

Romanian Identity in the Context of Disneyfication

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The paper makes a comparison between Disneyland and Dracula (Park), exploring the idea of a national myth both in America and in Romania. The concept of identity is understood here as shaped by historical and political national figures for both countries. In the case of America I will analyze the origins, history and structure of her most famous theme park, while in the case of Romania, I will talk about Bram Stoker's 19th century *Dracula* and, then, I will see what Romanian historians have to say about the two Romanian rulers made famous by this legend, Vlad Dracul and Vlad Țepeș.

One of the most famous examples given when speaking about globalization, and even glocalization more recently, is the American Disneyland, as 'the' theme park whose 'mere' copies are supposed to cover the whole world. And we do have such instances in Japan, Hong Kong and Europe, in France, the first two identical to the American park, while, the French one is much more national.

In his article 'Simulacra and Simulations' Jean Baudrillard has a very negative view of Disneyland,

'...a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation. To begin with, it is a play of illusions and phantasms: pirates, the frontier, future world, etc. This imaginary world is supposed to be what makes the operation successful. But, what draws the crowds is undoubtedly much more the social microcosm, the miniaturized and religious revelling in real America, in its delights and drawbacks. You park outside, queue up inside, and are totally abandoned at the exit. In this imaginary world the only phantasmagoria is in the inherent warmth and affection of the crowd and in that excessive number of gadgets used there to specifically maintain the multitudinous affect. The contrast with the absolute solitude of the parking lot – a veritable concentration camp – is total. Or rather: inside, a whole range of gadgets magnetize the crowd into direct flows; outside, solitude is directed unto a single gadget: the automobile. By an extraordinary coincidence (one that undoubtedly belongs to the peculiar enchantment of this universe) this deep-frozen infantile world happens to have been conceived and realized by a man who is himself now cryogenized; Walt Disney, who awaits his resurrection at minus 180 degrees centigrade.' (Baudrillard 5)

If, however, we do try a more positive approach, we may start by searching the reasons behind the creation of the park, in the very childhood of its creator. I will follow the article 'Walt's Inside Story' from the *The Walt Disney Family Museum* website. Here we are told about a little boy living on a farm with his family, made by his father to deliver newspapers first thing in the morning, a job who resulted in the boy's failure at school. Another frustration that seems to have had a huge impact on his later life is recalled by his younger sister Ruth, in the description of the Fairmont Park:

'It was a fairyland that you couldn't get into. All the fencing around it was white... We never dreamed there could be such an interesting – looking place. Walt and I used to go there and peek in all we could. But we didn't get in, ever... and then we moved away...' (WIS 1)

There was, however, a most positive influence on his imagination, a child's paradise that would later materialize in all those animated cartoons based on wonderful landscapes and adorable animals -his farm house in Marceline:

'The Disney's white frame house was set off by many shades of green. Leaf-heavy weeping willows, cedars, and majestic silver maples populated the front yard. When the harsh

Missouri winters melted in the face of a gentle spring sun, the fragrance of grape arbors, berries, peach and plum trees and apple blossoms mingled in the air with the promise of fruit to come.

In the fall, crisp red Wolf River apples weighed the tree branches down heavily with fruit the size of grapefruit. It was, in a word, paradise for Walt. He thirstily drank in life on the farm, his soul nourished in a way that was to provide him with warm feelings that he tried to communicate for the rest of his life'. (WIS 1)

His personality is presented as a combination between his father's determination and resilience, and his mother's 'love of fun, jokes and pleasure in people' (WIS 1). At his parents' influence one may add his uncle's love of trains and his best friend's -Walt Pfeiffer-family, 'a large, fun-loving family that enjoyed singing around the piano and joke telling' (WIS 1), something that helped Walt develop acting skills, having famous Charlie Chaplin as his model.

Besides performing, Walt manifested a love of drawing, especially little mice, since childhood. His training in this area was made through Sunday classes at the Kansas City Art Institute and the Chicago Institute of Art. And, also according to the article, his drawing in the school newspapers showed patriotic tendencies.

What can we see hear, in my view, is a cheerful and really dedicated child, important traits that will never leave him even as a hard-working and extremely daring boss at the Disney Brothers Studio, giving his family and his country all those wonderful fantasies he couldn't have. And one may say that this child could be a definition of America's personality, whose symbol Disneyland will later remain.

And now let's see 'How It All Began' and Disney's own projects and dedications for his theme park. According 'Disneyland's History' as revealed by JustDisney.com website:

'It started, Walt said later, with my taking my two kids around on the zoos and parks. While they were on the merry-go-round riding forty times or something, I'd be sitting there trying to figure out what you could do that would be more imaginative. Then when I built the new studio in Burbank, I got the idea for a 3-dimensional thing that people could actually come and visit. I felt that there should be something built where the parents and the children could have fun together.' (DH 1)

According to the article 'Walt Disney's Disneyland', the idea came to Disney when he noticed 'how ragged and filthy the small amusement park was' (WDD 1) and wished for 'one that would be clean, and would have attractions for parents and children together [...], a place that's as clean as anything could ever be, and all the people in it are first-class citizens, and treated like guests.' (WDD 1) He decided to document himself and search for a reliable model both in the United States and Europe, so he visited 'buildings of America's most prolific inventors and creators, such as Thomas Edison's Workshop, the Wright Brothers Bicycle's Shop and the home of the Dictionary Magnate Noah Webster.'(WDD 1) In the article 'New Horizons', the European model is revealed: 'he was particularly taken by the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, which was fairly priced and as clean as could be'. (NH 1)

As I've said earlier, the paper sees Walt Disney and his theme park as a definition of the United States, both due to the creator's personality and due to what he did choose to communicate through the park. And here I think we should pay attention to his own dedications, as quoted by the *Weekipedia*.

Let's start with Walt Disney's words in 1950, that connect the park both to the idea of a dream in general and to the idea of an American dream in particular.

'...to all who came to this happy place, welcome. Disneyland is your land. Here age relives fond memories of the past....and here youth may savor the challenge and promise of the future. Disneyland is dedicated to the ideals, the dreams and the hard facts which have

created America....with the hope that it will be a source of joy and inspiration to all the world.’ (Disneyland Wikipedia 1)

According to *Wikipedia*, there are five distinctly themed ‘lands’. I will use this description together with the quotations from Disney given here:

The first is ‘Main Street, USA’, based on the stereotypical turn-of-the-20th century Main Street. In Walt Disney’s words, ‘For those of us who remember the carefree time it recreates, Main Street will bring back happy memories. For younger visitors, it is an adventure in turning back the calendar to the days of grandfather’s youth’. (DW1)

The second, ‘Adventureland’, was designed to be an exotical tropical place in a far-off region of the world, ‘to create a land that would make the dream reality, we pictured ourselves far from civilization, of the remote jungles of Asia and Africa’. (DW1)

The third, ‘Fantasyland’, should be the place where ‘What youngster has not dreamed of flying with Peter Pan over moonlit London, or tumbling into Alice’s nonsensical Wonderland? In Fantasyland, these classic stories of everyone’s youth have become realities for youngsters – of all ages - to participate in.’ (DW1)

The fourth, and maybe the most important for my paper is ‘Frontierland’ that was meant to recreate the setting of pioneer days along the American frontier, since, as Walt Disney says, ‘All of us have cause to be proud of our country’s history, shaped by the pioneering spirit of our forefathers. Our adventures are designed to give you the feeling of having lived, even for a short while, during our country’s pioneer days.’ (DW1)

And the last theme park envisioned by Walt Disney himself, is ‘King Arthur Carrousel’, with a carousel taken from Canada, in order to make the park complete, and who has seventy-two horses carved in Germany in the late 19th century.

So, as we can easily see from this brief description of the structure and each of the main theme park’s purpose as Disney himself conceived it, apart from the funny side of the whole Disneyland, the history of America plays an important role, especially the ‘pioneering’ days and it should cause every American to be proud of it.

Like I said at the beginning of my paper, Disneyland is a very good example of globalization, even causing such a term like ‘disneyfication’ through his copies in the world. In another paper delivered this February at the Fulbright-RAAS conference in Bucharest I analyzed the case of Disneyland Paris considering the changing the American managers had to do, not to loose more money. This time I tried to see what happened in my own country with the so-called ‘Dracula Park’, the Romanian version of Disneyland.

If Walt Disney thought to give life to his wonderful animated fairytale characters, it seems that Romanians have chosen as a touristic attraction one of our national heroes. Or it should sound like it. The problem here is who was or, actually, who were, these Romanian heroes that are called ‘Dracula’ and how Romanian this so-famous legend really is?

In the article called ‘Bram Stoker’ from the *Wikipedia*, we are told about the Irish writer’s childhood, characterized by illness and helplessness, unlike Disney’s cheerful disposition, a trauma that surfaces in his literary work. ‘Everlasting sleep and the resurrection from the Dead, which are the central themes of *Dracula*, were of great importance for him, because he was forced to spend much of his life in bed.’ (Bram Stoker Wikipedia 1)

Then, the novel is analysed through its main themes and structure. It is an epistolary novel made by a series of diaries and letters, among the English characters. Speaking about the themes, we can also consider American Kathleen Webb’s comments from *Creature of the Night: The Changing Image of Dracula*, who sees the book as written only for Victorian English audiences, satisfying their ‘love for the macabre’ (Webb 15). Both Webb and *Wikipedia* place the novel in a time that was ‘both looking forward and back’ (Webb 15). For Webb, ‘The fin de siècle attitude, which looked to science and progress, was also pulled back by the religious authority and the rigid gender assignments’ (Webb 17). This theme is

developed in the chapter 'Literary Significance and Criticism' in *Wikipedia*, where the novel is seen as 'the struggle between tradition and modernity at the fin de siècle' (LSC 1). Such struggles are illustrated with Mina Harker as 'a thoroughly modern woman, as she uses (then) modern technologies such as the typewriter, but she still embodies a traditional gender role as an assistant school mistress' (LSC 1). In Webb's article, Lucy and Mina represent the New Woman concept, that woman 'who took control of her own life, and was considered by traditionalists, as a 'sexual predator', like Lucy and the female vampires at Dracula's castle'. (Webb 17) In a more positive version, Mina, the school teacher, allows men to decide what's best for her. Lucy's character is also commented upon in *Wikipedia*, which quotes Leonard Woolf, with his "Introduction" to the *Signet Classic Edition*, in 1992:

'What has become clearer and clearer, particularly in the fin de siècle years of the 20th century, is that the novel's power has its source in the sexual implications of the blood exchange between the vampire and his victims. *Dracula* has embedded in it a very disturbing psychosexual allegory whose meaning I am not sure Stoker entirely understood: that there is a demonic force at work in the world whose intent is to eroticize women. In *Dracula*, we see how that force transforms Lucy Westenra, a beautiful nineteen-year-old virgin, into a shameless slut.' (LSC 1)

The conflict between the world of past, as represented by folklore, myth, legend and religious piety, on the one hand, and the modern technology, logical positivism and secularism on the other, is manifested through the Van Helsing character. '...he uses, at the time, extremely modern technologies like blood transfusions, but he is not so modern as to eschew the idea that a demonic being could be causing Lucy's illness, thus he spreads garlic around the sashes and doors of her room and makes her wear a garlic necklace'. (LSC 1)

A fourth important character, Jonathan Harker, is said to 'display the problems of dwelling in a strictly rational modern world. Visiting Count Dracula in Eastern Europe, Jonathan scoffs at the peasants who tell him to delay his visit until after Saint George's feast day. As a solicitor, Jonathan is concerned with facts – bare meagre facts, verified by books and figures, and of which there can be no doubt.' (LSC 1)

Finally, the conflict between past and present, makes the characters use (then) modern technology and rationalism to defeat the Count. According the same chapter in *Wikipedia*: 'For example, during the pursuit of the vampire, they use railroads and steamships, not to mention the telegraph, to keep a step ahead of him (in contrast, the count escapes in a sailboat). Van Helsing uses the aforementioned method of hypnotism to pinpoint Dracula's location. Mina even employs the then primitive field of criminology to anticipate the count's actions, and cites both Cesare Lombroso and Max Mordan, who at the time of the novel were considered experts in this field.' (LSC 1)

Now that we have seen why the main characters and the main conflict of the story, the one between tradition and modernity, do belong to Victorian England, let's see what happens to the historical connection between this novel and the Romanian rulers made famous without their willing or their knowing it.

After I read the whole novel, I could not help but thinking at certain important points in my view: firstly, there is no mention of the name Vlad whatsoever; secondly, we have a vampire instead of the traditional impaler; thirdly, the castle is called 'Dracula's castle' instead of 'Bran'; finally, Dracula does not consider himself a Romanian, a Walach, but a Hugarian:

'We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship. Here, in the whirlpool of European races, the Ugric tribe bore down from Iceland the fighting spirit which Thor and Wodin gave them, which their Berserkers displayed to such fell intent on the seaboard of Europe, aye, and of Asia and Africa too, till the peoples thought that the werewolves themselves had come. Here,

too, when they came, they found the Huns, whose warlike fury had swept the earth like a living flame, till the dying peoples held that in their veins ran the blood of those old witches, who, expelled from Scythia had mated with the devils in the desert. Fools, fools! What devil or what witch was ever so great as Attila, whose blood is in these veins?' (Stoker 19)

Some interesting comments regarding Stoker's researches and models for this character can be also read in *Wikipedia*. Here we are told about a certain genre in the British Empire, called invasion literature, with representatives such as Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, or Arthur Conan Doyle, in whose tales 'fantastic creatures threatened the British Empire. Invasion literature was at a peak, and Stoker's formula of an invasion of England by continental European influences was by 1897 very familiar to readers of fantastic adventure stories.' (W 1) This idea is also present in Webb's article, where she claims that: 'The end of the century in England also saw the height of the British Empire. People in England, however, were quite unsure about the strength of English power, and Dracula becomes, in a sense, the foreigner who is invading England. The colonized becomes the colonizer.' (Webb 19)

Now that we clarified why Count Dracula comes to England, let's see what real English character he seems to impersonate, according to *Wikipedia*. If we read more about Bram Stoker's life, besides his childhood traumas, we are told he worked at the Lyceum Theatre in London, with Henry Irving as actor-manager, a 'tyrannical' figure. Irving is seen as 'Stoker's real life inspiration for the mannerisms of Dracula' (W 1), and the one 'Stoker hoped would play Dracula in a stage version' (W 1). It also seems that his original name was not 'Count Dracula', but 'Count Vampire'.

And here comes a very interesting idea, that will be later developed in the chapter 'Allusions/references to actual history and current science': '.....while doing research Stoker ran across an intriguing word in the Romanian language: 'Dracul', meaning 'The Devil'. There was also a historic figure known as Vlad the Impaler, but whether or not Stoker based his character on him remains debated'. (AHCS 1)

And now the question any Romanian reader should ask: what exactly did Stoker know about Romania? And the answer is not easy to give. According to Kathleen Webb, Stoker met a Hungarian professor from the University of Budapest in 1890, who told him about Vlad Tepes. This idea, however, is contradicted by Elizabeth Miller who argues that 'there is nothing to indicate that the conversation included Vlad, vampires, or even Transylvania. Furthermore, there is no record of any other correspondence between Stoker and Vambéry, nor is Vambéry mentioned in Stoker's notes for *Dracula*' (AHCS 1). Another source of inspiration might be, in *Wikipedia*'s view, Emily Gerard's 1885 essay *Transylvanian Superstitions*, so a French source he read during his research years about the European folklore.

I think the historical irony comes much later, through Radu Popescu and Raymond McNally's 1972 book, *In Search of Dracula*, who actually coined, in *Wikipedia*'s view, 'the supposed connections between the historical Vlad III Dracula of Wallachia and Bram Stoker's fictional Dracula'. And the article follows the 'true' history of Vlad III (1456-1462) as we all know it. The article's objectivity resides precisely in mentioning the German settlers in Transylvania as 'the main source of Romanian history from this time' (AHCS 1), an ethnic minority 'who had frequent clashes with Vlad for political and economic reasons, and may be somewhat biased' (AHCS 1), while for the Romanians he is 'a folk hero for driving off invading Turks with his brutal tactics; his impaled victims are said to have included as many as 100000 Turkish Muslims.' (AHCS 1)

The Romanian point of view in terms of fiction appears, for the first time, in the 1970s with Georgina Viorica Rogoz, a writer and a researcher, with a book '*Vlad, fiul Dracului*' (*Vlad, the Devil's Son*), followed by a second edition *Drăculeștii*, in 1977, and a third edition,

Istoria lui Dracula (Dracula's History) in 2004, having the first polemic work about Vlad Țepeș, written in 1463 at Buda by a German historian at Matei Corvin's Castle where Vlad had been taken hostage, as a title, according to Cornel Robu. It is a fascinating novel with three main parts.

The first, when Vlad Dracul, the son of Mircea cel Batran (Mircea the Great), is trapped by his rival at Bălteni, together with his son Mircea, and, while waiting either to die or to be saved by Matei Corvin, the king of Hungary, remembers the atmosphere and the amazing moment when he walked with the Pope and was received by Sigismund the Emperor, in the Christian Order of the Dragon, at Nuremberg. This part ends with Vlad Dracul's death and Mircea's being tortured and killed by the one who was supposed to save them.

The second part, actually the biggest part of the book is called 'Vocile' (The Voices) and there are three main characters, two Romanians – Codre and Harefa – and a Venetian, Benedetto, who have just buried Dracula's son, Țepeș, and are now trying to escape the rival band. Each of them has interesting experiences to remember about a very unstable period in Țara Românească, and each of them has something about the one ruler they were faithful to, Vlad Țepeș.

I will quote here from Harefa, a Romanian man whose name had changed into a Turkish one while being kept in the Ottoman Empire, sold by the former Romanian ruler instead of his own son. Although he had been raised and well-taught by a Turkish historian, his dream was to come back to Țara Românească and help Vlad fight the Turks:

'I knew from the boyars in Targoviste that Vlad the Ruler had ordered to stop all Germans' merchandise and that he was thinking of gathering them at his throne (Cetatea de Scaun), judge them in the spring and brand them on the ear or nose, not to forget they had not obeyed his demands of Grand Ruler and Prince, and then to let them free over the border, through the Rucăr and Prahova fords, back where they had come from. Vlad was really upset, but he had not punished them with his huge revenge yet. He might not have impaled them, had it not been for a rumor that, Brașov had also sent, in secret, twice more young apprentices to learn the language, besides those forty merchants' (Rogoz 160)

An important attribute of this book is that each chapter or "voice" begins with a motto taken from real chronicles of the time. The authors of the chronicles are either Romanians or foreigners but Christians, either on Vlad's side or on his rival's. And there are also some Turkish historians who had been really scared by Vlad. This part of the book starts with Vlad Dracul being taken prisoner by the Turks, together with his sons, Vlad and Radu, whose relationship is developed here. So we have Vlad Țepeș as a young boy in prison, despising the Turks while his younger brother, Radu, accepts them. Țepeș's later revenge is thus justified, and here I will quote the other Romanian, Codre, speaking about Vlad's cruelty:

'He was cruel, he was cruel and severe, there is no doubt...but he was fair. I'm still saying he was fair and I keep asking God to forgive me if I am wrong. And to forgive Vlad, too. He was cruel...How else could he have been other than cruel, at that time, when there were too many corrupted people in the country and too many highwaymen? And the enemies were continually waiting for us.....

He was cruel.....

The Germans were terrified and invented lots of cruelties, and charged Vlad with them, to revenge his right cruelty.

He was cruel.....

Our native ladies were terrified the day when Vladislav's son, the young and proud Dan, who had invaded our borders with his German army, was brought at Târgoviște, in the old cemetery, after having been defeated by Vlad the Ruler and his brave men, and was put to dig his own tomb and to listen – petrified – to his own funeral service' (Rogoz, 166)

Besides these episodes as such, the book also introduces us in the Sultan's palace and the political games played there, through Harefta and Codre, and in Rome, through the Venetian Benedetto, who is supposed to find out more about 'Dracullus' for the Pope.

The bad relationship between Vlad and Radu, two different brothers, the first fighting the Turks, the second fighting Vlad eventually, helped by the Turks, and all the intrigues and radical justice, lead us to the third and last part of the book, where Vlad Țepeș is buried, and the faithful voices are to confront the rival party. The book ends with the three of them being killed and ...buried only in snow, the impact upon the reader, at least upon me, being that of deep sorrow and pity and sympathy for Vlad Țepeș and his loyal servants.

In terms of history, we should consider the chapters 'Vlad Dracul, Primul român ce a făcut parte dintr-o civilizație europeană' (Vlad the Devil, the First Romanian that belonged to an European Civilization) and 'Vlad Țepeș – Un 'Dracula' pe care occidentul l-a ratat' (Vlad the Impaller – a 'Dracula' the Occident missed) from Gheorghe Zbucnea and Cezar Dobre's 2003 book *Diaspora Românească – Pagini de Istorie*- (Romanian Diaspora – History Pages).

I should start with a quotation about Țepeș's fame through the centuries from Dan Horia Mazilu reproduced in the book I've just mentioned:

'Vlad Țepeș is the Romanian Ruler who was destined to become famous (I think he is the most famous Romanian right now), not for his real merits – his fight against a horrible enemy of Christianity and of the European civilization, facts that can be historically checked – but in a context that made him into a frightful, terrible, - today even a prototype- of the vampire causing terror and death.' (Zbucnea & Dobre 19)

Like I have mentioned earlier in my paper, there is no mention of Dracula as 'Impaller' in Bram Stoker's book, something that *Wikipedia* explains through the lack of such information in Stoker's source: '...given Stoker's meticulous use of historical background to make it more horrific, it seems unlikely he would have failed to mention that his villain Dracula had impaled thousands of people if he had actually known much of Vlad's background' (W 1). So, what do we Romanians know about this issue when choosing him the one symbol to represent Romania through yet to be done 'Dracula Park'?

Both Georgina Rogoz and Zbucnea & Dobre can certify that he was a great fighter for Christianity and an extremely severe ruler of his country under the circumstances of his time. What Zbucnea and Dobre have to add to the classic story is the rest and biggest part of his life abroad, in exile. His origins are as Romanian as could be, since he was the son of Vlad Dracul, the grandson of Mircea cel Bătrân, and the cousin of Ștefan cel Mare. He might have been born in Sighișoara, Transylvania, Hungary at the time, or in Nuremberg, Germany, during his father's admittance in the Order of the Dragon. While abroad, he learned foreign languages such as German, Latin, Hungarian, Slavonic and Turkish. The years of imprisonment that are developed in Georgina Rogoz's book, seem to be true:

' It seems that he came in Țara Românească, for few years, only at his father's first reign, in 1436. He might have taken part, together with his father, in 1438, in the battles with the Turks, in Transylvania at Brașov, Sibiu and especially Sebeș Alba. Few years later he had to accompany his father at the Court of Sultan Murad the Second, in Adrianopole. He was retained there, first as a hostage, then locked in the Ottoman Empire [...].' (Zbucnea & Dobre 20)

He was remarked by Occidental historian Wauvrin in 1443, when fighting for the Christians, an historian who is credited with the first authentic news about young Vlad. He has a rather complicated life, abroad most of the time, either at Suceava at Ștefan cel Mare's court, or in Hungary, being protected by Iancu de Hunedoara, the one who also helped him obtain the throne of Țara Românească in 1456 and keep it for six years. In 1462 he was forced to run to Brașov in order to escape Mahomed the Second. He was caught, however, after a few weeks, and this marked the beginning of twelve years of imprisonment abroad, the

years that make the most mysterious period in his life, and are, therefore, full of legends. Only after his imprisonment in Buda did all those stories about his extreme cruelty appear, according to Zbucea and Dobre. He is then said to have had strong relationships with one of Matei Corvin's sisters whom he later married and became a Catholic. After another weeks of reigning in Țara Românească, helped by Ștefan cel Mare, he seems to have disappeared, and is said to have been killed. His head was separated from his body and put on a stick in Constantinople from Mahomed II 's orders, while his body was buried in an island in the middle of the lake Snagov.

Another contemporary Romanian historian who deals with Vlad Țepeș is Lucian Boia, in his 1997/2005 book *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească* (History and Myth in the Romanian Consciousness). According to Boia, there are no negative images of Vlad Țepeș in the Romanian chronicles of his time, that is around 1450. These are the only authentic Romanian written sources available and they speak about an ordinary ruler known for having built a castle in Poienari and the monastery from Snagov. However, here it is added a sort of joke saying that he made his people work so hard for the castle, 'till they closes broke', an episode also mentioned in Georgina Rogoz's novel, something that might have given no more than an idea about his sadism, in Lucian Boia's view. The rest of the information about Țepeș is not Romanian, but Byzantine, when speaking about his conflicts with the Turks, or German and Paleoslavonic when describing his supposed acts of sadism. And Lucian Boia blames these foreign sources for the modern version of the history of Vlad Țepeș, focused on his fight against the Turks and on his quick justice as symbolized by the stake, at the same time.

Another important point we can find in Boia's book regards both Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and the Romanian myth surrounding Vlad Țepeș. First, he tries to explain the location of Count Dracula, that is, why Transylvania of all other places in Europe, and he also sees Dracula as a Hungarian aristocrate, rather than Romanian:

'Even if when the famous novel was published, Transilvania belonged to Hungary, and Count Dracula himself is a Hungarian aristocrate, Romania inherited the myth in 1918 together with territories beyond the mountains. Dracula would have been fitted neither in the Alps (too close to the heart of Occident), nor in Tibet (too far). The Carpathian mountains offer him the right frame. It is at the margins of Europe: the place where Western civilization opens to an already different world.' (Boia, 100)

According to the same Lucian Boia, while everybody knows the horror stories with the image of a human monster thirsty for blood due to Bram Stoker's version, the same character filtered through our national sensibility and a different ideology made the 'vampire' into a great patriot ruler. And the basis for these changes seem to be not an authentic or reliable historical source but the remarkable capacity to transfigure that belongs to the imaginary.

Now that we have clarified who was the real Vlad Țepeș and which are the connections that could be made between him and the vampire in Stoker's book, let's see where did the name 'Dracul (a)' come from and who was our true Vlad Dracul.

In the first chapter of Zbucea and Dobre's book, 'Vlad Dracul, Primul român ce a făcut parte dintr-o civilizație europeană' (Vlad the Devil, the First Romanian that belonged to an European Civilization), which deals with Vlad Țepeș's father, 'Dracul' is said to come from 'Dragon', an important religious order founded in 1408 by Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, Hungary and the Holy Roman Empire, to fight an opposite group of Catholics and the Muslim Pagans. To this order, the 'Order of the Dragon', belonged at the time another important European rulers, such as the King of Poland, the King of Aragon and of Naples, the great Duke of Lithuania, etc. Their symbol was a golden medallion engraved with a dragon, like a snake, in the form of a circle, with the tail twisted around the neck, with the back torned along and with a cross above reading in Latin 'Oh, how merciful God is'.

In “Allusions/references to Actual History and Current Science” from *Wikipedia* we find the same explanation, to which it is added:

‘From 1431 onward Vlad II wore the emblem of the order and later, as ruler of Wallachia, his coinage bore the dragon symbol. People believed the dragon to be a devil, thus they called him Vlad Dracul (Vlad the Devil). In archaic Romanian the ending ‘-ulea’, meant ‘the son of’. Vlad III thus became Vlad Dracula, ‘The Son of the Devil’. (AHCS 1)

It seems to me quite an irony even for Romanians to lose that so very Christian meaning of the symbol that Vlad Dracul wore all his life and try to transform, to glocalize Disneyland into a Romanian hybrid meaning ‘the Park of Horror’.

Speaking about the park as such, the most recent article from *Evenimentul Zilei*, the online version, written on March 9, 2006, is called ‘Tăriceanu stârpește vampirii lui Năstase de la Drakula Park’ (Tariceanu eradicates Nastase’s Vampires from Drakula Park) and reads: ‘The government repeals the right to use the land where ‘Drakula Park’ was to be placed’ (EVZ 1). In an earlier article, written in January, 27, 2005, in *Ziarul Financiar*, is called ‘Procesul Drakula Park, amânat din nou’ (The trial Drakula Park, postponed again), reads:

‘The Court of Appeal in Bucharest asked the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs yesterday to prove the legal right of the director in the Ministry, who had signed the intervention petition in the Drakula Park case. Yesterday was the third summons in the case regarding the questioning of the Government Decision to allocate 450 hectares, in Snagov, for Drakula Park. The decision was prosecuted by Liberal Senators Nicolae Vlad Popa and Eugen Nicolaescu. The case has been delayed until February, 23, precisely because there is no evidence of the legal right of the MAI director that had signed the intervention petition in the Drakula Park case’. (ZV 1)

There is no description of the project as such, or at least it is not easy to find on the internet, as in the case of Disneyland.

As a conclusion I will say that while wonderful Disneyland from America so positively defines its country through enchanting images of both a well-known and documented history of the USA and through such lovely creatures as Disney’s animated cartoon characters, its supposed copy through disneyfication, globalization or glocalization, can provide neither a true story about our Romania, nor that joyful and positive image a Disneyland is supposed to involve anywhere in the world.

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