



PROPOSAL OF PROJECT FOR JOINTLY SUPERVISED DOCTORAL THESIS UNITA

**Cultural Heritage x ; Circular Economy ; Renewable Energy ;
Interdisciplinary**

Title of the project:

The fascination for the Heights: The Carpathians and the Pyrenees in the literary and visual imagination (from the nineteenth century to the contemporary period)

UVT

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Doctoral School of Humanities

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Description of the PhD project

Links or bibliography can also be included

The representation of the mountains in literature and the arts has a rich symbolism, and the summits of the peaks have frequently been associated with the depth of the human soul or with other core human values. Both the Carpathians and the Pyrenees hold an important place in the European geographic imagination. The English language writers who depict them have contributed to the imagological representation of these mountains both with remarkable travel notes and with influential fictional narratives.

In some literary works, the mountainous images are transfigured in fictional spaces, and geography is transformed into myth, while the narration is charged with a fantastic dimension. Specific features, such as the isolated castle on a picturesque mountain top and the labyrinthic mysterious forest have become iconic Gothic literature. In the case of the Carpathians, for instance, the fictional image of the mountains was consolidated by the association with the vampire myth constructed in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897). In the Pyrenees, the vision of the mountain was shaped by artists and writers and afforded a stimulating background for Gothic fiction such as in Ann Radcliffe's *Udolpho* (1797). In a contemporary bestselling novel, *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova (2005), both the Carpathians and the Pyrenees are veiled in the mysterious aura of the Gothic story.

The study of the mountains is an important direction of research in the frame of the UNITA consortium. Building on key concepts of Heterotopias (Michel Foucault, 1984), we invite proposals for a doctoral research focused on a comparative analysis of the representation of the Carpathians and the Pyrenees, which can approach topics such as, but not limited to:

- the symbolism of the mountains under study in literature and other arts;
- the relationship between space and imagination;
- subjective perceptions of geography and history;
- the evolution of the representation of the mountain across literary genres (from travel accounts to Fantastic Literature);
- the Gothic as a transnational phenomenon;

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- the construction of the image of the Pyrenees as compared to the image of the Carpathians in literary and visual representations;
 - Cultural transfers and the reconstruction of national identity abroad – with a particular focus on the Carpathians and the Pyrenees
 - The making of cultural myths.

The investigation of this topic is supported by the opportunity of the PhD candidate to do his / her research both at the West University of Timișoara and the University of Pau, and to have access to bibliographic resources on the Carpathians and the Pyrenees both in Romania and in France.

Select bibliography

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