

## Summary

### The Feminine Archetypes in Mircea Eliade's Literary Work

PhD student: Nicoleta Alina Dumitrache

Choosing my PhD theme was dictated by the absence of the studies approaching this field of research, which made me think that it would be a challenge for me just to take into consideration such a theme that had not been studied too much before. The thesis represents a study about the feminine archetypes in the literary work of Mircea Eliade due to the fact that I have found it unfair to the Romanian writer not to be approached from this perspective. The interpreters haven't taken into consideration Eliade's feminine archetypes in a particular way and haven't valorized this dimension of his work, so that they have been written a lot about Mircea Eliade but only a few things about his feminine characters. Felicia Gherghina has made a brief analysis of some of the feminine characters in the next novels: *Maitreyi*, *Miss Christine* and *A Wedding in Heaven*. Nicolae Manolescu has characterized Eliade's characters like "they are suffering of frustration, helplessness, idealism; (...) the psychological issue can be met here, the hero is a subject, the narrator is a character of the novel". Eliade also imposes mythical characters because he does not necessarily follow the rule of constructing the characters but mainly some characters who take place at the existentialist drama.

Even Eugen Simion in his *Despre romanul românesc*, in volume „Fragmentarium” said that people were creating myths throughout its folklore and history. A literature, especially through its epics is capable of creating myth-characters. The creative force of a writer lies firstly in his capacity of creating people – new and many people. It is not only the simple reproduction of “personagii” (the good father, the pervert, the guilty woman, the prodigal son, the cheated virgin etc), but also the creation of the new people, meaning people who participate in the efforts of building the present. Eliade's feminine characters are seen both from a social perspective and from an internal one, and in some cases they are also added mythical connotations. “The woman in Eliade's novels is not only a feeling but also intelligence, not only narrative construction but also mythological reiteration, the reiteration of a myth. She does not live only as a “she” who depends on “him”, she also has a social life and she is involved in the cultural life just as the

male character does; so that the women are the male's equals. Each of them has a well-defined role and, it can be said, equal in the evolution of the novel". (Eugen Simion)

Therefore, the idea of writing about Eliade's feminine characters has suddenly appeared to me as a challenge, mainly because I have not been able to find more than one study approaching this subject – Felicia Gherghina. That is why I consider this theme very appealing to the eye and that is not only because of its importance and its complexity but also because of its interest that can be provoked. The possibility of reaching an exclusivist feminine universe, full of mystery and fabulous things, where you can step into a certain way but you may never know where this way leads to is quite a unique one. The correlations can be innumerable and it is precisely because of that the challenge is even bigger. Eliade's feminine characters represent a different world where there are some extraordinary experiences that take place into parallel universes, in such mythical places either they are in heaven or on the Earth. They always belong to a unique epoch and, at the same time, also fascinate throughout their structure, their femininity and least but not last, throughout their attitude, mind and psychological construction. My aim is to approach a certain type of femininity, and that is the ideal femininity from the writer's imagination.

From the scientific point of view, this research is going to do some new introspections and evaluations of the feminine characters in Mircea Eliade's literary work, new databases about the feminine archetypes in the Romanian literature, precisely in the literature of Mircea Eliade's, especially due to the fact that the actual data of this problem have been only tangentially approached. It is certain that this research is an opportunity to establish the enrichment of the study of the Romanian literature concerning their interpretation (most of them had never been analysed before). My research is based on all the novels and short stories that can offer the proper material for analysing the feminine characters.

There are questions that should be asked. Have these feminine characters not been interesting enough to be taken into consideration by any of the Romanian literature analysts? What kind of relationships are there between all these characters? Can they be sorted out and fit into some archetypes? It is true that some of them can be miraculous creatures, positive or negative types but how else could we emphasize their features if not by an objective and an exhaustive analyses? What is the best way for someone to approach these characters if not by studying them very carefully? Maitreyi is an archetype of the universal female, some kind of

Isolda or Juliet or even Damayanti (Mahabharata). Miss Christine is the archetype of a vampire, a death messenger who desperately wants to stick with the living in searching of love just like Eminescu's Luceafărul. Miss Christine is some kind of Miss Havisham's projection in Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*; the only difference is that Miss Christine lives in the world of the death while Miss Havisham was living in the world of the living. Both Miss Christine and Miss Havisham are "forever brides" (see Susan Connell's novel) but each of them are living in another world, another dimension. One is capable of arising some devastating passion while the other is mourning her love from the past.

Ileana / Lena is the ideal female, the Demetria archetype who is forced by the destiny or by Mavrodin to become an instrument so that she can fulfill an ideal that she neither wants nor she accepts it. Ileana could be considered as an eternal female if that would exist.

My research paper emphasizes the way I synchronize with the concept of the female and the different archetypes of femininity in Mircea Eliade's literary work. This research approaches the Romanian literature field of science from the perspective of analyzing the femininity archetypes in Eliade's novels and short stories.

The main objective is represented by both the identification and analysis of Eliade's characters and their fitting in a certain type of typology. My objective is to emphasize these characters considering the age, archetypal construction criteria and the approach of the female considering erotic /non-erotic perspective. The specific aims of my research are:

- the theoretical background of this issue;
- the demonstration of the fact that Eliade's female typologies represent an important part of the writer's work;
- the focalization on female typology in Eliade's literary work.

Along this research I intend to highlight the female condition and the femininity concept from different points of view (historical, biological, political, religious and mythological perspectives). I identify some particularities of the feminine archetypes, to analyze their universe and their correspondences with real human beings from the author's life by taking into consideration both the space and Mircea Eliade's personal experience. I do that by accessing the poetical elements in his work and then, later on, that would allow me to reach this female characters' universe where I will take into consideration their archetypal construction, the

correlations between them, the classification, the classification and assessment both in the novels and in the short stories.

While writing this research paper, I took into consideration Eliade's own life experience, his poetics and aesthetics elements from Mircea Eliade's literary work, gender studies, mythology and a classification of a certain typology of these characters.

This research contains five chapters, each of them containing other subchapters. I am going to get started from a general vision over the writer and his work and I intend to find out some particular aspects concerning each feminine characters. In the first chapter I start talking not only about Eliade's activity and his work but also about some events from his personal life, events which made a huge impact over his life as a writer and also over his way of thinking. Moving on, I dig into his love life and make a portrayal of the writer in love, my main objective being that of emphasizing his own vision on his work.

In the second chapter I take into consideration the poetics and aesthetics elements that I found in Mircea Eliade's work. These elements will emphasize the research, the identification and the analysis of author's writings concerning literature, the history of religions, correspondence, memoirs, in one word, all his work. I also highlight the literary work and the poetics of the fantastic. Eliade's poetics is a very complicated dimension and it emphasizes the hystorical, social, cultural, psychological perspectives that are reflected in his writings.

In the third chapter I consider different approaches concerning some feminism and femininity concepts generally speaking; the aim is to create an introduction into the assimilation of the two concepts, to decrypt some existing theories and ways of thinking about the emancipation of women. This chapter is a synthesis of the conceptual determinations where I try to delimit their sphere so that, later on, to introduce the concept of female, which is an important element for this research.

I approach the female both as an ideal, as an object of representation and as a reality exponent trying to include the femininity essence the way it is reflected in Eliade's literature. Moreover, in this chapter I choose to make an incursion into mythology having in mind the fact of exposing an image of the femininity from this point of view. My aim is to identify the archetypes of the femininity on the mentality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century establishing at the same time some statute of the female both at a European level and at a national level. These archetypes are found into the feminine characters from Eliade's novels. I integrate the notions of magic and

mystery as attributes of the femininity and I find their reflection in Eliade's writings – all these are opening the new horizons concerning the approach of the next chapters.

The fourth chapter is the most developed one and it is about the female archetypes in Mircea Eliade's literary work, both in his novels and in his short stories. This chapter emphasizes the complexity of the female archetypes because in Eliade's writings the real often meets the unreal and obviously the route of the characters is a very interesting one from this point of view. This part of my research targets the identification, the extraction and the establishment of the female characters types by their archetypal construction, the correlation between them, the classification and their assessment. It is the most elaborate part of the research and it represents my main scientific contribution. This chapter brings about a new approach concerning the feminine literary types in Mircea Eliade's work. The interpretation of the data from this perspective manifests in concrete results of the analysis of these characters. The femininity of the characters highlights not only their common features but also some distinct features that brings about a glimpse of diversity and interest. We can find in Eliade's writings some fantastic, enigmatic, romantic, erotic characters and even more than that, witches, virgins and eternal female types. All the feminine characters fascinate through their strength and grace, characteristics that the author built them with, because he poured into them femininity, ideal, fascination and illusion. They are enigmatic, well behaved, sensual, ghostly and they describe a distinct world (or maybe two worlds) where they can hide or reveal as much as they want to having nothing to play by but their own rules. I identify and analyze the archetype presented in literature and I try to establish the female archetypes in the Romanian writer's literary work. I analyze some lists with the names of the characters and these lists bring about the conclusions concerning the frequency of the female characters. I highlight the fact that Eliade's characters represent not only "paper beings" but also the soul of the narrative discourse that the reader connects with and perceive them as being real. In the end, most of Eliade's characters in the novels are images extracted from real life human beings and reflect Eliade's reality, they are characters contextualized by the social and historical present of the narrative. As a conclusion, Eliade's characters have got both elements specific to real people but also "homo fictus" elements, although Eliade like Hemingway did not want to populate his writings with fictional characters but mostly with people as he used to say that. He succeeded in keeping his loyalty to his own way of thinking concerning characters, and still one of his representative characters can

be considered Miss Christine who is only a projection of his own imagination and she does not have any correspondent in the real world.

In the fifth chapter I realize a typology of these female characters. I analyze them considering the criteria of age and I approach them from erotic / non-erotic perspectives. Therefore, I identify three typologies: the first one is that of a teen ager having the prototype of the wife and that of a mistress; the second typology is the one of the old woman or the asexual female and the third one is that of the eternal female. This chapter comes as a conclusion of the idea of female and that is the ideal female from the author's imagination. It is necessarily to approach this subject concerning the identification of the female archetypes in Mircea Eliade's work.

In this research I demonstrate that Mircea Eliade's feminine typologies represented an important dimension of the writer's work and the fact that the issues have opened up a new perspective of analysis for the future researchers in this literary field. In this scientific paper I have had in mind not only the attitude toward the female, feminism and femininity but also the way it influenced the reception of the female in society. I have highlighted as well the fact that Eliade's literature was not only fiction but also a reflex from his life's experience, it was a part of his life and the female characters have had a straight impact over the reader.

All Eliade's female characters are placed in an urban life or in an oneiric space< the writer highlights especially the character and femininity features at the same time with no intention of trying to be superior to them but mostly giving them the opportunity to survive. Eliade's characters are the copies of real females from his very close life and he invest fictional features in them just to impress and fascinate the reader in order to beam him in a reality surrounded or not by myth where anything is possible and the femininity reveals in all possible hypostasis. It does not matter if the female lives in an oneiric space or in a real one, it does not matter if this space is diurnal or nocturnal, the femininity crosses the borders of Eliade's writings and wraps the reader in an imaginary shroud just like the one in the gypsies' house. That beams the reader in another world, a world of fantasy where the difference between dreams and reality blurs.

My investigations straighten the observation that the female characters in Mircea Eliade's work can be divided into two categories: mythical female characters such as Maitreyi, Ileana / Lena, Oana, Miss Christine, Niculina, Marina Darvari, Zamfira, the gypsies, Hildegard, Ilaria,

Frusinel, The General Woman, Simina, Miss Roth, Adriana Ariana, Thecla, Maria Daria, Ileana Sideri, Irina, Dorina, Missis Zerlendi etc and female characters contextualized by the historical perspective of the narrative, more cerebral or not such as Ghighi, Una, doamna Anicet, Getta Dragu, Marcella Streinu, Ioana Bologa, Veronica Tabacovici, Cătălina Palade, Valeria Dobridor, Anca Vogel, Clody, Geurti, Nora. The mythical female characters populate mostly Mircea Eliade's short stories but they can be found in the novels too.

I have investigated all the female characters in Eliade's writings. Even if we can easily find a huge number of female characters, these can be typologically classified which I actually did in the fifth chapter. These characters can constitute in a constellation of which hypostasis have configured along the way and have represented I hope, a small personal contribution to this literary field. There are some female characters that are both interesting and also original ones and can be seen as some kind of revelations in Mircea Eliade's literature such as Miss Christine, Simina, Oana, Frusinel, Maria Darvari, Zamfira, Dorina, Niculina, Miss Roth.

I have to say that the male characters have a more generous consistency than the female ones. Either way, while some of the female characters are well designed on a strong base, others have been treated with less consideration. This aspect suggests a possible orientation toward the male universe in Mircea Eliade's literary work in the future.

The conclusions are the following: Eliade's female characters are coming slowly along the way but they somehow manage to arrive just in time to be able to change everything they need in the males' destinies where they belong to. They always come in time, even though the time has always changed and their major achievement is the capacity of being eternal in a constantly changing world and always offering some new beginnings because they are nothing but some kind of transformers who belong to another world and not the real one. These females do not represent some ways of accessing the humanity (apart from a few ones) but they represent some ways of accessing the divinity (no matter the form of it), the sacred and because of that, they are somehow some kind of stairs to heaven. Eliade's female characters do not allow time to interfere their space, they overcome time, they refuse to grow old and all they want is to keep the youth in their hands forever and because of that they belong to eternity. Most of them are mythical creatures and they are anchored into ancestral experiences that highlight their extraordinary connection to traditions, old rituals and vital elements. It is imperative to know that Mircea Eliade presents the archetype as an exemplar prototype, repeatable of the primary model,

his absolute model being the sacredness. However, like in the real life, in Eliade's literature we can also find some hidden archetypes like Eugen Simion used to say.

This research paper has had as a main purpose to identify the complexity of the feminine hypostasis in Eliade's writings, to analyze the specific of the female characters and to assess critically and literary the universe of Eliade's narrative taking into consideration all the particularities of each female character. I dare to hope that, by approaching this theme, I have opened up a way for a new research in Mircea Eliade's literature.