and of the other. These images originated in anthropological relationships, they are the subject of cultural anthropology, but we can read them more reliably in literature where these images are summarized into types: imagotypes (a term borrowed from typography just like *type*, or *stereotype*, or *cliché*).

Ethnologists and anthropologists can draw their own ethnographic or cultural cartographies, but the raw material for a philologist is the spoken and the written word, the oral and the written tradition, which has to be challenged and questioned comparatively. Whether we decide to analyze the content or to analyze discourse, imagotypes cannot be avoided; and by this term we understand the specific, value-laden, and historically (by the moment of their emergence) marked conceptions (summarized in a type) about our own, about others, and those who are different.

Conception (and a prejudice possibly based on it) precedes the image, and it precedes its reception and mimetism, and therefore mimesis (Auerbach 2003, Girard 2008, etc.).

And yet imagology has succeeded in arising very late, just in the late 1960s (Dyserinck 1966; 1988), as a discipline of comparative literature that deals with hetero-images and auto-images. The Aachen School defines *agology* as only dealing with literary phenomena that cross the boundaries of a single language, but imagology breaks free of the boundaries of comparative literature, entering both cultural studies and cultural anthropology (Fischer 1981).

Of course, for acquiring hetero-conceptions and auto-conceptions there was no need to wait for somebody to contrive the concept and scope of imagology. They existed ever since the beginning of oral traditions,

1 According to Joep Leerssen (at [www.imagologica.eu](http://www.imagologica.eu)) imagology distinguishes between auto-images and hetero-images: the attitudes one has towards their own cultural values (self-image, auto-image) and the attitude towards the other (hetero-image). Any representation of cultural relations is a representation of a cultural confrontation; and the author's own cultural values and presuppositions are inevitably involved in this confrontation. There is, in other words, always a degree of subjectivity (auto-image) involved in the representation of another culture. This unavoidable degree of subjectivity is one of the main differences between an 'image' and objective information. Here we argue that these differences do not have to be between national cultures, but they can be the result of different cultural patterns within the same nation or the same intercultural ecumene.

before “the Muse learned to write” (according to Havelock 1986), perhaps before speech itself. They also permeate the Pentateuch and Homer’s poems - to stay within the limits of the Mediterranean chaos and cosmos. The concept of the archetype was first confirmed in Simonídes (Jacques 16, fr. 204, when writing about Praxiteles), then was widely used by Philo of Alexandria, who based it on Plato’s concepts of *eidos*, *idea*,<sup>2</sup> and *ousia* (especially in *Phaedo* 74d-75b and 100c-e).

For a pattern to be seen as an archetype, it needs to be established in the mind of a storyteller and their cultural group as an imagotype.

In today’s age of interculturalism or multiculturalism (which would not be as irritable if it was not considered vital or if it did not question the ivory towers of monocultural autism by comparison), it sometimes slips our minds that hetero-conceptions would not exist without interculturalism. All those who find themselves along any of the Mediterranean coasts and survived there are sentenced to it. Among them are even the descendants of drowned people whose languages at times vanished almost without a trace, and whose names are found in archaeological fragments or in partially deciphered myths, and still look at us or from us like some of the Mediterranean imagotypes.

The Mediterranean imagotypes, generated long time ago and perpetuated throughout the ages, thus function as stereotypes - but they do not lose the aspect of a hetero-concept, moreover, they determine it. That is also true for archetypes of highlanders or seashiders as well as for others, i.e. all Mediterranean identities and alterities exposed in classical and contemporary literature.

In an analysis of Mediterranean literary types, we face a threefold task: adopting and applying the imagology approach to the analysis of Mediterranean identities contained in analyzed literary works; observing and reviewing the interactional communicational relationship between collective imaginary and literary works; observing and reviewing the interactional communication relationship between cultural anthropology and methods of imagology in the example of Mediterranean literary identities.

It is impossible to comprehend the Mediterranean without a diachronic view, at least from the time of the formation of the Hellenic or Punic partial thalassocracy followed by the general Roman and pervasive Venetian thalassocracy, among others. In this context, hetero-images versus the other along the seaside and, even stronger, versus the other in the *hinterland* were flourishing.

At the same time there, behind the sea front, inverted hetero-images about invaders are logically generated. They are perceived as trouble-makers coming from who knows which Neverland to steal gold (even

2 Idea ← *videa* [what is perceived by a view].

the sheepskin in which some particles get stuck while it was washed away, a mythical golden fleece), and of course, to seduce women (not just Ariadne or Medea). Nevertheless, those strangers boldly protest if they experience a similar shame (for instance, by kidnapping young Helen from old Menelaus, not to mention the core story of the mountain Bull who lusts after alluring Europa).

Even in modern times, when IT links network the entire world and lift the horizons far beyond the skyline where the sea and the sky meet, Mediterranean imagotypes, anchored in literature, may serve as an incentive to our contemporary delirium. Conflict between Philistines and Jews began long before Samson the judge; it also overcame the division into blocks and attempts by now-domestic writers, such as Amos Oz, David Grossman, or Abraham Yehoshua, to break chains of hetero-images.

Those chains still function. In the mutual mistrust of seasideers and highlanders, even now we can discern Odysseus and Polyphemus.

## 2. Opposing Neighbors

Everywhere along the Mediterranean there are extended two territories, two rings, each with its past and tradition, divided by different and sometimes opposing civilizational emphasis and interrelated with migration and economic and civilizational ties.

One of these is composed of smaller islands and runs along the coastal line to the first mountains, while the mountains and the nearby inland area form the other. This division also holds for the large islands. In the south, behind the coastal line, the vast desert gapes with its nomadic civilization.

As an example, we can take Dalmatia, in the hinterland of which, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Voltaire found his paradigmatic savages, the Morlachs, who have thus entered, through literature, into the collective imaginary of the West.

Here, the first territory - the islands and the coast - belongs, as the 20<sup>th</sup> century ethnologist Milovan Gavazzi says (1978: 188), to the *Mediterranean areal* of traditional culture in Southeast Europe, while the area behind it belongs to the *Dinaric areal*.

The rest of the Dinaric areal extends beyond Dalmatia, far to the north, east and south, where its boundaries fully coincide with the internal borders of the former Roman province of Dalmatia, constituted by the Roman emperor Augustus in 10 AD (763 AUC).

The economy of the Dinaric areal was for millennia based on cattle breeding (mostly with periodic livestock transhumance: in the spring to the mountains, around hamlets, and in the fall back

to the villages). Social ties were characterized by fraternities and sisterhoods. Customary law was influenced by the concept of heroic justice versus state law. Traditional social values and myths of this area are often expressed through the epic, in a pattern stretching from antiquity.

The Mediterranean areal has been, throughout history, conditioned by its vegetation, so that for food and various raw materials the inhabitants depended on olives (for spices and for lighting), figs, carob, grapevine, and the Spanish broom (whose threads were spun and weaved). The main building material was stone. Lack of fresh water forced every house to have its own cistern for rainwater. Fishing in the shallows (with a trident, sometimes even with a sabre) was very important, as was deep-sea fishing. It all required the organization of work.

The donkey and the boat were the main means of transportation in Mediterranean Dalmatia for millennia, while inland it was the horse.

In both areals people were dressed in sheep's wool and ate the products of sheep, but the Dinaric used a skewer and a kind of Dutch oven (*peka*) for roasting, while the Mediterranean used grill roasting (*gradele*); on the islands oil and wine were stored in wineskins for millennia, or in amphorae, while in Dalmatian Zagora (the hinterland) they preferred barrels.

The Epic culture of the Dinaric areal used, as its main musical instrument, a kind of a fiddle (*gusle*) with a single wire to accompany the epic rhapsod, *guslar* (fiddler) or duet without instrument (*ojkalica*, from *ojkanje*, two-part singing); in Mediterranean Dalmatia, on the other hand, developed an urban three- or four-part type of singing. In the area of *ojkalica* the minor second music interval is now compactly Štokavian; polyphonic singing and songs in the Major third are traditionally multilingual.

Multilingualism was for a long time more of a rule than an exception. The first written legal monument in the Croatian language is the Baška tablet, written in the Glagolitic alphabet around 1100, on the same island of Krk on which, on June 10 1898, the Dalmatic language<sup>3</sup> perished. On that day, Antonio Udina Búrbur, or Tuone Udàina Burbur, the last speaker of Veklisún, the northern dialect of Jadertinian Dalmatic language, passed away (a piece of dynamite detonated too close to him - it was the only case that the death of a language really echoed out, even though not too far or wide). The Venetian language probably entered Krk in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and persisted there and there until that day. For several centuries,

3 A name given to Romance forms of speech along the Adriatic coast by Istrian linguist Matteo Giulio Bartoli (1906).

Vlach shepherds, settled once by Duke Anž Frankapan, spoke their own language close to today's Romanian. This means that Krk Island, the northernmost part of historic Dalmatia, has a record of at least 900 years of bilingualism, almost 600 years of trilingualism, and a certain period of quadrilingualism. Therefore, the island was called Curicta and Vikla, Krk and Veglia (or Veja) - and nevertheless, the archives do not record any conflict on Krk caused by multilingualism. The same goes for Kotor, and for Dubrovnik (long bilingual, occasionally trilingual), and for Split (bilingual for centuries, before and after the Venetian colonial vernacular suppressed Dalmatic), Hvar (where the nobility of both languages, Hektorović and Palladini, jointly and eagerly defended themselves from the plebeians) and other Dalmatian cities and many islands. Dalmatic was used in the cities: there are documents proving that in Dubrovnik, around 1470, lawsuits were held in the Romance Dalmatic language - but it is also documented that the Croatian language had penetrated in these cities already in the first millennium and so, by the names of the inhabitants (a Romanian root could be found with a Slavic ending and a Croatian root with a Dalmatic ending) as well as by speech and poems: Cardinal Boso wrote in *Liber Pontificalis* that Pope Alexander III was received in 1177 in Zadar: *immensis laudibus et canticis altissime resonantibus in eorum sclavica lingua*<sup>4</sup> (with immense praises and songs that were highly resounding in their Slavic language).

The harmony of singing along the seaside is based, as said, on the Major third and perfect fifth and in the hills on the astringent second, which to an unaccustomed ear sounds dissonant. Charles Nodier, in 1818 (s.a. 43), used a parable of "screaming of terrified beasts" to describe this music for French readers. Nevertheless, the archeologist Fr. Lujo Marun emphasized that neither Mozart nor Verdi could throw him into ecstasy like the *gusle*. However, when the "Dalmatian chant" is mentioned outside Dalmatia only a four-voice singing a cappella is mentioned, but the highlander's *ojkanje* was included, in 2010, on the UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Those who believe in Confucius' and Plato's ideas about music as the harmony of Heaven and Earth can consider that these two distinct melos are the expressions of two different mentalities. Still, the Dalmatian chant can still be heard inland, and the Venetian rector of Split testified in 1547 that the blinded warrior, after receiving a biscuit as a present, "sang in

4 As reported by Louis Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, II, Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1892: 437l. 17-18 (cfr. <https://archive.org/details/duchesne02/page/n521>). The original fragment with Boso's note was bound to *Codex Riccardianus* 228 (fo 233-271), stored in the Bibliotheca Vaticana (now, after reconstruction, in its underground depot). Translation mine.



Slavic about King Mark,<sup>5</sup> and all the people who stayed around him sang with him, as if by agreement, because everyone knows this song.”<sup>6</sup>

Literatures are equally diversified: one kind of lyric and, in particular, one kind of epic poetry persists along the coastline, and another, one could say more rough, is found behind the first hill; the prose differs as well - analogue differences characterize the prose of maritime and continental Turks, even Greeks, undoubtedly Spaniards, and to a lesser degree Italians and people from Provence or Catalans.

Differences in mentality in the two territories are undeniable. They were conditioned not only by different environments and economies, but also by various historical streams - but the connections were continuous, even in the not-so-rare times when the battlefield line was in the midst of today's cities, dividing Romans from Goths, or later Muslims from Christians. Dalmatia is now, as in previous centuries, the result of permeating yields of those who have grown up or settled there, and the permeation of its territorial-civilizational components: insular, coastal, and continental. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for all the northern and eastern Mediterranean: even in culturally compact Israel singing and writing are different in Jaffa compared to Jerusalem.

Polyphemus can become educated and Odysseus a clerk, they can be found in a discussion at the same round table, their families can be mixed through all kinds of relationships - but not even then their discourses will be the same. And even less its display in literature. It feeds on the emphasis of their differences.

The clash between the sailor Odysseus and the cyclops Polyphemus is largely an archetype of the friction between highlanders and coastal inhabitants.

### 3. Odysseus and Polyphemus

Not all the Cyclops were wild highlanders, bad-tempered, selfish and unsociable, primitive and somewhat simple minded, as described by Homer in the *Odyssey* (VI: 603, VII: 204), resonating typical prejudices of the coastal inhabitants towards highlanders. There was also the previous generation of these giants, which Hesiod in *Theogony* (139) mentions as sons of Uranus and Gaia (which makes them brothers of Kronos and the paternal uncles of Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades). Hesiod mentions three of

5 Marko Mrnjavčević (1355-1395), de iure Serbian king 1371-1395, prince from Prilep, the epic hero Kraljević Marko in Serbian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Albanian epic poems.

6 Transcribed from archives by Vincenzo Solitro (1844: 244).

them: Brontes, Steropes, and Arges, forgers of Zeus's igneous arrows (Arges gave them light, Brontes thunder, and Steropes brightness), Poseidon's trident, arch, and arrows for Artemis, and a helmet for Hades (which Perseus used in the fight with Medusa). They are blacksmith Cyclops, strong, stubborn and fierce. Because of that it was easier to assign animal characteristics to them.

Polyphemus, son of Poseidon and the nymph Thoosa, belongs to the later Cyclopien generation. He fiercely longed for the beautiful Galatea, one of Nereids, and beat her lover Acis to death with a stone - as Ovid wrote in *Metamorphoses* (XIII: 728). A stone is the typical highlander's tool (those too pious hit themselves in the chest with a stone, praying to God to have mercy on them, the short-tempered). Because of that Polyphemus could have been used as a mythical "macho" type who fulfils his desires by force and defends them by crime: literature is full of them (Mérimée's Don José is a rowdy Basque who would rather kill Carmen, a Gypsy, than cede her to her new love; we could also discuss Othello, although in the description of the Moor some racial prejudices are visible; nevertheless here we have an evil Iago, coming from a littoral area, who manipulates the foolish general). Naive girls might have seen it as an expression of unhappy love, not as a reflection of the possession of a woman as an object, a usable thing, but how can it be tolerated, with a contemporary sensibility, for any of them to be a hero, even in an opera? In Greek mythological tragedy, the driving force is not simply love. It can only motivate an immature junior, such as Haemon, in Sophocles' *Antigone*, but only to fulfill fate, real driving force, inexorable, but sometimes still subject to change. And that is what Odysseus will experience after the conflict with Polyphemus.

On the side of the primitive giant there was just savage force, while Odysseus had intelligence and cunning, knowledge and experience, and supremacy in the number of combatants.

The story is known, probably the most famous in Homer's *Odyssey* (IX: 187-542). Exhausted from wandering, the Greeks encountered a cave and food in it; satiated, and relying on their numbers, not even thinking of the possibility that it might be a giant's habitat. When Polyphemus came home, it was a sight for his only eye: parasites were crawling in his pantry.

Hospitality in the Greek tradition, *xenia*, required guests to be hosted, but also that guests did not take advantage (the very reason why Odysseus bloodily punished wooers of his wife).

There is no phase in Odysseus's wandering in which, in one way or another, *xenia* does not act, pleasant or provoking, embodied here in the accessible Nausicaa, there in the dominant Circe, the wet dream of Mediterranean males.

The Greeks, caught by Polyphemus *in flagrante delicto*, invoked Zeus, the protector of guests, but the Cyclops did not really care about Zeus or

his possible anger. He simply drove back the huge stone that closed the cave's entrance, and compensated the loss of food in nature by a short procedure: he ate two Greeks without sauce, finding this number to be the daily dose of guests to be eaten.

Odysseus used multiple tricks: he introduced himself to Polyphemus by the name of Nobody, got him drunk on pure wine (Greeks thought that only the barbarians did not mix wine with water), sharpened and ignited a stake and pierced the drunk and asleep giant's only eye with it. When Polyphemus started whining to the other Cyclops in their scattered caves about his bad luck, he was asked who attacked him. And he sincerely answered: Nobody. A cunning coastal inhabitant outsmarted a brutal highlander, fleeing under the belly of his sheep, and embarked on his trans-Mediterranean barge; then he continued sailing, allowing himself one excess: He shouted his name directly to Polyphemus, or, more precisely, he threw his name into the face of the Cyclops. It was no longer self-defense, not even vengeance, but hubris (*hýbris*): an arrogant, humiliating haughtiness.

In myth, which often offers morals, as a punishment for *hýbris* there follows *némesis*, divine justice, because Nemesis is a goddess who loathes and under that sensation the only person able to change a fate from which otherwise neither people nor gods can escape.

Polyphemus cried to his father, Poseidon, asking him to kill Odysseus in revenge. Or, at least, to kill all his crew so the winner at Troy would come back home late, as a beggar, also humiliated. Nemesis heard him.

The mytheme about a blinded giant and a hero vagrant who tricked him with a fake name is, presumably, much older than Homer. Researchers found it in the myths from Berbers and Basques in the west to Kiowa and Apache in the Far East (d'Huy 2013: 48), taking into account that Native Americans moved to their continent from Asia through Bering isthmus before it sank, around 20,000 years ago.

Julien d'Huy enumerated 29 versions (d'Huy 2012: 49), then 44 (d'Huy 2013: 49), arguing that they moved along with the migration of haplogroup X2 from prehistoric Europe to North America (d'Huy 2012: 51-52). It should be taken into account that Jennifer A. Raff and Deborah A. Bolnick (2015: 297-304) challenged this haplogroup migration direction, but the myth passed that way, by removal or by contamination.

The peripeteias of that mytheme are not important for us but the fact that in the *Odyssey* this mytheme was, for the first time, embedded in the anthropological opposition of coastal inhabitants and highlanders. Just as the mytheme of fratricide is found in many religions, from Osiris and Seth to Romulus and Remus, it is only in Genesis (4, 2) that the anthropological conflict of cattle raising versus farming economy is embedded.

As Genesis is written from the point of view of pastoral people and its cattle raising nomadic epopee, the anabasis from the lost Eden to the Promised Earth, so is the *Odyssey* an expression of the hopes and fears of the people whose anabasis started at the Mediterranean Sea, expecting earnings, possibly colonies where the demographic surplus could be placed, fearing shipwrecks and hostile locals.

Should we be surprised that this fear is embodied in the mythical Other, portrayed as a monstrous giant? He is a herdsman, different, hirsute, simple minded, *monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo*, simply: a savage.

One elaborate product of a trope about highlanders in the late Renaissance and Early Baroque is Shakespeare's Caliban in *The Tempest*, described as 'a calvaluna or mooncalf and a freckled monster' (Prospero, I.2.283), so its distinctness against the civilized Prospero and, of course, the airy Ariel, is sufficient reason to be forced into custody.

Description of the other, the indigenous, and native as a savage also serves colonialism as a moral justification in the Mediterranean, from Jason to D'Annunzio and Mussolini. This pattern is embedded in the literature from Hesiod to the space opera. That kind of science fiction extends its Mediterranean all over the Galaxy: *mare nostrum* is a metonym for *spatium nostrum*. This pattern is offered to future argonauts in computer games, where as soon as possible more and more cosmic savages have to be exterminated.

Thus, *mutatis mutandis*, even mutilating Polyphemus can now be seen as a non-heroic clash of the intellectually and technologically powerful with the natural, comparable to the easy task of killing offered by the Playstation (Ria 2014), shooting a lion in a nature reserve, an ecological offense nothing smaller than the excess of Saint George contributing to the eradication of dragons (and Harry Potter and Daenerys Targaryen, amongst others, meet the need of literary audiences to stand on the side of expelled and humiliated dragons, but this is a topic for another article).

The colonial aspect of the clash between Odysseus and Polyphemus was noted by Salvatore Quasimodo. Bart van den Bossche (2001: 31) claims that Quasimodo is at least partially identifying with Polyphemus because 'the rough and wild reality embodied in Polyphemus is also a reality of his own origin.' Polyphemus is to Quasimodo an 'emblematic image of Sicily which, through history, was invaded, harassed and violated'; for him that 'chthonic reality is autochthonous.'

Watching from Sicily, the evil Other is the one who attacks from the sea, just like the People of the sea in Egyptian writings from

the time of Ramses II, incarnated in Leviathan, the sea dragon, mentioned in Job, Psalms and Isaiah. Hell is other people” (Sartre 92).

In these opposing views, in the archetypical descriptions given to each other by mortal enemies, we have to search for one of the important sources of the iconic image of corrupt coastal inhabitants and brutal highlanders, represented by Odysseus and Polyphemus and so many of their literary descendants.

#### 4. Good Savages

In the European literature, a relatively important segment of fabulation on highlanders describes Dalmatian Morlachs as both factual and fictitious. Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in Venetian terminology the name of the Morlachs was established for the whole Christian population of the Adriatic hinterland under direct Turkish rule, incorporated into the eyalet of Bosnia (also called the Bosnian pashalik). All Venetian officials used the term Morlach for all the peoples of Christian faith in Turkey close to their boundaries, as they were until the year 1699.

The stereotype of Morlachs, like the patriarchal “good savages,” started even before Fortis, thanks to some travel writers such as George Wheler (1682: 158) and of course, Voltaire. This stereotype, thanks to both Fortis and other random travelers, was completed in the collective imaginary of the West. The *Viaggio in Dalmazia* also influenced the travel writers who passed through Dalmatia and its hinterland - Zagora: from Joseph von Seenus (1768, though his *Beschreibung einer Reise nach Istrien und Dalmatien* was not published until 1805), then Balthasar Hacquet (s.a. [1801-1808]), then Lavallée (who proposed to translate the Illyrian poems” - 1802: 42- 43) and his illustrator Cassas, and Giacomo de Concina (*Viaggio nella Dalmazia littorale*, 1809), and later writers from the Habsburg era who worked on popularization, both Dalmatian (Šime Ljubić, 1846) and foreign (Ida von Düringsfeld, 1857), all the way to Charles Yriarte (1878).

Here are the key features: the Morlachs live in patriarchal cooperatives, they are hospitable regardless of their possible impoverishment, respecting their guests, they have the moral norms of their patriarchal community (honesty”), they have picturesque customs (such as fraternity and sisterhood, godparenthood connected to first haircut of children, etc.), picturesque beliefs (e.g. in fairies, Fates, werewolves, and ‘*tenci*,” i. e. vampires, in wildfires), picturesque clothing, unusual music (*ojkanje*), unusual musical instruments (especially *gusle* and *svirala* i.e. a pipe), unusual poetry - they, like the old Greeks, gather around a rhapsodist (usually a blind man) who sings about heroism, and like the Greeks, they dance in a circle (*kolo*). They are tall and heroic; children grow up naturally like

Spartans (they bathe newborns in icy water, let the naked child wander around, let them die or toughen); women are beautiful, but they do not take care of themselves and in their thirties are already old.

Their flaws are no less interesting: they are stagnant, backward, lazy, dirty, used to sleeping with cattle in the same room, unfamiliar with farmland and fruit-growing, naive and victims of cheaters and usurers; they drink and smoke immoderately; are vindictive, brawlers and violent; they are often prone to banditism (*hajduci*)<sup>7</sup>

A description given by Giuseppe Modrich<sup>8</sup> (1892), also known as Joso Modrić, is not far from this. He reports to the Italian public that the Morlach is not a member of a special nation, that they are "Slavs from Dalmatian Zagora," members of the same population inhabiting Serbia, some parts of Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro, and that any differences arise from "dalle particolari circostanze storiche e politiche" (particular historical and political circumstances) (Modrich 1892: 343). For Modrich as well, Morlach is a "conservatore autentico" (authentic conservative), who, regrettably, in Zadar became a synonym for the savage, just as in Dubrovnik where they is called "Vlah."<sup>9</sup> Even if rich, he is living in a preadamite house (four walls, doors, a thatched roof or made of stone) so as not to be distinguished from their environment and become "ridicolo" (ridicule), the worst that could happen. The real Morlach never or very rarely undresses. Since they were in diapers they are used to the worst misery and the most unpleasant adversities. The mother gave birth to them while taking care of her businesses. If they survive from the fourth to the tenth year, they would end up working as a shepherd, allowed to go to school only when their parents were forced to do so, then they become a worker. At the age of twelve they forget literacy, and shortly after the young man marries the girl his father chose for him to forge a friendship or quit hostility with another family. A Morlach who cannot drink at least 30 liters of wine in a day does not go to other Morlach's wedding; he kidnaps a girl not from heroism, but in agreement with her, his beloved, to reduce the unbearable costs of the wedding that he would otherwise be paying off for at least a year. He courts a girl by fist fighting others and

7 *Hajduk*: brigand, in Bohemian, Bosnian, Croatian, Hungarian, Northern Macedonian, Polish, Romanian, Serbian etc. Probably from Tur. *hajdūt* (bandit).

8 Josip "Josó" Modrić, also signed as Giuseppe Modrich, landowner and entrepreneur, industrialist and politician after having been a professor and newspaper correspondent from the most distant foreign countries. A descendant of Morlachs, among who he lived in his native Benkovac under the Habsburg monarchy. Wrote in Italian.

9 Modrich is partially wrong: in Dubrovnik then and now, "Vlah" has been a pejorative name for an Orthodox Christian ("Vlaška crkva" is a colloquial term for the Orthodox Church in Dubrovnik), whether in the hinterland of Zadar "Vlaj" (a čakavian version of "Vlah") has been a pejorative exonym for villagers, equally Catholic and Orthodox.

strongly pinching her, and when he becomes the head of the family he is indifferent to his wife because she is now a thing or a 'useful animal' needed for calming his instincts and for her service to the family, and the Church (Orthodox) treats her the same way, imposing a humiliating ceremony of 'purification' (from which crime?" is Modrich's maieutical question) 40 days after childbirth. A Morlach is 'lazy to the bone,' in love with his cattle, and blackmailed by usurers threatening his cattle, a bad planner, eats little, but drinks immoderately (and criticizes the wine that cannot make him drunk on the second glass). He is an ideal type of highlander, concludes Modrich, adding that the Morlach is not born a savage, but grows wild in the midst of a hundred circumstances that do not depend on his free will.

Only in the beginning of the last century Hermann Bahr, in his *Journey Through Dalmatia (Dalmatinische Reise, 1909)*, will offer a new pattern, in the Mitteleuropean optics, when on the anatomical table is no more found a corpse of a Morlach (as a fictional return to the golden ages), but Austria Felix (as a fictional supranational empire), deadly wounded in 1848.

Although the Morlachian name was used earlier, especially in Italy, in various extents and meanings, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Venetian meaning was still accepted in the European West. This name remained in use since part of that population went to the Venetian territory during the the Cretan War (the War of Candia), and since the Venetian Republic by the Treaties of Karlowitz in 1699 and of Passarowitz in 1718 gained larger parts of the *sanjak* of Krka, Klis and Herzegovina from which it 'cleansed' the Muslims by expelling, converting, or executing them.

Morlachs - as we have already written (Bešker 2007: 5) - were absorbed into European literature in 1740, when Voltaire in *The Philosophy of History* (1740, Chapter VII: 'Of Savages' [1785/XVI: 31]) includes Morlachs, together with Icelanders, Laplanders, and Hottentots, among the savages that act in accordance with their instincts, 'like ants, geese, sheep.' His caustic analysis eventually becomes an introduction to the *Essay on the Customs and the Spirit of the Nations* (1754: 47). In Chapter CLXXXVI ('The Continuation of Italy in the XVII Century' 1785/XIX: 254)], Voltaire distinguished Morlachs by saying they are 'known as the most wild people in the world,' close to Venetia, at the doors of Italy which is honored by all the arts, but where Istria, Croatia and Dalmatia are almost barbaric' countries.

They swarmed in the European collective imaginary in 1774, when Fortis in *Viaggio in Dalmazia* (English edition: *Travels into Dalmatia*, London 1778) presented them, destroying some stereotypes, but accepting most of those already existing in the Venetian documents and descriptions of their first western neighbors. With this work the Morlachs became no longer merely a Dalmatian reality and a Venetian peripheral subject, but also a notion present in the European mainstream culture of that era.

The book caused quite a reaction in Italy, which resulted in translations around Europe.

It produced a thematic writing fashion that remained *en vogue* for several decades.

*Morlachism* would be a suitable title for that series. This term is intertwined with the concept of *morlachity* as a mentality, or the set of features of the Morlachs, real or mystified (see Bešker 2002). Giulio Bajamonti,<sup>10</sup> the main informant of Fortis, in his essay *Il morlacchismo d'Omero* (*The Morlachity of Homer*, 1797: 78), argues that "Homer's poems are closest to Morlachian taste," i.e. that "today the Morlachi people, like their songs, are most analog to Homeric taste." The emphasis - at the beginning of Morlachism - was not so much on the analysis of the specificity of Morlachian reality (real or imagined) but to underline the difference towards this "other world," the barbaric versus the civilized Europe, the pure ("untamed") versus the preciousness of civil society that was being born.

Here is how Charles Nodier,<sup>11</sup> in the novel *Jean Sbogar* (s.a. [1818]: 43), adorns the Morlachs through a description of their chant. The protagonist of the novel heard, somewhere near to Trieste, a coach driver's

...Dalmatian *pismé* (song), a kind of romance that is not without charm when the ear is used but which dissonates with its unusual savage mode when it is heard for the first time, and whose modulations are of so strange taste that only the inhabitants of that country know their secret. [...] It is quick, alternate imitation of the loudest noise, the most sharp cries and, above all, what inhabitants of deserted places hear in the darkest night through roaring of wind, thundering of storm, howling of terrified beasts, concert

10 Giulio Bajamonti (Split 1744-1800), a physician in Split, Kotor and Hvar, was a versatile leterate, polemic, essayist, playwright, poet, translator of Ovid, Racine, Rousseau, etc., a linguist (especially Anglicist), a bibliographer, an encyclopaedist, ethnographer, historian, archaeologist, economist, agronomist, chemist, composer, organist, choir director and theoretician of music. Voltairian by vocation, he was a member of some academies in Dalmatia and Italy, and founder and very active member of the Split Business Society. Forgotten by the Italians, ignored by Croats until the 1990s (although in his writings he called Croatian "our language"), Bajamonti was and remains one of the most learned, most versatile and fertile personalities of all the history of Dalmatia (and Croatia as well). Democrat and progressive, but not revolutionary or Francophile. He was a great-grandson of the poet Cavagnin, and direct descendant of the Split influent noble families of Capogrosso and Papalić, voted for humanism and letters), Bajamonti inherited from his forebears the largest library in Dalmatia: it also included books belonging to the famous Marko Marulić, founder of Croatian literature. The library was unfortunately destroyed in a fire in the first Bajamonti Palace in 1787.

11 Jean-Charles-Emmanuel Nodier (Besançon, 1780-Paris, 1844), writer, bibliographer and French lexicographer, found of the natural sciences. From December 1809 to August 1813, he was in Ljubljana as a state librarian, journalist, and finally secretary of Joseph



of plants coming from lonely jungles at the beginning of hurricane when everything in nature gets a voice to moan, all the way to the branch that wind broke without separating it entirely from tree and which whiningly hangs on string of bark ...

In the same way Morlachian literature (i.e oral tradition) is seen, in which a song and a poem are not differentiated: for both the term 'pisma" (song) is used. The uneducated did not declaim it, they would just sing it, and all the so-called oral tradition was a singing tradition, as long as it was not uprooted out of everyday life and bound into books.

On the basis of this form of dichotomy - between the savage highlander Morlachs and the gentle civilization of the European West - 'morlachism" has emerged as a myth. The most important chapter of Fortis's book, *Manners of the Morlacchi* (*De' costumi de' Morlacchi*), was dedicated to the ex-PM John Stuart, Earl of Bute. The Scottish Earl was the patron of the journey by the abbot of Padua, but also financed James MacPherson, the author (1765) of *Poems by Ossian* (*Fingal* 1761; *Temora* 1762), who attributed them in his poetic mystification to a highlander Celtic bard from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century). Bute also financially supported Melchiorre Cesarotti, who translated *Ossian* into Italian and influenced Fortis. In the introduction, Fortis makes a connection between *Ossian* and the wild originality of the Morlachs. So the highlanders of Dalmatia are depicted through an Ossian-like mystification. A special kind of 'sub-mystification" is contained in the fact that Fortis published, as a typical Morlachian 'pisma," the Bosnian Muslim ballad *Asan-aghiniza*, neither by its content nor by the mentality of Morlachian derivation, one of the first examples of 'women's writing" in the literature of Southeast Europe. Clemens Werthes, in Bern 1775, a year after Fortis' original was edited, published a German translation of the chapter on the Morlachs, and, in 1776, the entirety of Fortis' book. Already in 1775 Goethe commented the translation of *Asan-aghiniza* from Italian into German. In 1778 Herder included Werthes' translation in his *Volkslieder*. In the same year translations into French and English were published. The ballad *Asan-aghiniza* was then translated by the romantic poets Charles Nodier, Prosper Mérimée, Gérard de Nerval, Walter Scott, Niccolò Tommaseo, Aleksandr Puškin, Adam Mickiewicz, Johann Runeberg, and other poets all the way to Anna Akhmatova and other 20<sup>th</sup> century poets - a total of more than 50 different translations (Isaković 1974: 503-504).

Fouché, Marmont's successor as governor of the Illyrian Provinces. From August to December 1813, he was in Trieste. He also wrote about the history and geography of the Illyrian countries," the Illyrian" language and oral poetry in that language.

The notion of Morlach highlanders in the general imaginary of Fortis' era is quite easy to understand as Fortis polemically rejects such commonplaces in the introduction of the chapter *De' costumi de' Morlacchi*:

You have, no doubt, often [...] heard the Morlacchi described as a race of men who are fierce, unreasonable, void of humanity and capable of any crime. [...] The inhabitants of the sea coast of Dalmatia tell many frightful stories about cruelty of those people that, induced by the avidity of plunder, they often proceeded to the most atrocious excesses of violence, by fire and sword. But these facts [...] are either of ancient date, or if some has happened in later times they ought rather, from the characters they bear, to be ascribed to the corruption of few individuals than to the bad disposition of the nation in general. (Fortis 1778: 44)

The Morlachs are, therefore, described in these "rumors" as savages. Fortis will - not using that term - agree that the Morlachs are savages in a few things, but that they are good: therefore *good savages*, *bons sauvages*, another topic that will become common in that form. Moreover, when recognizing the partial validity of these charges, Fortis finds reason to excuse the causes of unacceptable behaviors, attributing them, for example, to war which corrupts people.

Fortis sees the main features of the Morlachs and the main difference between these *bons sauvages* and civilized Europeans as a different morality. Indeed, Fortis claims, their morality makes them so good that Westerners (and especially the closest ones, the Italians) exploit them, taking simplicity and sincerity as a sign of exploitable naivety.

Fortis gave a simple instruction: "It is enough to treat the Morlachs as human beings in order to achieve all possible civility and to make them cordial friends. Hospitality is a virtue not only of the opulent among them but also of the poor. [...] Hospitality is not just for a stranger, but for anyone in need" (Fortis 1774: I-56).

Therefore, here we recognize *xenía* again, but on the opposite, highlander's side.

Fortis exactly there sees the values of dwellers uncorrupted by civilization, naïve and insufficiently tricky. On the other hand, a *bon sauvage* is a trusted friend, which is the next key feature of morality that Fortis ascribed to the Morlach, who is as reliable as the last of the Mohicans, in opposition to the European who is corrupted by layers of civilization. Like friendships, hostilities are also difficult to be terminated among the Morlachs of Fortis, according to the mythical pattern of the *good savage*.

Revenge is, without a doubt, an important element in Fortis's description

of the Morlachs. It is logical that an observer from the Venetian ecumene - who had a long relationship with both Morlachs and Albanians - saw the blood feud, this element of ancestral addiction, as a link between Morlachs and Albanians. And in the words of Fortis, where he strongly rejects this custom (which is not only typical for the interior of the Balkans) it is easy to unveil the high emotional charge that the blood feud provokes among the pre-Romantics of the Enlightenment (later we will see how this motive touches, for example, Mérimée in *Colomba*, located among the Corsicans, as in *Guzla*, placed in the midst of the Morlachs). Even more characteristic is the motive of revenge, summed up to the proverb "Who does not take revenge - is not consecrated" and in its sacredness,<sup>12</sup> which Fortis carefully noticed on both etymological and semantic levels.

Purity (as a reflection of the natural state - like the one in Eden before the original sin) is yet another important element in the description of the Morlachs (and all the *good savages* revealed in Rousseau's age).

## 5. "Morlachism"

In 1788 Justine Wynne introduces the Morlachs of Fortis to western literature with her novel *Les Morlaques*. In the pursuit of interest that Fortis provoked, Wynne presented the Morlachs as "a people who think, speak and act in a way that is very different from ours" (Wynne 1788: s. p.). She started a trend: Mme de Staël, famous for being a successful follower of trends, in one episode of her novel *Corinne ou l'Italie*, based on a lesser-known work of Wynne's. Camillo Federici wrote the five-act comedy *Gli antichi Slavi, ossia le Nozze dei Morlacchi*, which had been written for the Carnival of 1793 (it had five editions in 26 years) and served abbot Giulio Artusi as the foundation for the ballet of *Le Nozze dei Morlacchi* and then to Gaetano Gioia for the ballet *I Morlacchi*. The ballet *Sale of Slaves*, based on a Morlachian topic, was performed in Paris, and in Vienna the opera *Zelina und Gorano oder Die Morlaken-Hochzeit* by Paul Wranitzky.

Nodier studies the real (*Poésies illyriennes*) and confabulates counterfeit Dalmatians (*Jean Sbogar*), Mérimée (*La Guzla*) succeeds in defrauding even Slavs like Mickiewicz and Pushkin, who accepted without doubt eleven of his mystifications as originals and published them in the book *Songs of the Western Slavs (Pěsni zapadnyh slavjan)*.

At some point in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the interest in this literary stereotype was so intense, especially in the French and Italian literary and theatrical scenes, that Arturo Cronia (1958: 331-332) wrote about "Morlachomania."

12 An analysis of the social and anthropological sacredness of the quoted proverb is offered by Tado Oršolić (2012).

The theme is not entirely neglected until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century in Western literature.

When the trend in the West was already declining, and when even *gusle* became (in Gautier) a common term for an exotic reverie, separate from the instrument and the music, Dalmatian authors who wrote in Italian remembered the Morlachs, like Marco de' Casotti (*Berretto rosso ossia Scene della vita morlacca*). Morlachian motives occur in the West even later, when mystification is not in fashion anymore, so they are found mainly as common places and illustrations, in Alphonse Daudet (*Les Rois en exil*), Jules Verne (*Matthias Sandorf*), and Karl May (*In den Schluchten des Balkan*). These common places are mostly clichéd, often contaminated by ignorance. It is a curiosity that Agatha Christie mentions Morlachs. The dawn of *science fiction* brought a new and unpleasant reminiscence of Morlachs and a stereotype about them: without that stereotype H. G. Wells (*The Time Machine*) probably would not have called his underground cannibals, a projection of the future of mankind, Morlocks. Luckily for the term, some names that differently marked Western literature of 20<sup>th</sup> century - Guillaume Apollinaire (*L'Otmika*), David Herbert Lawrence, and Marguerite Yourcenar (*Nouvelles orientales*) also used Morlachian motives.

Morlachian themes are present in Croatian literature even today (Vjekoslav Kaleb in *Na kamenju*, Vladan Desnica in *Zimsko ljetovanje*, Mirko Božić in *Kurlani*, Ivan Raos in *Prosjaci i sinovi*, Ivan Aralica in *Graditelji svratišta*, Ante Tomić in *Čudo u Poskokovoj Dragi*, and others).

The novel *Les Morlaques*, which begins a thematic series of Morlachism in literature, already mystifies the Morlachs in the introduction, not only as an indigenous population, more ancient than any other, but also as a people totally different from those living in the Catholic West. This procédé was, clearly, logical, perhaps inevitable, in the pre-Romanticist discourse in which *Les Morlaques* fits to a considerable extent, for the economy of its discourse of the mystification of not only the highlanders but also even of the highlander's landscape, was needed: in the center, there is the 'pretty plateau of Dicmo' (Wynne 1798: 37).

In this context, Wynne presents her version of Morlachian customs and habits, explains the fraternities and sisterhoods, describes *hajduks*, and other various unseen miracles.

Among the Morlachian customs and habits in the novel *Les Morlaques*, fraternity and sisterhood, courtship, kidnapping, a wedding and guests, childbirth, the first haircut of the child, godparenthood,<sup>13</sup> murder, a bloody shirt, revenge, a duel and a murder, a funeral and a funeral feast are described - a cycle of life and death. There are depictions of a harvest

13 *Šišano kumstvo*, A good explanation of it, called *Haarschneidepatenschaft* in German, is offered by Haser (2003: 148).

celebration, the story of how a bear was created from an angel (and other 'old folk beliefs' that portray animals as humans' brothers because they all once lived in Eden in harmony with our progenitors) - the cycle of fertility and harmony in nature.

The author also includes her beliefs in favor of the natural upbringing of children, respect for women, overcoming superstition, a rational economy, and enhancing the standard of living, including the expansion of education, but within the ideal of the natural state - the harmony of nature and society. Viewed from that angle, Stojković (1929: 265) considers *Les Morlaques* a tendency novel ('Tendenzroman'). Miodrag Pavlović is much more precise (1982: 23) in calling it a 'novel-chronicle,' but it would be entirely precise to call it a mystified chronicle.

Nevertheless, among all those motives with which Wynne decorates the Morlachs highlanders of Voltaire and Fortis, revenge is and remains crucial.

## 6. Revenge and its Cult

The motive of revenge and, above all, of the blood feud, permeates the imaginary of the highlanders as well as the imaginary about the highlanders since the beginnings of Mediterranean poetry: is it not revengeful anger the driving motive of the *Iliad*, first of Menelaus, and then of Achilles?

In fact, this has been true since the beginning of Mediterranean mythology and its religions.

Vengeance fought for its place in the Mediterranean pantheon as a means of re-establishing the right order.

The Albanian Medieval principle 'kok për kok' (blood for blood), written in the so-called Kanon of Lekë Dukagjini, in one aspect differs from the Law of Moses found in Exodus (21: 23-25): 'thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.' The Albanian Shepherds also knew the 'tranquility of blood,' the righteous compensation that ceased the cycle of revenge, which, as coming from God, Jewish shepherds considered absolute two and a half millennium ago. In the meantime, an unusual Jew, Jesus from Nazareth, intervened, teaching: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' (Matthew 5:38-39). As it happens, many have been attached to him throughout the following centuries, but they did not remember to hold to his teaching. Therefore, it would not be right to criticize only highlanders and shepherds and to see in them a crowd of cloned Polyphemus.

In the Greek pantheon (basically highlandish, older than the Argonauts, feasting on the top of Olympus mountain pastures) one deity was not enough for revenge. It was incited by three Erinyes (Erinýes), born of a drop of blood from Uranus (spilled while his son Kronos was castrating him), three sisters: Tisiphone (punisher of murderers), Allecto (implacable) and Megaera (having the evil eye), who punish all the unavenged crimes of people on earth and in Hades.

They are placated when revenge is fulfilled: in Sophocles's *Oedipus at Colonus* the self-blinded murderer of his father, his mother's husband, the deplorable father of the mutually murdered Polynices and Eteocles and Antigone, buried alive, after all that punishment finally found peace in the grove of Erinyes.

Aeschylus' *Orestes* and Euripides' *Electra*, even for today's readers and viewers, have something to say about Erinyes, simply because of the spirit of revenge - both personal and, worse still, collective - has not left the mentality of the highlanders nor that of the others. Allecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone found fertile ground in the mythology of highlandish Etruscans (who obviously did not buy only ceramics and statues from Greece), and then in Romans (who did not learn from Etruscans just to build vaults and soothsaying from livers). The slight difference is that Romans call the three sisters *Furiae*, thus conveying this concept to us, their heirs.

After all, what can be more infuriating than Medea who kills her own children to punish their father (regardless of the dilemma, whether this is part of an older myth or if it has been invented by Euripides, or even Neophron)? And this kind of revenge does not abate even today, although there are more frequent cases of furious men who "punish" women because they have not agreed to be property owned by a macho owner.

Revenge - with betrayal - is a central, axial moment in highlander narratives, not only among the Morlachs or in the wider milieu of the mountainous Balkan Dinarides. When it comes to Morlachs, both Fortis and his opponent Lovrich dealt with revenge. Wynne used it widely. Mérimée (who based *Colomba* on the vendetta) does not bypass it. It permeates the relative majority of the decasyllabic epic in the Balkans, and it is the central motive of most of the songs in the collection of Andrija Kačić Miošić. It is the main plot mechanism in *Gorski vijenac* by the Montenegrin orthodox bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš and in *Smrt Smail-age Čengijića* written by the Ban of Croatia (viceroi), Ivan Mažuranić, and in many other works.

Revenge by itself is not an exceptional subject in literature since its beginnings: it drives not only the aforementioned Atreides, leader of the people in the *Iliad*, but also many of the heroes of European and Far Eastern literature.

In Romanticism revenge as a topic penetrated into even smallest corners of creativity, not bypassing musical drama or vaudeville, and the literary descriptions of avengers have been permeating the collective imaginary that even an escaped political criminal, the former Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, found it appropriate to sign his dispatches from exile as Edmond Dantès, like the central character of Dumas' *Count of Monte Cristo*.

In the Balkans and along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, revenge is differentiated by one of its most horrendous aspects: a collectiveness that makes it permanent through the ages. Elaborating this aspect of mentality would be inseparable from the politics in which it is reflected and which, if it does not explain it, at least illustrates the persistence of Balkan and Levantine crises.

It is not, therefore, either always or primarily revenge for a crime of an individual. Together with the power of the archetype, the idea holds sway of an undeserved injustice, unfairness and offensiveness, which the group opponent (in fact: different by faith, by origin, by language, even by customs) has inflicted on our 'group.' This injustice can last over time, suffered but not accepted, invoking an equally collective revenge.

Of course, the idea of collective revenge is not an exclusive Balkan patent: *Carthago delenda est*.

This attitude, witnessed countless times in human tradition, transmitted and passed over the centuries to modern national and civil societies, mostly replicated through literary works (but also through repetitive works of the oral tradition from poems to proverbs), today looks suppressed until it emerges because of a crisis – and the last century on the Mediterranean was not void of them. Only in later times, on the scale of the same matrix, but by re-examining values, a different view begins to take place: that crimes should not 'be remembered' but that it is necessary that 'the human memory of all that is ugly should die and that the children do not sing songs about revenge,' as Meša Selimović writes at the very beginning of his *Tvrđava* (Selimović 1970: 7). Commonly accepted prejudices might be confused by the fact that this thought, which would easily be marked as Christian, was laid out by a writer of the Muslim circle. An optimist will remember that Jesus was from Palestine, and the pessimist that he was a minority.

On the other hand, as we have already seen, in the highlander's narratives, revenge - both personal and collective - assumes a sacral character that positions it above the moral fences.

In this respect, Corsica became famous, and the merit goes to Prosper Mérimée, essentially a materialistic-rationalist and therefore surprisingly interested in irrational passions, Romantic motives of fantasy and mystery, unknown regions and strange customs, 'exotic' and the 'local color.'

*Colomba* is the story of a blood feud, about a girl who is an incarnation of revenge as a moral duty, strong enough that she changes the point of view of her brother, Orso Della Rebbia, a civilized officer in a continental way (where officers are trained to kill by relying on the technology of extermination, not on passion). But *Colomba*, despite her pigeon name, has the spirit of a hawk and the power of a person mortally in love and who struggles for revenge, dreams about it, awaits it with the fervor and persistence of one dreaming of their beloved and awaiting an encounter with him. This is how Thérèse of Lisieux dreams about Christ and *Colomba* about revenge. For Mérimée, and later audiences *Colomba* was undoubtedly more interesting.

Carmen was even more interesting, Carmencita, *romi* (as she defines herself in the finale of the story). Her *rom* (man, husband) has the right to kill her, she says. Following her, a woman who fascinates him but whom he cannot understand (as the fascinated Des Grieux had never understood Manon by whom he was infatuated), he ruined his life, his military career as a noncommissioned officer, his civic honor. Unlike Des Grieux, a sacrificing intellectual, Carmen's *rom* is not willing to sacrifice himself; he will sacrifice the woman who refuses to be his object, a mere thing. He is not a Rom by nationality but a Basque, a paradigmatic highlander for both the French and Spaniards. He kills and buries her as she wanted, in the mountain (the symbol of freedom for Burns, for Goran Kovačić, and for many Macedonian and Aromanian poets), surrenders to the police but never reveals where the grave is.

The highlander is for Westerners almost equally unknown and unintelligible as Carmen is to don José: he is neither immoral nor amoral, he has his own moral; he respects justice, not the one of the State, but his own heroic justice. It is almost as if we could talk about a misunderstanding, even about a clash of civilizations – but the term is brutally abused.

## 7. Seducers and Enviars

Odysseus, who sees through Achilles' peplos, plants the Trojan horse, conceals the surviving comrades under the belly of Polyphemus' sheep and so on - is the archetype of a seaside cunning individual, audacious and daring, to whom the ingenious outsmarting of others is not just a tactical quip, but an ontological strategy.

He is no exception, Odysseus is not a miracle in the world (similar to the mythical Heracles or even the historical Friedrich II, called the *stupor mundi* at some other time). Ulysses is rather the paradigmatic *koryphaios* of a series of (mostly monomaniacal) characters, both actual and factual. Julius Caesar and his quasi-namesake Cesare Borgia taught the world that



it is possible at the same time to abhor and admire somebody. Literary historians have loaded pages with heroes that an honest man, even a sesider, would not be willing to have behind his unguarded back.

The very similarity of that archetype to the highlander archetype is found in the term "heroic freedom" which ignores institutional law, and subordinates institutional morality to his own goals.

It is a major difference in this context that the highlander's "heroic freedom" is collective, whereas the "heroic freedom" of Odysseus and Caesar's followers is essentially individual. It differs from the civil concept of liberty in so far as its boundaries are not freedom or the rights of others. The imbedded sesider is an egoist and egocentric in a pure state - or at least his highlander opponent sees him that way: "Neither the measure in the sea nor the trust in Latin," is a Balkan Orthodox invective at the expense of a Catholic neighbor, located in Zadar or some other coastal city.

The monomania of a corrupt sesider is not always focused on power. Its driving engine can be money (Danglars in *Count of Monte Cristo*), social position (Maupassant's *Bel-Ami*), a desire for many women (Don Juan, Casanova, et al.), a desire for one woman (Fernando Mondego), a desire for, simply, evil-doing (Iago).

The "indigenous" villain is a Mediterranean myth of on its own that stems from mythical prehistoric times. Those from the West find the Levantines to be mean, those from a particularly close East see Venetians as mean, and to the latter, the citizens of Dubrovnik are mean: each has their own nemesis. Shakespeare, obsessed with the Mediterranean (although trying not to irritate the democracy of his homeland where Swift's ear was cut for less), picks his exemplar mean persons even from the Levant (Shylock, whom he gives deeply human monologue on equality of men) and the South (Iago, whom he makes a reflection of the devil in human skin).

The cunning one does not necessarily have to be imbedded. A response on the level of class, as a consolation to the public, is served by the cunning servant of a simple master, a classical *servus callidus*, such as Sosia/Mercurius in Plautus (*Amphitryon*), Pseudolus, Palestrion (*Miles gloriosus*), and Tranion (*Mostellaria*). Hence Marin Držić - because he sees the cunning servant in his own and not in the antique reality - imagines him even with his own survival skills: he is Pomet himself, while Munuo (*Skup*) is taken from *Aulularia*. Such is also Zanni in *commedia dell'arte*, or Figaro, taken by Beaumarchais from the western edge of the Mediterranean. He is not a sinister personality, such as we can find in the folk and literary tradition in Central and Western Europe. Unlike the Hungarian Mátyás Garabonciás Diák or a German version of Till Eulenspiegel, the *servus callidus* outsmarts others to help his master.

Alternatively, he rescues his beloved, like Portia (*The Merchant of Venice*), because love is a bad contract of dependence that does not guarantee any earnings.

Writers from other parts of Europe (especially Protestant or Anglican provenances, pervaded by a loathing towards the Catholic environment) sometimes took the Mediterranean as a common place of wickedness. Using it in an ironic key, Pär Lagerkvist placed his sinister *Dwarf*, physically and morally spooky, in the Renaissance Mediterranean castle, as a natural habitat of intrigues and conspiracies.

In a benign version, the cunning one is simply an unconstrained spirit, someone whom a view of the infinite horizon of open sea taught that vastness spreads before liberty does, if you know how to navigate it: a typical example is Kazantzákis's<sup>14</sup> character Aléxis Zorbás, not very responsible, a confabulator, unconstrained and cynical. This folk thinker says: "Man is a brute ... If you're cruel to him, he respects and fears you. If you're kind to him, he plucks your eyes out." Perhaps it should be noted that Níkos Kazantzákis, a Cretan from Kandiye, was a nihilist with the appropriate definition of freedom: "I do not expect anything. I fear nothing. I am free."

It is easier to identify with this attitude on paper than in action.

Perhaps the mechanism of identification with the main character contributed to the fact that the audience is mostly prone to a serial seducer – historically: the libertine<sup>15</sup> – of all of the seaside cunning types, including villains.

In the context of the Age of Enlightenment, a libertine is defined as a person who thinks freely and without any burdens, a person deprived of dogma or taboo, a free thinker, or even an impious unbeliever (in the report on Cagliostro's death, chaplain Fr. Cristoforo da Cicerchia describes the deceased adventurer as "a terrible example for all those who indulge themselves to the intemperance of pleasures in this world and to the deliria of modern philosophy").<sup>16</sup>

14 Níkos Kazantzákis (Kandiye, now Iráklion, 1883-Freiburg im Breisgau, 1957, Greek writer, nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature nine different years (in 1957, he lost the Prize to Albert Camus by one vote). Famous for *Zorba the Greek*, *Christ Recrucified*, and *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Instead of Katharevousa, a lofty Greek who flirts with antiquity, used by the writers of his time, Kazantzákis opted for Dimotikí to capture the spirit of the people, and to make his writing resonate with the common Greek citizen, as he stated. Moreover, he wanted to prove that the common spoken language of the Greeks was able to produce artistic, literary works. In the same spirit he translated the *Iliad* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* into modern Greek

15 A denomination referred previously to a freed Roman slave or a medieval freeman outside feudal chains.

16 "[...] esempio terribile per tutti coloro che si abbandonano alla intemperanza de' piaceri in questo mondo, e ai deliri della moderna filosofia" (Augias 2014).

On the other hand, the strengths that we could define as representative of these dogmas and taboos insist especially on the sexual aspect of libertinism. If bishops, cardinals or popes have children, women or mistresses, this is treated as a temporary deviation that is rectified with repentance and some prayer and penance. If kings or magnates have mistresses and extramarital children, it is part of the prerogatives of their socio-economic status. If libertines have them, it is proof of their sinful atheism and nihilism.<sup>17</sup>

The libertine gained his glory at a time when the enlightenment sought to rationalize, and the Rococo was oriented to kitsch - neither of them extending into the lives of the vast majority of the people who, at least in the little carnal pleasures they had, lived much more freely than it befits. Although the libertine at that point in time reached its full "maturity," as a literary type, or even a model, it was conceived in the Baroque as a satire and allegory. Neither form would succeed if they did not resemble a chronicle, perhaps not as common (the Baroque wanted to show the miraculous, not necessarily the chaste), but also not unknown.

The libertine archetype is Don Juan, proverbial in today's dictionary as well. Don Juan is the main character of *The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest* (*El burlador de Sevilla y el convidado de piedra*), attributed to Tirso de Molina. This work, published in 1616, is a satire that takes, as believed, a real historical figure as its starting point. We do not know anything reliable about him, even if his name was really Don Juan Tenorio.

Writing a supposedly moralistic comedy, the author cleverly veiled praises to the seducer with a *revenge from the afterlife* motif. The question is how much piety there is in, supposedly instructive, the end of Don Juan Tenorio, allegedly a real-life character (in Andalusia the balconies are long open as well as in some short stories of Boccaccio). Don Gonzalo, the father of the dishonored lady, whom, above all, Don Juan killed in a duel, transformed into a sculpture over the grave, then drove the seducer back to hell because he missed the last opportunity to repent. Really, hell? Obviously, he did not come from the heavens, though he did not come (only) to avenge.

The stone Guest has remained, in the collective imaginary of Southern Europe, a common place, more common in newspaper headlines than as the divine Nemesis, but the hero, in every sense of term, remains Don Juan.

A whole series of great and not so great authors, from Molière to Byron,

17 Vanini, one of the three famous philosophical libertines, had no love affairs, but despite it he was burned in Toulouse because he was labeled an atheist, and that was enough.

to Ivanac and Saramago<sup>18</sup> (mainly men, as can be noticed) – dealt with Don Juan paraphrasing, epiphrasing, even antiphrasing, or used him in other ways, through comedy, tragicomedy, satire, even apotheosis, in verse, prose, music, and finally film.

From the Hugo's immediately banned five act play *The King Has Fun* (*Le Roi s'amuse*, 1832), Verdi's librettist Francesco Maria Piave inserted two precisely "donjuanites" arias in *Rigoletto* (1851), slightly massacred by Austrian censorship in once libertine Venice. In one of those arias the Duke of Mantua announces that he does not care which one of girls' or women's turn it is, everyone is good, especially if a lover or husband are raging about it (*Questa o quella per me pari sono*, act I), even more because woman is fickle like a feather in the wind, whether crying or smiling (*La donna è mobile*, act III). This manifesto of machismo has surpassed, in the collective imaginary, all other of Verdi's love motives, from the lachrymose to the heroic. The reason for that is hardly Piave.

One of the amusing paraphrases of the Don Juan myth from the Baltics belongs to Ingmar Bergman, who, taking as a pattern the theatrical comedy of Oluf Bang, wrote a screenplay and in 1960 directed the movie *The Devil's Eye* (*Djävulens öga*), by his own definition a *rondò capriccioso*. In the movie Beelzebub sends Don Juan from Hell to Earth to deceive a modest girl who wants to be married as a virgin, but the poor guy falls in love, does not accomplish anything, and falls back to Hell, while his servant (here called Pablo) seduces Pastor's wife because he who is destined does the act, not he to whom it is said.

If only a dozen of these works had been deployed during those dozen centuries of antiquity, we would without any doubt speak about the myth of Don Juan. Because it flourished during the last centuries, approximately four, we can only talk about the character of a Latin lover, whom was borrowed even the literatures beyond the Mediterranean. Albeit those who

18 Among them are: Giovan Battista Andreini (*Il nuovo risarcito convitato di pietra*, 1651, the first opera on Don Juan); Molière (*Dom Juan ou le festin de pierre*, 1665); Antonio de Zamora (*No hay plazo que no se cumpla ni deuda que no se pague*, 1713); Carlo Goldoni (*Don Giovanni Tenorio*, 1735), Lorenzo da Ponte and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (*Il dissoluto punito ossia il Don Giovanni*, 1787); Lord Byron (*Don Juan*, 1819-1824, unfinished because of death), Christian Dietrich Grabbe (*Don Juan und Faust*, 1829), Alexander Pushkin (Каменный гость, 1830, according to Da Ponte); Prosper Mérimée (*Les Âmes du purgatoire*, 1834, where the soul of Don Juan is saved by the historical figure of Don Juan de Marañón); Alexandre Dumas (*Don Juan de Marañón ou la chute d'un ange*, 1836, based on Mérimée); José de Espronceda (*El estudiante de Salamanca*, 1840, where the character Don Félix de Montemar is made an example of Don Juan), José Zorrilla (*Don Juan Tenorio*, 1844); George Bernard Shaw (*Don Giovanni explains*, 1887); Edmond Rostand (*La dernière nuit de Don Juan*, 1922); Azorín (*Don Juan*, who converted in the Christian manner, 1922); Ödön von Horvath (*Don Juan kommt aus dem Krieg*, 1936); Max Frisch (*Don Juan or Die Liebe zur Geometrie*, 1953); Ivica Ivanac (*Odmor za umorne jahače ili Don Juanov osmijeh*, 1961); Gonzalo Torrente Ballester (*Don Juan*, 1963); Dacia Maraini (*Don Juan*, 1976); José Saramago (*Don Giovanni ou O dissoluto absolvido*, 2005); etc.

have put a copyright on the myth of Faust - the one who does not seek only knowledge but a moment in which he could finally say: 'Ah, stay a while! You are so lovely!'"<sup>9</sup> - Don Juan was used more frequently than Faust.

Ready to lightly irritate and provoke within the permissible limits of order, Molière also accepted Don Juan as the erotic version of Don Quijote (in Molière, the great seducer has the problem to accomplish anything when he enters the scene and all his conquests are from the time before the curtain was lifted, so that his score is positively like that of Caballero de la Triste Figura (Knight of the Ill-favoured Face"), while the voice of cynical realism, instead of the fatty Sancho, is spread by the starving servant Sganarelle, who is the only one who represents religious morality, but so that he becomes even more laughable to the audience.

Religion is the link and division between Tirso's (?) and Molière's seducer. Molière's declares himself an atheist, and remains truly astonished when the Stone Guest enters his house. Tirso's, on the contrary, is a practising Catholic of the traditional Mediterranean type: he thinks that he is a sinner, knows that he is a sinner, but understands that in the Catholic version the sacrament of reconciliation can act as an effective detergent of the soul, so he counts on having enough time until his libido falls and piety grows, and only then will he repent and enter into the privileged part of Paradise, with other noblemen, no matter when they convert to the virtuous path.

Don Juan, however, is not the only serial womanizer: in *Burlador* his competitor is Marquis de la Mota, who takes over Don Juan's cap and robe, and not the servant Catalinón (in Molière, a portion of undeserved beating in that moment is given to Sganarelle).

Nevertheless, another master, better than maybe Tirso or surely Molière, was found, if not better than the two of them, with the brilliant share of the third.

The first master is from the outskirts of Venice, Lorenzo Da Ponte, a dissolute cleric and a freemason, an ironic observer, capable of summarizing his views into the sparse rhymes of a libretto. As a librettist, Abbot Da Ponte suggested to Mozart Molière's hero, which in his Italian version became *Don Giovanni*. A helping hand was given to him by the born Venetian, legendary serial seducer Giacomo Casanova, author of the infamous and therefore very much read memoirs *Histoire de ma vie*. The former Catalinón, then Sganarelle, was again renamed and becomes Leporello, the servant in charge to keep a precise record of the seductions. He explains to Donna Elvira that it is a futile effort to dream about don Giovanni as a faithful husband who will finally calm down in his own wife's bedroom.

19 "Verweile doch! Du bist so schön!" (Goethe, *Faust*, I, Studio 2, verse 1700).

According to Leporello's catalogue, the tireless seducer made love to 640 women in Italy, 231 in Germany, 100 in France, 91 in Turkey, and, at that time, 1003 in Spain. Among them were villagers, maidens, citizens, countesses, baronesses, marchionesses, and princesses: women of all classes, figures, and ages. Talking about a blonde, he praises her elegance, about a black-haired woman, her persistence, about a white-haired woman, her tenderness (but not wisdom, in any of them). He is even picky: in the winter he prefers fatty, in the summer skinny. He yearns for a tall and magnificent woman but a tiny one is even more hankered after. He seduces old ladies just to extend the list. Nevertheless, his greatest pleasure is in a young novice. He does not care if she is rich, ugly, or beautiful: "It's enough that she wears a skirt, and you know what he does to them," Leporello points out, mumbling in pleasure.

Well, credit for that mumble goes to a third, always inclined to skirts though, they say, one faithful to his charming wife, a freemason as well, genius of the geniuses, briefly: Mozart, who gave the music to it, and edified it as an artistic monument to the *Latin lover*, the seaside villain of whom so many adulterers are envious.

In 1797 Goethe points out that the action is full of ambiguities - both textual and musical - that Mozart has involved throughout whole opera, and thinks that it is, by his opinion, an insurmountable work.<sup>20</sup> It is not a musicological opinion, of course, but a poetic one, and from an author who puts in the mouth of Faust a confessional cry to Wagner: "Two souls, alas, are dwelling in my breast."<sup>21</sup> In the "ambiguous" *Don Giovanni* each event provokes another, usually unpredictable.

Goethe thought that *Don Giovanni* was an insurmountable opera. In *Don Giovanni*, where "the music itself speaks," which rejects an imitation of nature in favor of the symbolic communication of the ideal truth,<sup>22</sup> he could sense the spirit of "Sturm und Drang."

This great intellectual and aesthetic movement begins to undermine the duality of neoclassical thought: the Aristotelian dichotomy of Good and Evil, Moral and Sin, Beautiful and Ugly, and begins opening the whole spectrum of nuances and relativisms. This dialectical permeating of nuances, both agogic and dynamic, produced at that time a new instrument in Italy which astonished the *wunderkind* of Salzburg - pianoforte or piano, and because of it he rejected fortepiano, the favorite of Leopold Mozart.

Goethe's view of *Don Giovanni* hails from the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. In his magnum opus *Enten-Eller (Either/Or)* he also introduced

20 In the letter to Friedrich Schiller 3 / V / 1797, *Goethe & Schiller* Vol I, 1955: 311.

21 "Zwei Seelen Wohnen, ach! In meiner Brust", Faust, I, Vor dem Tor, verse 1112.

22 Letter to Schiller 30 / XII / 1797 (ibidem).

a seducer, who is not similar to Don Juan or anyone in the Mediterranean archetype, although he knew him in detail. However, in this work he incorporated the "The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic" treaty, where, as one of the starting points, he uses the erotic charge of Mozart's music. Taking Mozart's opera - which counts as one of his favorites - as a starting point, Kierkegaard speaks of the "erotic-sensual genius" of the Don Juan myth (Kierkegaard 1843 [1987: 48]).

In the case of Kierkegaard, Mozart himself was a hell of seducer (with the pinch of romantic emphasis): "Immortal Mozart! You to whom I owe everything - to whom I owe that I lost my mind, that my soul was astounded, that I was terrified at the core of my being - you to whom I owe that I did not go through life without encountering something that could shake me, you whom I thank because I did not die without having loved, even though my love was unhappy" (1843 [1987: 49]). For this Danish philosopher, Mozart saved, combining fascination and rejection within the character of Don Juan, ideas of medieval Christianity, according to which every individual, even the most disgusting, possesses his own and inalienable value. So does Don Juan, of course.

For Kierkegaard, Don Giovanni, as Mozart and librettist Da Ponte imagine him, represents the demonism of the senses, completely Earthly, unlike Faust - the other myth, which got a hold of Goethe and lured Mozart - and which evokes a spiritual, supernatural level. Kierkegaard, a predecessor of Existentialism and a child of Romanticism, celebrated Mozart's ability to unite what the hegemonic - absolutist, dogmatic, clerical - thought separated into mutually untouchable spaces. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* does not exclude moral condemnation, but undoubtedly surpasses it.

As stated above, a helping hand was given to Da Ponte by the born Venetian, and legendary serial seducer, Giovanni Giacomo Casanova, the self-proclaimed knight de Seingalt, the author of the notorious and therefore readily read memoirs *Histoire de ma vie*. It would be unjust not to pay some attention to his work because the memoir too is part of literature (it allowed Churchill to get the Nobel Prize for Literature).

Casanova died in 1798, at a time when his enlightening, libertarian, and gallant century was already suffocating in blood.

He was the central figure of the Venetian Carnival in 1998, at the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Philosopher Massimo Cacciari, at that time the mayor of Venice, suggested him as an emblem. All this within a picturesque scene of the city which is a monument of itself, an immense *proskenion* made of stone lace for an open-air live theater, where everyone is invited to play a part at their will or just watch the show. Da Ponte met Casanova in Paris in 1783, and visited him in Dux/Duchov, where the aged lover was a librarian of the freemason count Waldstein and it seemed that Casanova had visited Da Ponte and Mozart in Prague while they created *Don Giovanni*.

Casanova came to Dux already old, arthritic and toothless, impoverished, having crossed half of Europe, and escaped, allegedly the only one in history, from the Venetian dungeon *Sotto i Piombi* (so terrible that the passage leading to it from the Doge's Palace is called the Bridge of Sighs). In the meantime, he earned a lot of money on the stock exchange and squandered it... Waldstein gave him a salary and a servant, and Casanova paid him back by organizing an enormous library (40,000 volumes). Irritating and intolerant, he quarreled with the male servants, but he was still chasing after women. Casanova died in Dux of cancer that hit him in the zone he was practically most proud of: in the prostate. In his final months he did not allow anyone, except Waldstein and his nephew Carlo, to see him: ashamed for being toothless. He dictated his last letter on June 1, 1798, three days before his death, which was directed, of course, to a lady: "I cannot read, I cannot write, I have to thank my nephew that I can send You this message."

Unlike the fictional Don Juan, a myth that fascinated both male and female audiences, a focused collector of seduced women whom apparently he did not love, at least not as persons (it is not needed to be in love with the lamb to eat it, for some it could even be deemed inappropriate), Casanova was *The Man who Really Loved Women*.

Thus claims Lydia Flem, a Belgian psychoanalyst who made herself famous with books on racism, Freud and his patients, on panic, etc. However, the original title of her book was: *Casanova or the Art of Happiness*, but in later editions it has been altered as mentioned above.

Counting all the ladies Casanova included in his late memoirs, Flem reduces the suspected number of 600 to 122 - an almost insignificant figure compared to the alleged 3,000 ascribed to President John F. Kennedy (to whom they served as a painkiller during headaches, as quoted by Flem) or with 10,000 as Georges Simenon announced (a Belgian and thus far from our Mediterranean focus). "It is important to Don Juan to note how many women he has been able to possess at some time in some place, and to Casanova how many times he managed to satisfy the same woman in a certain period. He is not interested in being with seven women in Marseille, for him it is important to generate seven orgasms in one night to the same woman in Marseille," writes Flem (1995: 87).

Psychoanalysts assume that obsessive seducers do not even remember faces or names of their "successes," let alone a key feature of their character, while Casanova, the eponymous Mediterranean seducer, has remembered all the details of each of his 122 mistresses, so he was able to write an autobiography with such lively, precise memoirs: "writing his memoirs he managed to remember every woman in person, meeting and words whipped on those occasions. And to live his wonderful life twice," writes Flem, not hiding her enthusiasm for a man of many loves and no



marriage, who did not accept the later thesis about the transformation of quantity into quality.

Soon after Lord Byron started working on *Don Juan*. He was fascinated by the Mediterranean. He fought for it, in Greece, and there found his death. He sings about the Greek Islands in *Childe Harold*, follows his Don Juan from Seville, across Cádiz, to Cyclades, and to Istanbul... (we are really not interested in following him any further).

Byron's *Don Juan* - his magnum opus, unfinished at the moment of his death - is a satirical epic poem in which Don Juan does not chase women, but fails to escape their desires because he, with a strong masculinity and weak determination, cannot resist.

It is therefore an everyday, almost banal story of the male gender, essentially different from that of the mainstream to which *El Burlador de Sevilla* opens the water gate. Byron is not interested in this "Titan of Embodied Evil," as the classical Don Juan with a pinch of envy was summarized by Ernest Hartley Coleridge,<sup>23</sup> rather than a humorous paradoxes, as the poet explains in a letter to Thomas Moore.

He picked him up on the Mediterranean and sent it on a sort of "big tour" across Europe, as Thomas Mann would pick his fraud Felix Krull in Rhineland and sent him to show his talents (especially seductive) in the Mediterranean, celebrating them by a triumphant whinny of the seduced mother of a seduced girl.

At the end of the first chapter of *Eugene Onegin* Alexander Pushkin points out that his hero will go along the same paths Byron's Don Juan had passed - but there ends Onegin's similarity with Byron's seduced seducer, and with *El Burlador* there were none.

Like the latter Krull, Byron's seducer is mainly a picaresque, not erotomaniac character. After all, from the West of the Mediterranean oecumene, from Granada (where Moorish and Jewish influences affected the Ibero Catholics), there came Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, who is firmly believed to be the author of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the first picaresque novel, whose hero acts as a serial *servus callidus*.

It would be unjust to reduce the Mediterranean archetypal seducer only to the libertine, whether fictitious or factual. His history begins much earlier.

Ovid's *Ars amatoria* did not recoil before the "holy fortress" of a marriage which, seriously endangered, August tried to protect with the marriage law (*Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*, 18 BC). That poem on the *Love Skill* and an undefined mistake ("carmen et error," *Tristia*, 2,207) was the reason

23 In taking Don Juan for his "hero," Lord Byron took the name only, and disregarded the "terrible figure" of the Titan of embodied evil, the likeness of sin made flesh" (Coleridge, 1903: XVI) From the Introduction to *Don Juan*", *The Works of Lord Byron*, Poetry. Vol. VI. In the foreword to the *Selections from the Works of Lord Byron*, by A.C. Swinburne, 1885, p. xxvi)

for his exile in Tomis, along the Black Sea coast, forever far away from the City where he was happy and glorified.

While in antiquity the poet could be guilty, in the Middle Ages the culprit could be the book of romantic, adulterous love (in the concrete case of the Knight Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, as troubadour Chrétien de Troyes recorded around 1177 in the poem *Lancelot, le Chevalier de the Charrette*). This is in the Mediterranean oecumene memorized by Dante Alighieri in the famous episode of the historically-inspired adultery of Francesca da Polenta from Rimini with Paolo Malatesta. For Paolo's first trembling kiss (*la bocca mi baciò tutto tremante*) the culprit, really the "procurer was a book and who wrote it" (*galeotto fu l libro e chi lo scrisse*," *Divina Commedia, Inferno, V, 133 -138*).

If someone is a seducer in the Mediterranean, a real and permanent one, that is – foremost they are a writer.

## 8. Conclusion

The highlander and the seasider survive, among the archetypes created in the Mediterranean cultural ecumene, as a pair of not only different but also specular types, even rivals, from Homer to the present day. In works thematically located on the Mediterranean, European literature accepts and replicates the same scheme.

Both the highlander and seasider imagotypes, as literary patterns, are the consequences of their own territorial, economic, or cultural affiliations. It was not until later that they have sometimes been transposed across ethnic or national keys.

Those imagotypes owe a great deal of their typically recognized characteristics to the prejudices expressed by the opposite narrative, especially by the seasiders on the highlanders.

It is amazing how long some of these prejudices last, through millennia, regardless of the tremendous epochal changes in the meantime. The literature in that field acts also as an indicator, disseminator, and sometimes as an amplifier.

Neither one of the archetypes is uniform. Literary figures based on the same archetype can be characterized by different properties.

The highlander is usually displayed as a primitive, brutal (Polyphemus), freaky on a corporal and spiritual level (Caliban), credulous and simple-minded (Stanac), primarily revengeful (don José) or secondarily, as under the pressure of a cultural pattern (Orso Della Rebbia), etc.

The seasider is curious despite dangers (Jason), cunning (Odysseus), sly (Portia), a confabulator (Zorbás), a libertine (Don Juan), and a seducer (Casanova).

Such characters and features were found to be suitable and appropriate by authors from other geographic areas too: Shakespeare, Voltaire, Pushkin, Joyce, Yourcenar, Lagerkvist, and many others.

It seems that the Mediterranean produces not only more religions than the whole world needs, more history than it can withstand (what Churchill explicitly applied to the Balkans), but especially more literary topics and characters than it is capable to exploit by itself, leaving them to migrate to spiritually deeper regions.

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