

“THE LIVE CITADEL” IN HALLIPAS’ CYCLE

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Abstract: This article is a foray into Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu’s interwar Bucharest as seen through the eyes of some of her characters in Hallipas’ Cycle, who travel or walk through the “Live Citadel”. The research is an analysis of a corpus of literary texts from the cultural anthropology perspective. The paper focuses on answering few questions as: How people used to live at that time, what diseases they feared the most, what was their outlook on family, education, how did they have a good time, what were the most innovative things in terms of comfort and culture, what the streets and the public places looked like, what were the newest occupations they could undertake, how people used to behave in the public means of transportation, what means of transportation they used, how men and women behaved towards each other inside the family and in the public places, how men and women came to know each other, what were they obsessed about. The houses’ variations of the interior decorations depended on the social category of the persons who inhabited them, so did the way of living, of socializing, of raising their children, of dressing up, of having fun, of travelling. Places with names that sound familiar to us, contemporaries, used to be populated by other businesses and trades than today and the people of that time were different in behaviours, in mentalities and occupations. The public places that are taken into account are streets, trams, markets, the Stock Exchange, cinemas, sport clubs, art galleries, courts of law, the University and private boarding schools. Here density of population reached its highest values. This article will also offer a depiction of Bucharest during various weather conditions such as after raining, during the winter.

Keywords: Bucharest, means of transportation, food, occupations, places.

Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu (1876 - 1955) is a Romanian writer of the interwar period as her most important works were published during this period. The present paper focuses on aspects of Bucharest, the capital city of Romania, as seen travelling along with Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu’s characters in her “Hallipa’s Cycle”¹, where we may discover a Bucharest at the beginning of the 20th century, full of people with specific manners, certain ways of living in certain environments causing certain diseases. Social cast dictated the places they attended.

The upper class: This category included deputies (politicians), land-owners, artists, princes etc.

They hired nurses, mentor teachers for their children in order to give them a proper education ever since these were young. When their children grew up they were able to go

¹ The Hallipa’s Cycle is constituted of the novels that have the members of Hallipa family in the center of their plot: *Fecioarele despletite* (*The Dishevelled Maidens* - 1926), *Concert din muzică de Bach* (*A Concert of Bach’s Music* - 1927), *Drumul ascuns* (*The Hidden Road* - 1933), *Rădăcini* (*Roots* - 1938). The edition used for all citations is: Papadat-Bengescu, Hortensia, *Opere*, vol. 1-3, Bucharest, Fundația Națională pentru Știință și Artă, Romanian Academy, 2012.

abroad and obtain University degrees which they would make use of later when they came back in Romania.

Such was the case for Elena Drăgănescu's child since she was the wife of a deputy. She had instilled strict rules for her boy, Ghighi, whom she had rationalized "the food, the air, the recreation" (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 563). Dia, Nory's sister, had also been raised and educated by her Swiss mentor teacher, Mado. Dia had attended schools abroad for a long time – in Geneva. Prince Maxențiu had also benefited from an English nurse who had taken pity on him for being the son of a "dishevelled maiden" – Zaza, the French cabaret star. Each and every Hallipas' child had gone abroad to obtain a diploma – Hallipas' Twins had gotten a degree in Pharmacy and Bacteriology in Germany, Mika-Lé had been at Notre-Dame de Paris, Coca-Aimée and Elena had been in Switzerland. Marcian, Prince Maxențiu's cousin, was the son of a nurse and under her disciplining influence he had become a worldwide famous musician.

Young ladies got married to whom their fathers ordered them to or they feared they might have become spinsters (e.g. Aneta Pascu, Tana, Gramatula). Elena got married to Drăgănescu in order to save her legacy and signed the cession her father asked her to. Dia obeyed her father's will – Boyar Dinu – and got married to Vrana's son who was bankrupt but possessed a social title. Coca-Aimée got married to her mother's husband – Dr. Walter – in order to avoid poverty, and Dr. Walter had observed his wife's pray to help Coca-Aimée with this. Marrying out of love or searching for love was a rare case and mostly it was meant to fail one way or another: Elena took many years with interruptions and highs and lows in relating to her lover, Marcian; Mika-Lé never found love no matter how many relationships she had tried; Mini was divorced of her rich husband.

Partnerships between man and woman were started out as trades. Ada Razu married Prince Maxențiu for the sake of his title of nobility and he wanted to save his lands with her money. Dr. Walter had based his fortune on Salema's riches. Ada married Lică in order to push him into politics and gain advantages out of his position – she had gained ownership on the Prince's horses and stables and was using them for races to drain her money.

Thus Elena now lived in the only house in Bucharest where all the taps worked and Mini also benefited from the warm running water to take long pleasant baths with a sponge in a tub. Elena owned the only store with musical instruments in Bucharest and she was able to organize concerts with artists: "The music shop, shadowy and cool there behind, under the stairs leading to the upper floor, was crowded and noisy towards the entrance and at the desks. That autumn, the Opera held the record of solicitations as well as it used to hold it some other time for the symphonic poems" (*A Concert of Bach's Music*, p. 683). Bach was preferred out of snobbism and a tendency to project a serious image onto the society, although Mozart was perceived as jolly and pleasant – ladies loved Dr. Rim's play of Don Juan on a violin, admitting they had grown tired of that lugubrious atmosphere their whole life was impregnated with.

Dr. Rim used to play chamber music once a week at the Schmidts. There, Mr. Schmidt – a pharmacist – played the double bass, Dr. Rim played the violin or the flute, Mr. Tuchte, owner of a model dairy, played the cello and Mrs. Schmidt played the piano. Together they formed a perfect quartet and they had fun.

Elena's house, as well as Dia's, was open to visits – for coffee and tea – at certain hours, a fix time of the day, complying to a strict program and rules. Dia was in charge with "taming the servants" (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 469). Visitors were served "sweet wines and various cookies" (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 565). Dia's fix program of meals bothered Nory

who had not been raised into such a noble environment as Dia, and used to eat at any time of the day, whenever she felt hungry.

Dia and Elena held accounting books, they checked things up, they knew how to handle their family's finances.

The upper class representatives all spoke foreign languages such as French, English, German. Ada addressed Lică in French in the street although she was actually insulting him. Dia wrote letters in French. Elena knew English. The writer uses neologisms to designate the newest aspects of technology in the Romanian language – wattman (for the tramcar driver), hall, golden party, bob-sleigh, sex-appeal, sandwich etc.

In Lascăr Catargiu Avenue houses were still rare and newly built. Elena's house in Lascăr Catargiu Avenue included a music chamber (room) where people gathered and listened to classical music be played on piano, violin etc. Furniture was made mainly out of walnut and Cordoba leather (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 562). Her husband came from a family of publicans who sold a lot of wine and had big deposits in Dealu Spirii (a place in the very centre of Bucharest).

Men offered financial help to the whole family and to the extended family inclusive of sisters, sisters in law etc. Elena kept on living together with her sister in law, Tana, even after Drăgănescu's death as well as Dia kept on sharing her life with her step mother, Cornelia, with her sister in law – Ms. Deleanu – after Deleanu died. Strangers felt obliged out of principles to help poor unhappy persons who were innocent victims of fate: Mika-Lé got a dowry from Gramatula who was no consanguineous relative of hers, then Tana wanted to offer her another big dowry and arrange a family life for her and her child. Dr. Walter married Coca-Aimée – his wife's daughter – only to keep his promise to his wife and to help her, to protect her without going to bed with her because he did not appreciate her as a wife or as a human though she was an ideal of physical beauty.

These people showed respect towards ancestors and hung their portraits on the walls of their palaces. At his house – the Barodin Palace – next to Calea Victoriei, Dr. Walter had Salema's portrait right at the entrance. Salema had been his mistress – though she was old and fat and a banker's wife – and he owed her the construction of the sanatorium at the end of Kiseleff Highway and the whole fortune of his becoming a famous physician, owning his own private clinic too. While his lover Salema was still alive he had acquired lots of costly objects of art – “paintings, bibelots, furniture, carpets” (*The Hidden Road*, vol. 1, p. 847) bearing notorious names like Lalique, Van Beers etc. The sanatorium was also a museum at the same time, it was equipped with state of the art technology and a laboratory where he studied and searched for new toxic substances. He did not enjoy going to clubs and coffee shops, he hated social gatherings, he hated showing off. He had the latest automobiles – a Rolls, a Buick and a Chrysler. Coca-Aimée's friend, Cora Persu, used a Buick to travel inside Bucharest. Elena also had a fancy automobile, a Lincoln. Dia had a Chrysler and the coachman had been sent to a driving school.

Doru Hallipa kept his mother's portrait at the entrance hall of Prundeni house.

“As regards *the future*, that is marriage, pensioners were true modern bourgeois and had in mind three kinds of candidates: the tennis comrade, the billionaire producer and the nobleman with a title but no money left in his pockets” (*The Hidden Road*, p. 866). For such purposes young ladies went to clubs, e.g. the Sports Club. There one could see how pairs got to link and split (id., p. 1034). Cora Persu attracted Coca into a dangerous game. They got out of the car and walked in the street flirting with different kinds of men. The fun was to study their reactions and those reactions depended on each type of a man that was being mislead – young wolves, old dirty lewd jerks, don juans, workers etc. The girls quickly and suddenly

climbed back into the car. Yet, at times rape was one step away from happening because the young lady was unprotected by an adult of the family, out in the city – the driver himself was a danger even though he was employed by that very young lady's family (Coca-Aimée).

Coca-Aimée took her mother out at the optician's on Calea Victoriei (Victory's Avenue) to buy a lorgnette so that they could go to the horse races and watch them. At painting expositions men wore monocles: there were "two categories of monocles: the diplomatic monocle and the snobbish monocle" (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 573).

These people went to balls where they "could hear all kinds of variants of style and tone: polite sentences, compliments more or less skilful, discussions, complicated or careless, cancons, jokes (...) and the young people's jargon – young club members friends" (*The Hidden Road*, vol. 1, p. 979).

For such parties or for auctions people – mostly ladies but men, too – went out to buy certain materials such as taffeta or laces or satin or crepe de Chine, silk etc., then went to the tailor's to have them made. Dia went to a fashion house in the centre to renew her wardrobe. Lică's tailor is very busy with famous clients and earns a lot of money out of this business. Right after his marriage with Ada, he went to have some sport suits tailored, and Prince Maxențiu wore a sportsman suit in order to please Ada though he was not keen at all on sports and horses. The race course was a place where high-society loved to gather around and socialize – Coca-Aimée's young friends (Zossima, Pejan, Bubi, The Persus Sisters etc.), Lenora, Lică, Ada, Maxențiu etc. Ada took great care of her horses and had hired specialized personnel for them.

Ada took Prince Maxențiu out in the city in their dog-cart so that everybody could notice them better and acknowledge her as a Princess since she came from a tradesman's gipsy family and now she had climbed up the social ladder. They also had a car but the dog-cart provided more visibility out in the city. As a counterexample, Dr. Walter always travelled in his automobile with the windows closed so that nobody could see him.

The Hallipas also owned a dog-cart which they used to travel everywhere. Mini, a friend of the family, used their dog-cart to get back to Bucharest where she felt best. She loved the "Live Citadel" especially for the comfort it brought.

The wealthy families employed coachmen, drivers, gardeners, land administrators who were agricultural experts. Drăgănescu died at Walter's clinic of heart failure. Rich people only were the clients of Dr. Walter.

Dia had the most modern suitcases. She cared a lot about her furniture and allowed no one to wipe them from dust. She had a house at Izvor and used to have another one in Plantelor Street. The furniture was Empire style. Dr. Walter furniture was Empire, too. Dia kept inside goblins, embroidered pillows, brocade etc. Her second husband had been killed on a national feast day by a knife, in front of the Athenaeum, for a low mean reason – adultery – but the public opinion had speculated that it was a political assassination. Dia and Mado had the habit of watching the shop windows – in Paris or in Bucharest – in order to memorize models of blouses and knit or sew them later from memory.

Dia's house in Plantelor Street was built in the Renaissance style. Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu adds that most of the buildings of our capital were built in this style: this style used to be the "jewel of our capital before the war" (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 514) (i.e. World War One). Dia also used to own a stable of race horses which she used to rent and make money out of it.

We are also told about a baroness who switches off the lights in order to save money. (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 511) The rest of the country was not electrified, but in the capital the richest people had even electric bulbs. Nory daydreamed and her vision contained a "Venetian

lantern” (*id.*, p. 481). Even the richest had debts and we hear that the real estate prices were rising.

Women had their secrets they kept from the men in their families and they had a hard time disclosing them to men. These secrets referred to diseases that affected the feminine sex – womb cancer, haemophilia etc. Lenora feels ashamed to confess her bleedings to her husband, Dr. Walter as well as she had felt ashamed to avow Doru Hallipa that she had been raped by the Italian painter and decorator. Madona also feels ashamed to tell her husband, Dr. Caro, that she was suffering from haemophilia. She confessed it to Nory when her death came closer and in the meantime the whole relationship with her husband got ruined because she refused to make sex with him and thus they suspected each other of cheating and both were acting jealous towards each other.

Men went to nightclubs where women danced and sang half naked.

There was a *new fashion* in the city: the woman had to be slim, hipless – as the mannequin de Maison Lys: “without the pelvis of life, created not to bear children but the last models of Premet, some silk scarf on an inexistent body”, wearing a tiger fur, with a “small insolent head that was painted in such a way that the life of the skin should not be felt” (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, p. 464). Eliza, Doru Hallipa’s second wife, “was not shaped according to the newest model” (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 513), according to this new fashion, she was a bit fat.

The middle class was in full ascension and it referred mainly to physicians, artists or others who gained access to the high society.

Dr. Lina Rim was native of Tecuci, a province town. She had access to rich clients and had thus gathered a nice amount that allowed her – at least in theory – to buy a beautiful, artistic house that her husband, Dr. Rim, appreciated and longed for. They were actually living in a poor house with poor furniture that was poorly decorated. It was Lina’s peasant furniture that she had brought from Tecuci. She felt compelled to give up her child, Sia, whom she bore without being married, in order to be able to graduate from Faculty of Medicine and become a respected and wealthy gynaecologist.

Mr. Ipolit Persu was a member of scientific commissions but his house had almost no furniture and the furniture was scarce, poor and cheap. His daughters did not benefit from a high education and lost their time with uneducated young people, and were quite cunningly towards everybody. They went to the Sports Club to access the high society, they were manipulating Coca-Aimée to bring Dr. Walter’s Lincoln (automobile) and played wicked games on young men in the street, endangering Coca-Aimée. Boyar Dinu – Dia’s and Nory’s father – used to attend the Royal Club (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 515).

Dr. Caro started out poor. When they lived in Berthelot Street, his wife Madona used to do the laundry for other people to earn money and they had bed-bugs in that flat. Madona complained that the campaigns against bed-bugs were inefficacious. He gradually grew rich and bought a Chrysler automobile. He got to be a lecturer at the faculty, too. He decorated his cabinet and bought state-of-the-art devices – such as the “radioscopy equipment” (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 475) – in order to please his high-life clients – ladies who needed abortions, or needed help in child labour, or needed appendectomy etc. As Dr. Lina, he practiced gynaecology and surgery and this proved to be an inspired choice from the point of view of the financial future.

As midwife Mari complains that people had given up midwives’ services and started to ask for physicians only for such cases. Now midwives grew poor because they were losing all their clients.

Dr. Rim was a professor at the Faculty of Medicine, he also had artistic preoccupations such as collecting paintings and stamps, playing the violin and the flute but he

did not gain as much as his wife. The Hallipa Twins were working in the faculty's laboratory, in the underground, doing a work of research, and they hardly gained anything since they had to fight their father, Doru Hallipa, at the court of law, in order to win a mere house where they could live.

Dr. Caro and Dr. Rim had also benefited from a musical education, they both played the violin and other instruments.

Lică feels tempted to go to the Stock Exchange that had just appeared in our country at that time but he heard that people committed suicide and the atmosphere in there was extremely crowded and stifling. Jobless people like Lică tried to earn money out of fortune games (playing cards etc.) or by misleading others in trades and negotiations. He also felt free to have a rest in other the gardens of other people.

New jobs had entered the market at that time. These were deemed as honourable: “tram ticket seller, shop assistant or fiddler” (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 503), “typewriting and manicure” (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, p. 518): “The suburban girl had disappeared and was exotic, and the new professions, the urban ones, typewriting and manicure, had shaped the form of the suburb. The driver was the quintessence of the suburban boy moulded by mechanics as by fire, to take a form that yesterday still used to lead to *anything*” (*id.*, p. 518). The electrician had new perspectives ahead.

Fiddlers had replaced their old romances with the “*chimmy* and the *Mon home*” (*id.*, p. 516). “The modern troubadours wore long waistcoats, long shoes, shaved faces, rare hair with no haircut, forced movements, rigid walk, disgust and laziness, true or fake exhaustion to let one know that their temperament was the lack of temperament. They did not know that their partners had to be scanty mannequins; on narrow busts they had to wear breasts that scabrously pointed out in an unsuccessful attempt as any voluptuous form, meaningless faces, exaggerated eyes, lanky arms. Models that had been created for the new dances or out of the ferment of the ultimate ideas of extreme civilization. It was the European model, whose structure had emerged of the slow transformation phenomenon, in conflict with the sudden accidents.” (*id.*, p. 516).

Mothers educated their children according to the heroes they had met in books or on the silver screen, at the cinema.

Nory – Dia's younger step sister and Boyar Dinu's bastard daughter – had been taken to the “schools in Bucharest” (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 563). She had gone to Pitar Moș Nuns School, then she had graduated two faculties – Law (Political Economics) and Philology. She became a feminist and helped women by providing her services to a non-profit woman assistance organization. She worked at the Palace of Justice that was extremely crowded.

Eleven years younger Aneta Pascu gives Nory the impression that students in her (Nory's) generation were not “garbage” and they paid their taxes, their rent, their meals (*Roots*, p. 398), they did not go begging for money to strangers.

Aneta inherited her obsession of coming and living in Bucharest from her mother in Vaslui who remained with her eyes stuck on the window for hours and hours. She was the daughter of a bailiff and the sister of a magistrate who worked at the Palace of Justice. She wanders through Bucharest a lot and through her eyes we can get a more detailed image of our capital. We learn that the best cheese pies in Bucharest were sold by Dragomir's.

The streets were full of eating houses and pub houses one next to another. One fashionable tavern was in Piața Teatrului (Theatre's Square) (*id.*, p. 313). There was an Atheneum in the Tei area, too, except for the one we still know nowadays.

Nory remembers that she and her student fellows used to invade the confectioneries on Elisabeta Avenue and they paid the bills by turns. As she walked in the street with Aneta, the air was full of smoke and it smelled like fried fat.

In Elisabeta Avenue there was also a cafeteria where students could come and have lunch. Groups of dancers were gathering there after having an edible meal. They removed three or four tables in the middle of the hall and then someone was playing a cottage piano and the others began to dance in pairs. The others were talking and watching and getting friends with each other. It was at this place that students from the faculties of Medicine or Law or Mathematics were roaring their verses, political ambitions, aspirations to the Nobel Prize, they played their musical compositions – romances.

Madona was a poor person, from a poor, numerous family, student at Philology, and she sewed her own gowns and she taught her younger brothers.

Students in Nory's generation had fun trying to enter the concert room at the National Theatre free of charge. They normally got their free places but once they came in too big a number. Yet, they still asked for their places and made such a noise that some lady thought a revolution had started. The police came but then they erased the whole thing as if nothing had happened.

At that cafeteria professional issues were discussed and big decisions were taken. They decided upon the topics of the conferences, they drew artistic programs for the benefit of the sports club of the students of Medicine. Dr. Caro loved to sing in a tenor voice and to play football, too.

Lică has an apartment in the Pake Protopopescu area, he bought it after marrying Ada but it looks quite poorly furnished and he barely lives there anyway.

Aneta goes to pay a visit and brings bonbons to the lady of the house but the lady – midwife Mari – was not at home, in Știrbei Avenue, so Aneta came back to the student hostel and shared them with her colleagues. Bonbons were quite a luxury.

There was a student hostel in Diaconeselor Street, a pension in Bălcescu Street. (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 322). There were lots of hotels: Metropol Hotel (*id.*, p. 322), Boulevard Hotel (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 490). In Grivița Street there were many hotels. At the corner of Știrbei Avenue one could find whores (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 596).

The Association for Woman's Assistance – where Nory worked – was located in Amzei Square.

Calea Victoriei was preferred by everybody for walks. But Aneta had no clothes to wear. And she was always hungry. She hardly had any money to pay her rent at the student hostel. She had come to Bucharest against her parents' will who were ashamed that their daughter would be a student, so they refused to send her money. The mentality was that Bucharest had "ruined lots of geese girls" (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 467) and being a female student meant becoming a lost woman. From time to time her mother sent her "cozonac" cake that she baked at home, in Vaslui, and she sent her some small amounts of money.

Aneta went to the Court of Law to look for her brother's help with money but he also felt ashamed with her and chased her away. The Court of Law looks like an inferno, full of people. But one can have a meal there, too. Nory carried sandwiches in her purse.

There were confectioneries on Calea Victoriei. There was one on Academiei, too. A rich exhibition of sweets were tempting passers-by: shelves of bonbons, fruits, ice-creams, pies and mysterious creams, cakes, chocolates, biscuits.

Slicing devices for ham existed, too, at that time, and people could buy small quantities of Prague ham. (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 503).

At Iancu's they sold raw meat, beef, calf, pork. And the place was full of people. On alleys they sold hot sausages, livers, hot meatloaves, burgers and other traditional specialties. Bakery specialties were sold by pedlars at the Palace of Justice.

Next to this Palace, in front of a hospital, a new bridge was planned to be built over Dâmbovița River – “the dirty water” (*id.*, p. 774). A new avenue was planned in the same area, too (*id.*, p. 774).

The clock at the University was fascinating for Aneta. She found Bucharest as a paradise, and its dwellers as miraculous beings (*id.*, p. 339).

The streets were full of taxis, coaches, automobiles, dog-carts and trams.

We find out that the tram had its final station at the end of Pake Protopopescu Avenue.

Brătianu Square was woven in a network of trams and policemen were everywhere the place watching the traffic (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 512).

Aneta travels by tram a lot. Men have a habit of pinching ladies' butts. Aneta tries on a frotteur experience and the people in the tram take her for a hooker, so they call the police and then Nory has to take Aneta to Dr. Caro to prove that Aneta is still a virgin.

People tried to enter the cinema without paying tickets, at that time, too. Aneta went there to find a lover and many times she entered for free (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 638). In the halls of the cinema groups of women approached single men. Photos and pictures on the walls of the cinema halls were nice (*id.*, p. 647).

At sunset, in halls, next to shops, on the platform of the tram station or next to houses, at the tables of restaurants and coffee shops, men and women were waiting. Many were late. Many did not come at all to meet their dates (*id.*, p. 632-633).

Because she walked too much all around Bucharest, Aneta had remained without shoes, too, and she dreamt of wearing Kayser stockings like one of her colleagues at the student hostel.

Small desks selling stamps could be found in the streets.

At the Atheneum painting expositions were held. Famous painters such as Bălașa sold their paintings there. Visitors came, looked stunned at his paintings and bought them only because he was famous.

The newest art streams had arrived in our capital, too. Mika-Lé tried to launch herself into the prismatic art. Dr. Rim collects stamps showing naked women and he is so passionate about it that he gets very anxious when losing one notebook full of precious stamps.

Bucharest was a crowded place which Mini missed if she had to go outside of it even for one day. She was so happy to recognize Cercul Militar, just by seeing it she was sure that she was home, in the “Live Citadel”.

“Summer rains never put a sad face to the city. The shop-windows were colourful like beautiful ladies and the Citadel was steamy and fresh with washed gardens and fat land” (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, p. 553).

She could go and choose jewellery and watches – Schwartz even. They went to Capșa even if it rained. There they could meet Prince Maxențiu.

Mini reports one cold winter night when she had to go to the North Station (Gara de Nord). Trains were not heated and people got frozen inside them. The heating pipes were frozen, too, as well as the waiting room of the chief of station. Fog looked like the Polar atmosphere. The Citadel was surrounded by a “yellowish light” (*id.*, p. 464). The Citadel was

“noble, big, luminous” (*id.*, p. 468). It was a charming city (*id.*, p. 473). Mini was afraid of unfamiliar places in Bucharest but her fear was mixed with pleasure (*id.*, p. 481).

She loves the National Theatre area where Câmpineanu Street and Matei Millo Street come across. At this theatre high-life gentlemen came dressed up in tail-coats and military decorations and they put up serious, gloomy, anxious faces. (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 402).

Nory was in love with cities, too. Bucharest, Galați, Oradea, Arad were all the same to her – commercial and industrial centres – because feminism could thrive there.

After rains, the capital was stained by small mudholes. In the afternoons, the inhabitants were all asleep in their high quiet mansions. (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 561).

Doru Hallipa had become a citizen of Bucharest after marrying Eliza. Upon his first wife’s request, he reluctantly became a driver of his own car whose engine he inspected complying to a ritual, so that it could work properly. The smell of burnt gasoline was unpleasant though (*id.*, p. 536).

Houses were unique by their *rez-de-chausee* (ground floor); beautiful gardens with climbing plants and fir-trees were transplanted, balconies gave the impression of a white, elegant, perfumed lady; new modern buildings had popped up and gave an impression of disproportion. (*id.*, p. 537).

At night Bucharest looked like an emanation of its citizens’ souls. Sentimental emanations that sometimes smelled of drunkenness and at other times exhaled volatility as lyricism (*id.*, p. 592). Inhabitants were dissipated like separate individuals, like dismembered spare-parts that later were to become each at its turn an initial spring of new activities (*id.*, p. 592).

“The Live Citadel” looked like a thousand small lights in the dark. Mini thinks that “the Live Citadel” cannot have been built by a shepherd, no, “once a traveller had wanted to seek a shelter for his lover, so he had built the first nest” (*id.*, p. 593).

Behind the windows ladies were judgemental and imagined they understood the lives of their neighbours. This is the example of Vera who lives right across Lina’s house and watches Lică visit Sia and kiss her in the street (*A Concert of Bach’s Music*, vol. 1, p. 794).

The opinion of the Swiss nurse Mado was that “Bucharest is a city composed of all the provinces of your country. It has no specific face yet, which one could make up a new homogenous paste” (*Roots*, p. 773).

Either poor, or rich, what *diseases* did the inhabitants of Bucharest fear the most?

Pneumonia and lung tuberculosis seem to keep the record of deaths among men at that epoch. Pneumonia killed Doru Hallipa’s mother, Calliope, in *The Man Who Passed By*. She had merely gone out on a torrential rain and got pneumonia. Drăgănescu’s sole brother died of lung tuberculosis when young. Ghighi, his son, survived pneumonia when being a child. Prince Maxențiu struggles with lung tuberculosis and dry pleuresies ever since he was a young boy but a period of physical strain puts him down to bed to never recover again.

“Cerebral chills” (*Roots*, p. 760), as they called the meningitis, was a fatal disease, too, along with typhus. Paralysis and heart failures killed mostly men. Zaza’s husband, Prince Maxențiu’s father, died of a stroke. Drăgănescu died of heart failure due to a congenial malformation.

Haemophilia killed Madona, Dr. Caro’s young wife. Womb cancer killed Lenora after the first successful attempt to remove the tumour. Breast cancer killed Maxențiu’s mother because she was reluctant of having her breasts resected in order to have her life saved.

People also died of accidents as is Nory's case. She is eaten inside by an anxiety caused by her womb malformation which makes her an outcast, as a hermaphrodite, and prevents her from having a sex life with her husband at all. Her first sexual act was felt like a rape.

Neurosis killed the teenager Ghighi – he committed suicide after registering strange symptoms in the throat area.

Women fainted, they were consumed by neurosis: e.g. Lenora fears to admit to her husband Doru that she was raped because she wants to avoid losing him. She also feels ashamed of admitting the womb cancer symptoms to her third husband, Dr. Walter. Madona, Dr. Caro's wife, fails to inform her husband about her anaemia caused by haemophilia for the same reason – the fear of losing him. Neurosis consumes her, too, when she puts up jealousy scandals. Lenora had set the bed on fire causing burns to her skin. Her first husband had shot himself to death out of jealousy or for financial distress. Mika-Lé threatens with suicide and commits suicidal acts. Her first new-born got born dead because she was beaten during her pregnancy – she was not married and her mother hated her because she was the product of a rape.

Aneta, consumed by a long struggle with neurosis, wanted to imitate the wattman's getting off the tram in an elegant curved movement but she succeeded losing her legs.

Abortions killed women like Sia. She was a special case, though, because she had a two-way vagina – another malformation. Hallipa Twins had been born as identical twins that were surgically set them apart by doctors at birth.

Some people at that time healed themselves with homeopathic remedies. Cornelia, Nory's mother, is given *Nux vomica* (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 528). Urticaria and eruptions on skin (occurred after the ingestion of homeopathic remedies) are considered hygienic and cleansing according to the homeopathic principles (*The Dishevelled Maidens*, vol. 1, p. 432).

Before getting married, Nory is happy about being a virgin and she goes having sex for the first time when approaching her midlife, because thus she can avoid abortions, haemorrhages, hysteria that come altogether with marriage (*Roots*, vol. 2, p. 798). She was a passionate feminist and saw many women suffer for these reasons in hospital. When she finally wanted to become a woman – after refusing to be neither man, nor woman – she ironically discovered her hermaphroditism.

Dr. Rim suffers from rheumatism and hypochondria.

These were the people who populated Bucharest between the World Wars from Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu's perspective. Many of their manners got lost on the way to us as did street names, buildings, trades and businesses, diseases, mentalities and means of transportation, architectural styles, occupations.

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