Jean-Marie SCHAEFFER. *Petite écologie des études littéraires. Pourquoi et comment étudier la littérature ?* Vincennes : Thierry Marchaisse, 2011. Imprimé. 128 p.

Le dernier livre de Jean-Marie Schaeffer fait partie d'une tendance pro-littérature qui engage depuis quelques années des chercheurs en sciences humaines, critiques, philosophes, sociologues, soucieux de plaider en faveur des études littéraires dans la société globalisée de nos jours : Yves Citton (que Schaeffer interpelle d'ailleurs dans ce livre), Tzvetan Todorov, Jacques Bouveresse, Patrice Maniglier, Jacques Rancière, Laurent Dubreuil, etc. Il enrichit par ailleurs la tendance encore mince dans la culture littéraire française, celle qui produit de la littérature un discours « raisonné » et également polémique envers les outrages de la « théorie » – une dimension du « tournant éthique » des études littéraires auquel participent les nouveaux philosophes d'ascendance « analytique », comme Bouveresse ou Engel. C'est un livre qui met en saillie quelques points forts dans la conception des « études littéraires » mais qui, d'un autre point de vue que nous allons exprimer vers la fin, soulève une question importante concernant le rapport entre langue et culture.

Un premier temps du parcours argumentatif de l'auteur oppose les sciences humaines aux sciences exactes, précisément dans une perspective écologique, sans que cette notion ait affaire de quelque manière que ce soit à ce que « ecocriticism », par exemple, signifie aux États-Unis (l'on parle de manières de vivre et de socialiser de ces sciences). Celles-là manifesteraient, par rapport à celles-ci, trois types d'isolationnisme dont pâtissent ces mêmes « études littéraires » dans leur tentative de sortir d'une crise où elles semblent sombrer : le premier tient au *cloisonnement national*, dont une histoire culturelle européenne explique bien la résistance à une nouvelle tolérance épistémologique. Les deux autres en sont davantage indexés épistémologiquement : *isolement interdisciplinaire* et *ségrégation intradisciplinaire*. L'isolement interdisciplinaire des études littéraires est remarquable et traditionnel, mais il est difficile à enfreindre, compte tenu du rôle politique de l'enseignement littéraire dans l'ensemble des communautés nationales. Il semble que les littéraires craignent le mélange des disciplines, au point de penser qu'un tel mélange rendraient superflues leurs propres compétences et enlèverait à l'autorité qu'une certaine stylistique discursive produit *per se*. Schaeffer touche là à un point qui lui est cher, celui de la *réception* des œuvres, un domaine que les approches classiques peuvent à bon droit être accusées de rendre obsolète au moment où les recherches en neurosciences engendrent des connaissances dont aucun littéraire ne rêvait il y a à peine trente ans. Le troisième point, celui de la ségrégation intradisciplinaire inspire au théoricien français une image écologique : les études littéraires mèneraient un « style de vie rural », où chaque « spécialiste » se replie sur lui-même pour devenir « le » spécialiste dans un certain type d'études (à la différence des sciences exactes « urbaines »). Mais les traits contrastifs des sciences exactes versus les sciences humaines amènent Jean-Marie Schaeffer dans une position incommode parmi ses confrères « littéraires », en regard des vœux de supériorité spirituelle de ces derniers devant l'empirisme « vulgaire » des sciences exactes. Il n'est pas facile d'entrer dans la cité des lettres après en concevoir des réaménagements majeurs.

Le cœur du débat que ce livre ouvre met en question le rapport entre « description » et « normativité » en études littéraires, un de ces débats insolubles dont il vaut la peine de réviser de temps en temps les arguments et le contexte. Nous pourrions le ramener à une opposition plus immédiatement compréhensible, entre objectivité versus subjectivité – ou, autrement dit, entre description de « nature » et la transmission et préservation de la « valeur ». Les études littéraires se seraient méprises dans la tentative de séparer *description* et *norme*, puisqu'elles déduisent ou bien les normes des descriptions, ou bien fondent les descriptions dans les normes. Lorsqu'on veut mettre en évidence la « fonction strictement cognitive » des études littéraires, « la question de la valeur des pratiques étudiées (par rapport à d'autres pratiques), de même que la hiérarchisation comparée des produits de ces pratiques selon une norme apportée par le chercheur, doivent donc être mises entre parenthèses. » (41) Certes, mais une telle réduction aurait des conséquences incalculables sur les enjeux des études littéraires. Il est donc tout à fait vrai qu'une crise de légitimité frappe depuis quelques années ces études, mais comment pourrait-on la lever, du moment que cette même légitimité aujourd'hui en crise est une construction qui n'a que peu à voir avec la suite argumentative agencée par Schaeffer, mais à un habitus qui doit être dénoncé, à notre avis, de l'intérieur ? Que la théorie littéraire classique ait voulu « déduire » une normativité d'une « nature » supposée de la littérature, tels Wellek et Warren dans leur « théorie littéraire », n'a rien d'étonnant pour qui est au courant des aléas de cet habitus tout au long des deux derniers siècles. Comment auraient-ils pu procéder autrement à une époque où l'eugénisme par voie idéologique semblait encore à portée de main ?

La formation cognitiviste de Schaeffer l'amène à opérer quelques distinctions très subtiles entre par exemple le statut illocutoire et les effets psychologiques des actes de langage. Un énoncé descriptif peut très bien entraîner des croyances chez l'interlocuteur, dont la formation dépend plus des façons de dire que de la référence des objets de ces énoncés : ceci pour dire que, pour les arts, des « prédicats objectaux » à première vue ne sont en fait que « relationnels », car ils dépendent d'un locuteur : d'où découle l'enjeu majeur de l'herméneutique. Quand Schaeffer admet que « la valeur aussi est un fait » (55) il a parfaitement raison, mais il se met à nouveau dans une position à part, qui est surplombante par rapport aux études littéraires en ce que celles-ci gèrent moins un domaine qu'un trésor culturel, donc une valeur qu'elles ont du mal à prendre pour un fait, donc à relativiser. Or, s'il s'agit de comprendre cette valeur en tant qu'objet (construit) et non en tant que quelque chose de donné dont les taux d'intérêt oscille, mais dont les cadres sont hors question, se pose de nouveau la question des *enjeux internes* de ces études.

Le parcours se fait plus philosophique par la suite, alors que Schaeffer en découd avec l'autoréférentialité de l'herméneutique philosophique de Heidegger, en ce qu'elle porte le sujet à une position transcendantale dans le cadre de l'ontologie humaine, rendant caduque la démarche descriptiviste. Puisque toute description est aussi, pour les tenants du cercle herméneutique, une auto-description, l'interprétation d'un texte ne peut être que le déploiement de la subjectivité de l'interprétant. Pour parler au dilemme de la circularité supposée du cercle herméneutique (de son immanence si l'on veut), il y a des moyens

logiques que l'auteur mobilise, par exemple la « théorie des types » de Bertrand Russell, selon laquelle il y a des discours qui parlent des propriétés d'un objet et d'autres qui expliquent comment un tel discours s'articule (métadiscours). Il y a par exemple, pour ce qui nous intéresse, un discours qui fait l'analyse des composantes de l'autoréférentialité du dire humain et une théorie qui expose cette autoréférentialité (et qui la juge, évidemment). Toutes ces ratiocinations, parfois séduisantes, visent à conjurer le cercle vicieux de la valeur qui fonde la norme et inversement, en matière de littérature, pour mettre un peu d'ordre (logique) dans un domaine où règne le confus. En plus, à part le fait et la valeur vus de la perspective de l'auteur, l'auteur fait intervenir davantage le lecteur, dont le contact avec le texte est lui-aussi régi par des intentions différentes de celles supposées de l'auteur du texte en question. Comme toute lecture est enveloppée par un contexte, qu'on peut appeler horizon culturel, horizon d'attente, etc., il faut distinguer entre « configuration de l'auteur », « incarnation textuelle » et « reconfiguration du lecteur ».

Au dernier chapitre, après avoir sarclé et labouré ce champ des « études littéraires » laissé un peu au hasard du tout-venant, Jean-Marie Schaeffer offre quelques « propositions modestes » qui, elles enfin, n'ont plus l'air de casse-tête pour les lecteurs moins rompus aux efforts de la pensée analytique. L'attention se porte vers la lecture et, si écologie il y a, c'est par la lecture (des textes littéraires) qu'elle doit commencer et s'accomplir, puisque c'est la lecture en tant que « mode d'expérience » qui doit être davantage pratiquée et encouragée.

En tant qu'adressé aux littéraires – ce qui n'est toujours qu'une vérité partielle, car il s'adresse à tout intellectuel « humaniste » – ce livre soulève, à la fin, deux types de questionnements dont la discussion ne saurait être trop théorique : celui de la littérature en tant qu'objet d'étude institutionnalisé et celui de la langue ou – même si on pousse ainsi les choses vers une aire pas très facile à mettre en argument – d'une « écriture ». Parler de « compétence fictionnelle », dire que la notion de fiction « n'est pas une réalité intrinsèquement littéraire » (108) soulève la question du « pourquoi la littérature mieux que le film, le théâtre ou tout autre production qui mobilise des compétences fictionnelles ? » Que la lecture esthétique implique une stratégie attentionnelle différente de la communication pragmatique, on n'en doute pas, mais la question spécifiquement littéraire reste sans réponse claire.

L'approche analytique tend à mettre entre parenthèses l'historicité de la notion de littérature. Croire que la crise des études littéraires serait une crise de la rationalité de ces études, c'est en quelque sorte prêcher le dialogue dans un couple dont les partenaires ont de graves problèmes de communication : c'est important, mais insuffisant, puisque les distorsions argumentatives qui empêchent la communication ne sont pas la cause, mais un effet de la crise. Je voudrais faire intervenir là l'argument d'un célèbre psychologue cognitiviste, Daniel Kahneman qui, dans son best-seller *Pensée rapide, pensée lente* (2011, Penguin) range toute activité de pensée selon deux types d'embrayeurs : celui du système 1, pensée automatique, non-consciente parfois, et système 2, pensée consciente, réflexion. Le système 2 vient à la rescousse du système 1, dit le savant, *seulement lorsque celui-ci piétine*. La crise des études littéraires ne saurait se résoudre par l'appel exclusif du système 2, plus lent et mobilisant un effort supplémentaire de la part du sujet, comme semble le faire

Jean-Marie Schaeffer, mais plutôt par une solution qui rebondisse sur des processus plus primesautiers, ceux du système 1. Une lecture esthétique est automatique, rapide ; de même, le sens de la notion de « littérature » relève d'une même pensée automatique, celle qui mélange valeur et norme. Les séparer relève du système 2, qui ne peut fonctionner qu'en dernière circonstance. C'est ainsi que l'argument le plus important de ce livre me semble celui de la nécessité d'encourager la lecture comme expérience. En second lieu, la distinction entre le chercheur qui étudie « les faits littéraires » et l'enseignant censé assurer « la transmission des savoirs » littéraires et des textes me semble déjà difficile à réaliser, quitte à creuser des écarts statutaires et sociaux entre les chercheurs « plus intelligents » et créatifs et les profs « plus traditionnels » et passifs.

En dernier lieu, la langue. Le « style » de la *French theory* est souvent présomptueux, voire embarrassant. Tout le monde le sait, le déplore et quand même les plus grands théoriciens français sont tous traduits et enseignés plus outre-Atlantique ou outre-Manche que dans l'Hexagone. Il est très prudent et sage de commencer une assertion par « je pense », le « I think » sceptique de tous les intellectuels anglo-saxons qui ont à avancer, de temps à autre, quelques propositions modestes et bien sensées. Mais pourquoi alors écrire en français ? Pourquoi écrire en français plutôt qu'en anglais ? Pourquoi lire Jean-Marie Schaeffer dans sa langue maternelle, et ne pas attendre d'une traduction en anglais qu'elle dise la même chose ? Cette question renoue avec le « nationalisme » des études littéraires, travers grave et rédhibitoire des littéraires – mais comment l'oublier, dès lors que la littérature moderne s'impose tout d'abord dans un cadre national ? S'il faut « mondialiser » la littérature, il faut toujours passer par une langue et, dans certains cas, par une écriture.

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David DAMROSCH, ed. *World Literature in Theory.* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2014. Print. 544 p.

The concept of *world literature* entered the circuit of literary scholarship almost two centuries ago, if we are to date this entry back to Goethe's coining of the term *Weltliteratur* in 1827, when the German author told Johann Peter Eckermann, who was serving as his private secretary, that "[n]ational literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of World-literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach" (19-20). We must admit that for the main part of this time, the concern for the literary and cultural implications of the concept was rather limited. However, in the late 1990s, comparative literature scholars started taking considerable interest in world literature, and since then, they have constantly tried to redefine and develop new intellectual vistas for it. The most cited works to offer an overview of the recent development of world literature (Damrosch 2003; D'haen 2011; D'haen, Damrosch, and Kadir 2011; D'haen, Domínguez, and Rosendahl Thomsen 2013; Rosendahl Thomsen 2008) usually attempt to define the discipline as a "response to the shortcomings of both comparative literature and postcolonialism" (D'haen, Domínguez, and Rosendahl Thomsen xi), or as an effect of globalization.

All these perspectives on the history of the discipline link the revival of the term in the 1990s to "the agenda of globalization and its effects on cultures and on conceptions of identity" and to "the internal organization of literary studies" (D'haen, Domínguez, and Rosendahl Thomsen x), animated by the ambition of including all the literatures of the world in their research domain. *World Literature in Theory*, edited by David Damrosch, assumes the existence of these two factors and also illustrates the perils of applying a set of theories that may respond to the leveling forces of globalization. As the editor of the compilation affirms in the anthologized debate with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "[t]he study of world literature can very readily become culturally deracinated, philologically bankrupt, and ideologically complicit with the worst tendencies of global capitalism. Other than that, we're in good shape." (Spivak and Damrosch 365). The essays that constitute *World Literature in Theory* aim to explore the possibilities of world literature today, to answer theoretical and methodological questions regarding, for instance, the adequate grounding in more than one or two cultures, the importance of developing frameworks and networks that extend beyond an author's homeland, or the problem of language considered, in Emily Apter's terms, as an irreducible otherness.

The first part of the volume, "Origins," begins with a key text, the 1827 "Conversations with Eckermann on *Weltliteratur*," in which Goethe first mentions the term of *Weltliteratur*, though without giving a thorough theoretical systematization of the concept. The section also includes texts signed by Hugo Meltzl ("Present Tasks of Comparative Literature," 1877) and Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett ("What Is World Literature?", 1886), pioneers in the study of comparative and world literature, the former discussing the problems of polyglottism, and the latter—translations outside Europe and the deracinated mode of writing as an indication of the aim to reach an empire-wide audience, as in the case of Apuleius. A selection from John Pizer's 2006 book *The Idea of World Literature* gives

a contextual perspective on Goethe's *Weltliteratur* and its echoes in the *Communist Manifesto*, where Marx and Engels approach the concept in terms of a materialistic dynamics related to the international economic exchange. "Origins" concludes with two essays which share the suggestion that we should embrace a unified view of literature able to defeat narrow-minded nationalism or the mechanisms of transnational divide. "World Literature" (1907), by Rabindranath Tagore, speaks of a universal spirit of culture that should create cohesion between people from different cultural spaces, in the sense Goethe ascribes to *Weltliteratur*, thus supporting the free circulation of literatures from various areas and promoting the acceptance of the Other and his particularities. "A View on the Unification of Literature" (1922), by Zheng Zhenduo, refers to an ambitious project from the Asian space of theoretical approaches towards world literature (*shijie de venxue*), emphasizing the need of a literary universalism, initially articulated by Richard Green Moulton, which should enable "a universal spirit and sentiment of mankind" (62).

The second part of the volume, "World Literature in the Age of Globalization," illustrates the paradoxical situation of world literature, simultaneously a product of the possibilities of globalization and a form of resistance to this phenomenon. In this section we find the most recently acclaimed texts in the socio-cultural research field of world literature, like that of Moretti ("Conjectures on World Literature", 2000 and "More Conjectures", 2003), Casanova ("Literature as a World", 2005) or Bassnett ("From Cultural Turn to Translational Turn: A Transnational Journey", 2011), as well as seminal studies signed by René Etiemble and Edward Said, or the "Reflections on Yiddish World Literature" (1938-1939), by Melekh Ravitsh and Borekh Rivkin. The essays in this section tackle the reality of globalization understood as the dominance of central powers, and advance the hypothesis that cultural products do not follow this course stringently, for, instead, in certain areas, we deal with the emergence of unclassifiable phenomena. Such is the case with the literature of the diaspora—which manifests itself in a "quasi-territory," in the absence of a physical nation—discussed by Melekh Ravitsh and Borekh Rivkin, or with René Etiemble's urgency to "rethink the notion of world literature," so that "our only limits should be comprehensiveness and truth. A true history of literature and of literatures will have to be as truthful as possible, acceptable for all people involved. If it does not satisfy these criteria, it is worth nothing" (95). The emphasis on universal acceptance suggests Etiemble's preference for a global approach which should dismiss the Eurocentric projection of European values as unique and invariable.

Consequently, the most evident structure in this section is that of a simultaneously binomial and sequential relation between dominance and inequality, best illustrated in Casanova's socio-cultural examination of the (presumably) autonomous literary field, Franco Moretti's systemic consideration of literature (his object of study is understood as "one, but unequal"), in the wake of Darwinian evolutionism and Immanuel Wallerstein's world system theory, or the section's concluding essay, signed by Susan Bassnett, where the literary market is discussed from the translator's point of view. One of the most important voices of contemporary translational theorists, Bassnett rethinks the role of the translator in the context of a global market and refers to world literature as a discipline that can reshape and formulate in a more coherent frame the aspect of translation studies,

usually seen as a minor and insular field of research. In order to have an accurate reception of the numerous texts we are provided with in the era of globalization, we must, in Bassnett's words, "reconceptualise translation as movement between and across, not simply as a transaction between a source and a target text" (244). As for the relation between dominance and inequality, we can assert that, in Bassnett's case, the inquiry points to a discrepancy between literary processes, where translation is unjustly considered to be a peripheral aspect of literary dynamics and the translator—an isolated practitioner with no influence over the international book market.

The third part of the volume edited by David Damrosch is perhaps the most interesting and provocative section of all, especially for the supporters of the discipline that tries to study literature beyond the limits of a nation, because here, under the title of "Debating World Literature," we find some of the most constructive critiques made to the paradigm. In "Stepping Forward and Back: Issues and Possibilities for 'World' Poetry" (2004), Stephen Owen draws attention to the understanding of the variety of poems that circulate beyond their own nation's borders, while Djelal Kadir, one of the most prominent figures in the field of critical thinking, emphasizes the importance of one's "positionality, especially when bringing non-Western works into the realm of a hegemonic power such as the United States, as even progressive scholars can end up participating in a neo-imperial process of assimilation and self-legitimation" (Damrosch, "Introduction. World Literature in Theory and Practice" 8). The next four essays (by Michel Le Bris et al.—a group of writers from the former French colonies—, Nicolas Sarkozy, Jacqueline Dutton, Françoise Lionnet) discuss the functionality of preserving the concept of "francophonie" vs. an open idea of "francophonies," which would fit better into the general discourse on the acceptance of diversity and the integration of world's different cultures and literatures. The problem is of great interest for what could be called the still present neocolonial hegemony of France, and it deserves an extended discussion, even a book-length socio-cultural analysis. The final three essays of the section (those signed by Aamir R. Mufti and Emily Apter, and the debate mentioned above between Damrosch and Spivak) offer a compelling approach towards world literature, for they investigate the perils of applying a standardized framework to all literatures, and of allowing the English language to became a new *lingua franca* that would nullify the other languages (Apter). Therefore, this section illustrates in a moderate tone the fact that world literature, if it is accepted as a world paradigm, must remain alert to cultural and political mutations and must find the means to promote distinctiveness and to integrate the excluded elements at all costs.

The last section of the volume presents various approaches to world literature around the world, from Jorge Luis Borges' "The Argentine Writer and Tradition" (1943) to Jessica Pressman's study on the Korean/American duo known as Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries and their Internet texts that require the reader to perform an intensive type of reading. The volume concludes with an 'Epilogue' by Zhang Longxi, who analyzes the most important aspects of world literature as debated in this anthology, with the clear statement that if it is to be functional, the concept must take the necessary step of "crossing over the divide between European centers and non-European peripheries" (520).

All in all, *World Literature in Theory* deserves to stand alongside the most influent collections of theoretical texts addressing the concept of world literature, because it describes both the positive effects of its implementation and the dangers of applying its present methods without preliminary social and cultural cautions. The chance of world literature as a new paradigm lies in this type of attitude.

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Stephen PRICKETT, gen. ed., and Simon HAINES, ed. *European Romanticism: A Reader.* London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. Print. 1032 p.

It is, of course, at least surprising to read, in 2014 (or at the first edition, in 2010) that this book was written because it is still impossible to find a good reader on European Romanticism in English (if we were to think only of the dictionaries published by Routledge on the subject in recent decades, starting from the huge *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era: 1760-1850*, we would still have a place to start the list of the already existing readers...); such justifications were not necessary, not to mention the fact that they did not reflect the reality in the libraries. But a new book, designed specifically for students in the history of world literature, and for readers who only have access to the English language, is always welcome. The authors continue to explain their motivations somewhat on the same note, invoking both the need to translate Romantic literature into the language... under whose supremacy we live today in the academia (which implies, at least, an extremely simple way of understanding the cultural load in the act literary translation), as well as the poignancy of the Byronic model in the construction of European Romanticism that such a rendition "in the language of Byron" reveals to the reader. If the "model of Byronic Romanticism" is, indeed, one of the main topics of the introductory essays, we can only regret that (in the two pages dedicated to Romanian Romanticism, signed by Mihaela Anghelescu Irimia) the theme is insufficiently addressed; moreover, the study by D. Popovici on *Romanian Romanticism* [*Romantismul românesc*], which has clarified the subject ever since the 1950s—is completely ignored, which is all the more unfortunate in the case of a "belated" Romantic literature such as ours, where the role of the Western models (mainly Lautréamont, Byron and Heine) is a far more complex one than that of mere "prestigious models," imitated in the distant provinces of Europe.

The volume (structured into a *first part*, comprising overviews of Romanticism and a *second part*, consisting of an anthology) organizes the material according to two principles: the *linguistic principle* (namely national, in subsidiary, to the extent to which these languages become languages of nation states, starting from the second half of the 19th century) and the *thematic principle*. The various "Romanticisms" are presented historically according to the languages in which they were expressed (their order is alphabetical, for a better search function within the "reader," and not chronological, which would have probably created other presentation problems for the authors): British, Czech, Danish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Finnish (here the alphabetical order fails). These studies are followed by two essays about American Romanticism and "The Impact of European Romanticism on Japan." At a quick glance, Greek Romanticism is missing, which, given the authors' major premise, concerning the Byronic model, is likely to surprise us; we find, however, that all the literatures of the Balkans are missing from the ensemble, indicating that there might be a common reason for not including them—a reason that still escapes us. In the second part, the volume is a reader, grouping excerpts from Romantic literary works written in the languages listed above, according to thematic criteria (1. "Art and aesthetics," 2. "The Self," 3. "History and politics," 4. "Language and interpretation,"

5. "Myth, religion and the supernatural," 6. "Nature," 7. "The Exotic," 8. "Science"). As announced from the beginning: „the organization of our anthology is crucial. To avoid the kind of national compartmentalism mentioned above, and to give some sense of the interaction between various movements the texts themselves are arranged under eight major thematic headings" (20). As the interactions alluded to are not explained by a system of comments of the anthologized texts, the freedom (disorientation?) of the anthology user is complete. There isn't a separate bibliography section, apart from the footnotes and the small bibliographical entries at the end of various introductory contributions. As far as Romanian Romanticism is concerned, bibliographical references to studies applied to it exclusively, to monographs, etc., are limited to the scientific production of obsolete decades (G. Călinescu, *The History of Romanian Literature from its Origins to the Present Day [Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent]*—1941, Paul Cornea, *The Origins of Romanian Romanticism [Originile romantismului românesc]*—1972). They are complemented by European synthesis studies in which Romanian Romanticism is mentioned or even commented upon, and which probably are more accessible to the English-speaking reader (Peter Burke, Virgil Nemoianu, etc.). This bibliography, as well as the brief synthetic summary of Romanian literature, gives the impression that the subject is uninteresting to the contemporary literary field, subordinated to a vision of Romanian literature as a minor literature, lacking originality and centred mainly on a few identity obsessions. A more careful contextualization of the historical nuances of our 19th-century literary geography, as well as attention to more recent studies on Romanian Romanticism (by comparison with Paul Cornea's founding text—we are talking about almost half a century's worth of research!), would have updated the perspective, enabling foreign readers to connect such variations to the overall European picture of the movement.

The samples of Romanian Romantic literature illustrate seven of the eight themes of the anthology; the absence of Romanian examples from the last chapter, "Science," is inexplicable to us—and, in any case, left unexplained on the whole, implicitly suggesting that the Romanian Romantics didn't have any writings about science, the development of science, reveries on the theme of science, or even scientific texts worthy of being included here. From the anxieties of old Gheorghe Asachi on the need for engineers in the young Principalities, to the eclectic journalism practiced by all the Romantics, from Mihai Eminescu's astronomical reveries (in prose, in manuscripts, etc.), to Vasile Conta's or Titu Maiorescu's writings, a selection could have been done. Otherwise, the authors anthologized are Cezar Bolliac, Mihai Eminescu (most abundantly represented, although his Romanticism is somehow unusual for the central focus of the present volume), Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Grigore Alexandrescu, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Alecu Russo. With the exception of Mihai Eminescu, all the other authors are represented by just one text—perhaps due to the Romanian collaborator's intent to present a greater number of authors. The volume doesn't have a special section for describing the anthologized authors through bibliographical notes, which is liable to impede the access of the novice reader (to whom the anthology is mainly addressed) to a correct view not only of the volume on the whole, but also on the individual texts.

Instead, there is a section comprising the originals of the English translations, which recommends the anthology as a potentially useful material for comparative linguistics or translation seminars. A special issue is, of course, the accuracy of the translation itself, the reproduction of originals suggesting the desire to facilitate such an exercise.

In conclusion, we can say that the reader on European Romanticism is a volume designed for didactic purposes, without bringing any scientific novelties. If it is addressed to English-speaking students of European literatures, and thus attempts to answer their need for points of reference, then it is an almost successful endeavour, in spite of its methodological failings. If, however, it aims to create a space for dialogue among professionals (and even among postgraduate students), its shortcomings make it a tool that could only be used with caution and with considerable attention to the necessary nuances, always to be supplied by the learned reader.

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Jan C. BEHRENDS and Martin KOHLRAUSCH, eds. *Races to Modernity: Metropolitan Aspirations in Eastern Europe, 1890-1940*. Budapest-New York: CEU Press, 2014. Print. 380 p.

The interest of the book reviewed comes from the change of emphasis, in substituting *aspirations* for *backwardness*, when characterizing the evolution on the path to modernity of thirteen "towns in the Romanov and Habsburg empires as well as in the Balkans" (St. Petersburg, Kiev, Wilno, Moscow, Athens, Belgrade, Sofia, Warsaw, Kaunas, Tallinn, Riga, Helsinki and Zagreb) (1). What is specific in their growth "into cities and metropolitan areas" (1) is followed, with Western presuppositions in mind, "in the decades from 1890 until the beginning of World War II" (2) (as shown in the preface, written from "Potsdam/Berlin and Leuven" in 2014, by the two editors). The titles of the twelve contributions spell the varieties of modernity (they are called "races to modernity") which can be followed with modern literature, history, architecture, politics, sociology, statistics and economics in mind. Urban becoming embraces as many perspectives as there are, in this book, kinds of expertise developed by professors of (East European, Russian, architecture and art) history and sociology (these experts being participants, from Europe, east and west, and from America, in two workshops organized in Berlin and Warsaw in 2008 and 2009, respectively). Consequently, the names which recur in the articles are those of Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, Marshall Berman, Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Habermas, Henri Lefebvre, Marx-Engels, Carl Schorske, Max Weber—in an attempt to enumerate them in alphabetical order—, names which ought to take us to the heart of the modernity debates. "Races" stands for Eastern Europe's aspirations (to modernity) and translates the concrete strategies employed in overcoming hindrances or, on the contrary, in allowing historically inherited obstacles to turn into national/regional handicaps.

On the way to modern progress, the fate of cities as made by real people and local institutions is followed in great, telling detail after national liberation and the reorganization of power constellations, also setting up new modern empires in the wake of old ones. As presented in the volume's fourth intervention, Moscow, for example, is the occasion of a comparison between, on the one hand, Tsarist urbanity—and with it, the emergence, as a result of modern reforms, of an autocratic/imperial centre here before 1917—and, on the other hand, the "modernization at break-neck speed" spawned by the Stalinist empire (Behrends 101).

In general, and closely understood, cities are testimonials for the disintegration of empires and the effects of this historical landmark on national and liberal modernization in its fight against social and political conservative forces. With urban literature in mind, more specifically, with the turn of the century and early-20th-century newspapers, the social and symbolic analysis of Russian "Modernity as Mask: Reality, Appearance, and Knowledge on the Petersburg Street" opens the volume with a characteristically back-step critique of everything that should count as instances of modern progress, if regarded from the mainstream modern Western perspective. Mark D. Steinberg, a professor of Russian history and the history of emotions at Urbana-Champaign, the University

of Illinois, follows the rise of local anti-modern feelings in St. Petersburg, "Russia's most deliberately modern city—with Europe often standing for the 'modern'" (23). What is at stake in adversary modern radical journalism, we understand, is the cultural expression of urban fears bred in the hearts of newcomers to the city. The contrast between the Eastern and Western positioning in respect to the modern life is obtained by placing Russian journalistic criticism from the turn of the century side by side with Baudelaire's *Peintre de la vie moderne* and Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*.[1] Contrasts are blown up when we look at the Russian urban development in Moscow, i.e., from the other end of the scale than Petersburg. The former was an adventitiously modern Russian town *made modern* twice, rather than *becoming modern* by the Western emulation of elites, as had been the case in the latter city. In the 19th century, Moscow was made into "a center of trade and industry, where the merchant elite became more influential than the gentry," "[f]rom a traditional seat of the Russian nobility" (Behrends 102). In the 20th century, it was equally turned by force and design into a Bolshevik metropolis meant to demonstrate the ideological force of Stalinist modernity. This gives the measure of an East European *cum* Western constellation of modernities, with lots of nuances added to the notions of the West. These nuances are revisited by Eleni Bastéa's Athenian summary of *Modernity and Identity* by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman, when she mentions

> Jürgen Habermas's abstract, high modernism of "the ought" and Marshall Berman's subjective populist, low modernism "of the 'is'; the here and now, *la vie quotidienne*." Max Weber's high modernism, which privileges judgment and cognition, is contrasted to the subjective and transitory low modernism, the "modernism of the streets" as described by Berman in *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* and by Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (128)

Both St. Petersburg and Athens are placed side by side with the Baudelairian city, i.e., the 20th-century city of *flânneurs* versus the Weberian city (of the 19th century). Speaking from her University of New Mexico chair when comparing Athenian to Western identity, Bastéa adds (Ottoman) post-imperial hues to liberal and capitalist high and low processes of modernization. In the East, the low modernism of the streets is economically justified and politically conditioned, rather than being the "modernism of *flânneurs*" and their aestheticist pose. The modernism encountered in the streets of Eastern Europe is rawer, being prompted by the need to accommodate in the city the dislocated ethnic or urban masses, brought over in the aftermath of the Romanov, Habsburg, Ottoman empires' dissolution, or in order to spark the new imperial history of Bolshevik Russia. Hence the emergent typology of Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Baltic, Finnish, beside the typically Balkan, modernization which the volume intends to push theoretically further when identifying by a German name, the *Ostmoderne*, the resulting species of post-imperial East European modernism/urbanism. When appearing in the title of the volume's last part, the German loan-word is followed by a rhetorically tentative question mark.

In reviewing the 2014 CEU volume, East European modernization, north and south, from the Baltic to the Aegean can be presented by reference to Arjun Appadurai's

ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes and *ideoscapes* in *Modernity at Large* (1996). Applied to Eastern Europe, these global analysis categories make manifest the distances to cover in this part of the world side by side with the successful strategies—and, of course, the failures—recorded in the history of the cities' advancement on the path of modernity.

To begin with the failures, since they are instructive (and, for Romania, not entirely unfamiliar) the study of Belgrade, by Dubravka Stojanović, shows, in an on-site report, how the city's urban development along modern lines was kept in check by the constant opposition between the local liberals with pro-European political sympathies and the central government. In Serbia "there was no ordinary democratic conflict of varying interests; rather, the political divisions in local political culture usually meant a 'life-or-death' division" (Stojanović 158), and the struggle between factions was responsible for the fact that "each new government canceled the results of the previous one, even when the decisions were based on competent analyses of highly paid foreign experts" (Stojanović 160). In addition, "[o]ccasionally much more time was spent on the work of different commissions that were supposed to approve projects than on the realization of the project itself" (Stojanović 172). This, in fact, reversed the stream of modernization by suspending the operation of what in the normal global circuit would count as the *financescape* or *technoscape* factors, spelling a major disjuncture in the system.

More pertinently, the study of East European modernism/urbanism should open with foregrounding the determining factor of the *ethnoscape*, as is the case in the second article of the collection. *Ethnoscapes* must come first because in the constellation of Eastern post-imperial modernism, just as in the postcolonial world, forced demographic change, and in particular mass mobility caused by older imperial policies, (post-)imperial wars and newer imperial strategies are distinctive and decisive. With the analysis of Kiev, we get to the heart of the social and the national question in the Eastern metropolis (the title of the book's first part). "Modernist Visions and Mass Politics in Late Imperial Kiev," by Faith Hillis, another Illinois professor from Chicago, usefully isolates *nationalizing* from *capitalist modernism* in "the only large city in the [Tsarist] empire dominated by the political right" (50). The analysis of the role played by the nationalizing Little Russians, i.e., urbanized Ukrainians who were used by imperial Big Russia to enforce its policy against the ancient Polish-Catholic nobility, the *szlachta*, is still very much relevant today. The fact that the Little Russian Ukrainians turned into a petty urban middle class with an Orthodox national conscience, as observable from the nationalist press of the day, is again relevant, together with the fact that they were encouraged to turn their anti-Catholic into anti-Jew nationalist and anti-capitalist class and religious hatred.

The intricacies of East European modernism determined by what Arjun Appadurai would call the disjunctures and differentiations observable in the imperial/post-imperial *ethnoscape* are documented in the second part of the volume, titled "Urbanism Goes East: The Development of Capitals, Infrastructure, and Planning." It addresses the reactions and urban development solutions adopted in response to the incoming waves of population after the Balkan War and the First and Second World Wars. They range from *unchecked* to *systematic* urban development. The former is applicable not only to Belgrade, as already noticed (in Dubravka Stojanović's contribution to the volume, aptly titled "Between

Rivalry, Irrationality, and Resistance: The Modernization of Belgrade"), but also to Athens. Here, Eleni Bastéa shows that the origin of the Plaka on the Akropolis is to be found in the illegal building of lodgings erected in the ethnic, insular style for housing used by the constructors of the modern, systematic city when it was revived as a capital on the occasion of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. The coexistence of systematic infrastructural planning with unchecked development (in what we could term protracted transience), in contradistinction to urbanistic rationality, is marked in the titles of all the Balkan reports on modernization, from "Athens, 1890-1940: Transitory Modernism and National Realities" to Sofia, whose architectural praxis is presented from the inside by Professor Elitza Stanoeva under the angle of "The Changing Perception of Oriental Urbanity and European Urbanism" between 1879 and 1940. The Bulgarian difference is also translatable in terms of global *ideoscapes*: it illustrates the enthusiastic application in Sofia of the "accepted Nazi version of the garden-city planning ideal" (Stanoeva 201). Thus, the small scale modern garden-city comes to stand for "the totalitarian city" as it was theorized in a 1941 supplement to "the most thorough Bulgarian treatise in urban planning": *The Modern City*, written in 1927 by Trendafil Trendafilov, the Nazi collaborationist architect.

In the same series of distinctive East European urban modernization schemes, south and north, should be counted the cases of Zagreb and Kaunas. In the contribution of Maryland Professor Steven A. Mansbach, titled "Capital Modernism in the Baltic Republics: Kaunas, Tallinn, and Riga," Kaunas is an example for the successful transformation of a marginal town into a cultural capital, the capital of Baltic modernism. Kaunas grew around the work and renown of the artist (painter and musician) M.K. Čiurlionis by default, namely in the absence of funding, and after the seizure of the traditional capital Vilnius by the Polish irredentists after 1920. It is perhaps no coincidence if, in the book, the latter town's presentation as Polish Wilno precedes the presentation of Kaunas; it is also ironical, perhaps, that both Wilno and Kaunas are examples of cities whose importance is culturally established, since Polish Wilno, Theodore R. Weeks, from Carbondale Illinois University, shows, stood apart as a university city built on the foundation of Adam Mickiewicz's ideologically exploited fame. The development of Zagreb constructs a quite different East European case, whose explanation goes beyond any possible categorial *Modernity at Large* explanations. Eve Blau, from Harvard University, chronicles the way Milan Lenuci, the town's architect, managed to negotiate over the head of the official fighting factions and justify the growth of the city… in an amazingly Clausewitzian manner. Applying military small steps tactics for urban development, the Croatian-Italian urban genius by-passed financial obstacles and defeated the resistance of the local and central administration alike. This explains the paradoxical growth of a successful metropolis from below, and gaining ground thanks to several tactical initiatives and decisions of a single planner—who was actually working with no master plan. Yet another striking, and also exemplary, feature of the modernization of Zagreb is its contribution to the specifically East European *ideoscape* signaled from the title of the article. "Modernizing Zagreb: The Freedom of the Periphery" introduces the conviction that "[t]here is a freedom of the periphery in the distance from power and all that it entails: the absence of strong institutions and systems of patronage, the lack of

material resources and political reality" (292). Besides enumerating here "the thousand natural ills" which plague the cities of Eastern Europe and slow down the races and rates of advance towards modernity, this quotation adds something that could have counted as a declaration of utopian faith, were it not for the fact that it praises actual successes scored during the modernization of Zagreb. It declares that there is "a condition that offers considerable 'freedom of creation,'" since "[t]he peripheral milieu is one in which multidirectional vectors offer access to many centers" and "[t]he periphery in this way has the capacity to become its own center" (292).

On the other hand, Eastern Europe could also boast its capacity to emulate Western centrism. Acting in the aftermath of Habsburg discipline, the systematic development of Warsaw, chronicled, from Leuven University, by Martin Kohlrausch, is the occasion for hitting the nail on the head in regard to the meaning of urban modernism as one of modernity's implemented, rather than unfinished projects. The *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* Polish project demonstrates what, as the title indicates, "Radical Urbanism and the International Discourse on Planning [meant and performed] in the Interwar Period." The project constituted a successful East European adaptation of Bauhaus modernism to create a functional city, capable to accommodate more than decently the incoming population while "urban extension quadrupled between 1916 and 1939" (Kohlrausch 213) owing to the collaboration of state and municipal institutions for implementing the provisions of master plans.

Useful not only as an extremely rich, suggestive source-text for probing East European urbanism and modernity in related, palpable, and distinctive ways, the collection of articles put together under the aegis of the Central European University in 2014 motivates further research on the speeds or races of modernity. It provides the template for grafting Eastern on Western expertise by maintaining in just balance local and global attitudes and studies. The book fills the gap between the West and the Rest with equanimity, constructively, through eliminating prejudices and reducing cultural gradients, working with hard facts rather than playing agendas against each other.

NOTE

[1] Had unpopular modernity been compared outside Russia by turning back to the fear of the new *technoscape* in the Victorian age, rather than the turn of the nineteenth century period, the panic-stricken observations about modern urban corruption would have replaced the sense of East European oddity, backwardness and rejection of progress; it would have led to finding a fairer western counterpart to eastern fears in early and mid-Victorian English literature and the frescoes of Dickens and George Eliot, for example. This would have shed light on the ideological lower-class motivation of the St. Petersburg critiques proposed by journalists, who were in sympathy with the urban newcomers' complaints rather than with the self-serving modern leisure that St. Petersburg made fully accessible for the upper-class elites.

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Monica SPIRIDON. *Popular culture: Modele, repere și practici contemporane* [*Popular Culture: Models, Hallmarks and Contemporary Practices*]. Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 2013. Print. 208 p.

When it comes to popular culture, the typical humanist scholar can fall in one of two opposing categories. He can either show enthusiasm for the poignant creativity, the political involvement and the activist effervescence of popular culture, or be dismissive of the unpretentious consumer product and its hypnotic marketing value. Either way, this vibrant cultural terrain appears as a daunting object of research. Monica Spiridon's book promises to guide further explorations by presenting current knowledge in a meta-analytical frame.

In a scientific, rigorous style, the author manages to illustrate the most important approaches to the field, sometimes highlighting their blind spots, while other times encouraging what seems to be a useful instrument for the tentative theorist. This field of research has a lot to offer and the book provides a complete framework of its history and conceptualization. Recent studies tackle the topic with a univocal intent, from the vantage point of a unique discipline, be it critical theory, sociology, politics, or minority studies. Monica Spiridon's book provides the building blocks for anyone who might take interest in the topic and, at the same time, stimulates further research by pointing out the aspects as yet insufficiently addressed by various theories.

Professor at the University of Bucharest, Monica Spiridon currently teaches media studies, narrative discourse analysis and semiotics. Her research interests cover semiotics, narratology, comparative literature, and literary theory. The numerous publications and conferences she attended testify to her vast experience in the literary field.

The book is divided into two parts. The first one is a critical overview of the post-war history of theory, where the author stresses the aspects which require further development or highlights the causes and circumstances which occasioned error. The second part deals with specific concepts from the field of popular culture, clarifying their definitions and illustrating them with examples from our cultural milieu.

Popular culture is a controversial field of academic investigation because it defines itself in terms of its entertainment value. It also has political implications, bringing into question everyday issues such as equality and social justice. I cannot recommend this book by invoking its entertaining qualities, because the intention of professor Spiridon is to construct a body of scientific knowledge. Still, the effort of understanding what lies at the foundation of our version of reality makes for an adventurous reading experience. The author engages in a thorough, multi-level analysis, with intellectual distance and strong references.

The motto of the book emphasizes the existential relevance of the topic and places Monica Spiridon's endeavor under the patronage of Umberto Eco, the semiotician who is presented as having elaborated the most important concepts for this area of study. Ultimately, it is Umberto Eco who redefined man as a mutant product of the information age (in *Apocalypse Postponed*). The new means of mass communication

have not only destabilized art and culture, but have also slowly modified human nature. In postmodernity, humanity, culture and science are knit together.

The title of the preface links Monica Spiridon's analysis to Aldous Huxley's famous dystopia—a world of both wonder and horror, which must be understood by the scientist from the inside. The intrinsic uncertainty of the field calls for instruments from all areas of humanist research, including fiction. The title of the introduction hints to yet another important reference for the book, namely Pierre Bourdieu's description of popular culture as "a paradigm with a variable geometry." Popular culture lacks fixed traits because it changes with the speed of technological advancement; it colonizes reality, borrows from or is nurtured by high art and refuses to yield to the traditional delineation between art and life. As a result, the research itself must adapt to the mutability of its object of study.

The introductory chapter deals with the colonization of reality by popular art. The boundary between the imaginary and reality grows ever thinner, a phenomenon which raises ethical concerns as well. The reference to Michel Foucault in relation to epistemic changes is unavoidable. In codependence with technological progress, mass media have modified their function from representation to creation, in direct relationship with market economy. Not only is this phenomenon confounding, but the theoretical response to it is disorganized. Foucault described certain pathological cases which emerge during moments of cultural crises. Their mark is bovarism and quixotism. Monica Spiridon uses this metaphor in relation to the theoretical domain. Since research in this area is transdisciplinary, theoretical bovarism encourages borrowings, assimilations, adaptations, innovations and improvisation. But there comes a moment in the advancement of knowledge when it is necessary to determine with precision the state of the discipline, and this is what Monica Spiridon's book sets out to do from a critical perspective.

The author presents a diachronic survey of the main schools of thought and their most useful concepts. Monica Spiridon associates each moment with a metaphor. The Frankfurt School of critical theory were the prophets, the Birmingham School were the pioneers and finally, Umberto Eco is portrayed as a lone runner. Some "prophets" discerned the mutual determination between economy and art, and described how it leads to the objectification of symbolic goods. They were also messengers of salvation through art. It is a post-Marxist line of thought, illustrated by names such as Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Their scrutiny focused on features such as standardization, the proliferation of consumerism, the conformity of pleasure and means of oppression. The main fault of popular art is the discrepancy between what is explicitly sold and the actual discursive effect. The Frankfurt School offers "an evaluative research, with overtly demystifying purposes. Its targets were on the one hand market economy, industrial society and ideology, and on the other, cultural objects produced by mass communication technologies" (Spiridon 31). The book puts the Frankfurt School in dialogue with the more recent approaches of Umberto Eco (2008) or Simon During (1993), both of whom accuse the "prophets" of cultural aristocracy (Spiridon 30). The representatives of the Frankfurt School failed to see the emancipating potential of the cultural industry and the user-position of active reception. For each direction of thought, the author tries to

disclose the "existential predeterminations" (Spiridon 31) which impaired the objectivity of analysis.

The Birmingham School of cultural studies took the investigation further in two directions. Culturalism (represented by Raymond Williams) focused on everyday life, individual response, and historical contingency by employing a mainly sociological apparatus. The second orientation of cultural studies, structuralism, used semiotics to reveal the grammar of culture. This school was the first to make use of transparadigmatic instruments to understand popular culture, and the two directions of research were complementary. The subchapter ends with directions given by Angela McRobbie (1992) concerning the future of cultural studies. A new paradigm should incorporate the study of subjectivity in culture, making use of ethnographical instruments.

The third historical contribution is provided by the solitary figure of Umberto Eco. The author is extremely optimistic about the possibilities offered by the use of semiotic implements in the study of popular culture. The book discussed is *Apocalypse Postponed*, because it gave a working hypothesis which subverted the polarization between popular culture and avant-garde art. According to Eco, the two forms of culture exercise a mutual influence. The avant-garde can be a reservoir for popular culture, but democratic access can encourage a horizontal production of meaning and an emancipation of the subject.

The second chapter of part one, entitled *Popular Culture as Alterity and Difference*, focuses on terminology, because even experienced researchers seem to find it confusing. The concepts of mass culture, media culture, cultural industry and popular culture cannot be used interchangeably. The terminological chaos is related to the main controversy on the subject, i.e. the boundary between high art and popular art and, of course, to the unscientific nature, the unfixable quality of the object of study. As Monica Spiridon aptly puts it, the research field of popular culture is "a field of methodological bricolage and interdisciplinary concepts" (67).

Another important issue is where to position popular culture with respect to postmodernism and traditionalism. The answer is not given in a straightforward manner, as Monica Spiridon adopts a nuanced perspective, first reviewing the information which needs to be taken into account when tackling this issue. Postmodernism, as expected, encourages popular culture and even draws inspiration from its carnivalesque aspect. Another element brought forward is the emergence of a new type of literacy. The situation of popular culture in relation to tradition is actually divergent: the modernists, whose credo is McLuhan's famous statement "the medium is the message," oppose the traditionalists, who, like Yuri Lotman, identify a pattern within the chaos of diversity and theorize an inclination toward global tribalism and totemization.

Part two of the book focuses on different models and practices articulated in the comprehension of popular culture. Each concept is handled in theoretical synchrony. The first model stems from conservatism and mimicry. The author analyzes the concepts of genre, myth and serialization. Genre is obviously a literary concept which morphed into a sociological tool for the understanding of cultural productivity. The author places particular emphasis on this ability of the domain of research to encourage methodological grafts with unexpected, yet fruitful results. Myths originate from religious studies and

give anthropologically relevant results when it comes to understanding production and reception. The author categorizes myths into two types—patrimony myths and self-made myths. Monica Spiridon demonstrates a keen insight into the workings of television and politics when discussing the phenomenon of serialization, detailing narrative strategies and the impact of media franchise.

A second useful literary graft is intertextuality, and here Monica Spiridon masterfully introduces Mikhail Bakhtin to popular culture. Textual analysis merges with cultural theory to outline not only the way in which production develops through mass media, but also the more political, existential and ethical issue of the colonialization of everyday life by the Imaginary. Intertextuality, the original concept, is adapted so as to suit the more appropriate linguistic frame of transmediality.

Another useful concept, neutralization, is provided by Umberto Eco, who explains how high art is inevitably acclimatized by popular culture. The last paradigm is centered on pleasure and its paradoxical nature. From Marcuse, through Barthes, back to Bakhtin and then jumping to semiotics, this polyphonic phenomenon cannot be tackled outside interdisciplinarity.

The book graciously closes with the presentation of Thomas Pavel's theory of possible worlds. Every civilization which produces and consumes culture also produces possible worlds. What is peculiar to the contemporary era is the extensive effect of popular culture both on the actual world and on the most respected models of possible worlds.

Monica Spiridon offers a thorough examination of the topic at hand, with relevance for the understanding of the contemporary self and the current cultural problems. Her book is a mandatory reference for any future researcher of popular culture.

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Andrei TERIAN. *Critica de export: Teorii, contexte, ideologii* [*Export Criticism: Theories, Contexts, Ideologies*]. Bucharest: Editura MLR, 2013. Print. 346 p.

The book comprises a series of studies published in international journals and collective volumes, covering a broad area of interests related to various fields (comparative literature, literary theory, ideology criticism, relatively recent approaches to literary texts—postcolonial studies, literary geography—, translation studies, fictionalism, and narratology, among others). Although, as a result of this diversity of perspectives, *Export Criticism* may appear eclectic, all the studies in the book express one and the same attitude, and the ideas presented converge at the center of Andrei Terian's preoccupations, i.e., Romanian criticism, which, beyond the difficulties it faces both at home and abroad, is already an object susceptible of export.

Export criticism is defined as that "critical discourse which retains some relevance beyond the strictly local, regional or national context which produced it" (5). The discussion inevitably leads to the rethinking of the literary cannon and of the status of Romanian literature and criticism in relation to international expectations. In doing so, the author surveys the major problems of Romanian criticism and offers partial solutions, showing that Romanian criticism is not only exportable, but already exported.

The first problem Terian identifies is the relatively limited number of translations of—and the overall lack of interest in—Romanian literature. Although the object of criticism might be insufficiently represented, criticism itself is not doomed to remain within its national cultural boundaries and to be read exclusively by individuals who are part of the culture it explores. The author argues that criticism is always transnational, because it exhibits a conceptual structure which is larger than the specific issue it tackles. In this context, the perspective offered by literary criticism and the stance adopted by the critic might prove to be more relevant to an international public than a poem or a novel. Although this is apparently an external problem, later on in the book, the author deconstructs the internal factors which lead to self-isolation.

The other side of this self-isolation is the absence of contexts which could ease the encounter of an international public with a foreign literature that carries its own assumptions and ideological tendencies. The author draws attention to the absence of a substantial work of history of Romanian literature written in or translated into an international language. The lack of context is doubled by the inconsistent exploration of a discipline which could prepare the encounter with the textual otherness, i.e., comparative literature. While the author views the discipline itself as a field which mostly pertains to export criticism, he also disregards it by stating that world literature is its "upgraded" version. The reasons why a comparatist should abandon the project of organizing literature according to its established values (i.e. the canon) or to other structural principles are debatable and I see no valid reason why the two—comparative literature and world literature—should not be seen as complementary. Nevertheless, Terian does find comparative literature relevant, by emphasizing its role in crossing local/national barriers. Using the instruments of this discipline, "Romanian literature

could be defined as the most important literature written in a Romance language in Eastern Europe" (10).

This brings us to the way in which Romanian literature could negotiate its position on the international market—and not only in relationship with other Romance cultures. The solution advanced by Andrei Terian is identifying the place of Romanian literature within the East European cultural framework, the affinities and differences between Romanian literature and Slovenian literature, for instance—a perspective usually neglected. Although there is a tradition of declaring the Romance origins of Romanian culture, studies focusing on the historical destiny shared by the countries of Eastern Europe could be of the utmost importance to a foreign reader interested in cultural intersections; such studies would therefore be exportable.

Besides the aforementioned problems, there are some tendencies in contemporary Romanian literary criticism which hamper cultural dialogue: they concern the method, the form, the object, and the criteria. Regarding the method, the author notes the fact that Romanian criticism seems frozen in time, in the cultural framework of French Theory, while the Western mainstream consists of postcolonial studies, world-system analysis, translation studies, literary Neo-Darwinism and others, fundamentally different in method, perspective and tradition. The author makes a plea for synchronization, while acknowledging that many Western tendencies could be rethought. The methodological problem is doubled by the problem of the way most Romanian critics express their ideas: their impressionistic manner, their newspaper column discourse and attitude. This practice was heavily criticized by Romanian comparatist Adrian Marino, and there is a general disapproval of the impressionistic style among scholars; still, superficially drafted samples of criticism continue to be published.

The object of literary criticism is also problematic, due to the persistence of the "aesthetic autonomy" principle, which discourages contextual approaches. Indeed, we can assume the foreign public is less concerned with the virtuosity of Romanian writers and more interested in the ideology that transpires in their work, their relationship with proximate cultures and the way they contribute to a Romanian identity. From this standpoint, studies that demonstrate how "great" a (usually canonical) writer is are dismissed.

Yet another obstruction in initiating a real dialogue is the inconsistent criteria scholars apply in the reception of Romanian studies written outside national borders. The hostility foreign critics experience when trying to rethink (re-contextualize, reinterpret and revalue) Romanian literature is detrimental to a genuine dialogue.

Lastly, the dialogue is inhibited by the lack of understanding of what it means to write export criticism, what rules apply to the canon of world literature, and of the ways they differ from ours. While world literature consists of national literatures, a general reorganization might undermine the already established principles and criteria operating in those literatures. The key is to acknowledge that there are *several* Romanian literatures: one claimed by Romanian critics, and others by foreign critics—none of them more relevant than the others.

Although the focus of the book is on the concept of "export criticism," the studies tackle other problems as well, such as the (re)construction of the critical discourse, the geo-cultural conditions of literature, the relationship between criticism and ideology in (post)communism, and the individual profiles of several exportable literary critics (Thomas Pavel, Nicolae Manolescu, Eugen Simion).

Another interesting chapter concerns the theory of comparative literature, bringing into discussion the most recent and influential scholarly works on the topic. There is an ever-growing tendency to question the main tool used in comparative literature, which is, of course, comparison. The author argues that there is an "incomparable" factor in literary texts which questions the legitimacy of the discipline. Terian goes on to equate "incomparable" with "uninterpretable." The forms the "incomparable" can take are that of a cultural (or spatial, geopolitical) otherness, as defined in postcolonial studies (the discrepancy between the colonizer and the colonized); an irreducible linguistic otherness (the untranslatable); and an irreducible historical otherness (starting from the premise that in a globalized world two contemporary writers from different parts of the world are more likely to know about each other than about the classics of their own national literary tradition).

The last part of the chapter is the most interesting and piercing one, deconstructing the theories of otherness that were supposed to undermine the legitimacy of comparative studies and especially of comparison as a means of approaching texts. Firstly, as far as the irreducible linguistic otherness is concerned, the untranslatable seems to refer not to words that have no equivalent in translation, but to words that are misleadingly translated or constantly retranslated. This leaves open the possibility that the untranslatable could, in fact, be translated properly and sensibly—a hypothesis which undermines the very concept of untranslatability. Secondly, there must be a *tertium comparationis* in the historical otherness, in order for the present to be able to communicate with the past, and in order for us to be able to compare extremely different and apparently incomparable traditions. If the past seems foreign in the logic of Damrosch's critique, for example, Terian argues that there is no reason to assume every individual internalizes the past in the same way: the past could be a reality more familiar than the present. As to cultural otherness, the author suggests that postcolonial studies might be problematic for the same reason they regard comparative literature to be, i.e., the way in which they invite the reader to make assumptions about a text: from a foreign point of view. Similarly, postcolonial studies view the Other as infused with the Self, and not in its pure otherness. Terian argues that this outlook represents a dead end in the history of reading and interpretation, because it implies that the only candidate for the status of legitimate reader is the author himself—which clearly is not how literature works. The conclusion is not that comparative literature is infallible, but that it should be criticized based on how it uses comparison, and not for using comparison.

What makes a comparison sensible? The author stresses the fact that there is no rule in deciding which comparisons are good and which are not. Rather, he likens comparison to metaphor in an attempt to explain why there is no rule in ascribing value: both valuable comparisons and metaphors generate their own context (interpretation,

evaluation, and eventually norm) retrospectively, after they have been uttered. Reuniting and systematizing some historical models of comparative practices, Andrei Terian gives a brief classification of the types of comparison which have been successively at the heart of the discipline: the comparison of elements (the original form of comparative literature, working with symbols, *topoi*, patterns, etc.), the comparison of forms (along the lines of Russian formalism and structuralism, and thus comparing "forms" and "structures"), and the comparison of processes (the dominant impulse of the contemporary practice of comparative literature to understand the forms, *topoi* and so on within a cultural framework which is, in turn, part of a global context).

The discussion is of topical interest in the context of Franco Moretti's ambitious project and the increasingly acute conflict between distant reading and close reading. Andrei Terian provides a description of the ways in which comparative literature manages to remain relevant in spite of these perpetually changing tendencies, and suggests new directions in the field:

> And if the history of comparatism amounts, from a certain point of view, to progress, this "progress" seems to mean the enforcement of the following principle: we must understand the forms better precisely in order to understand the elements better, and we must understand the processes better in order to understand the forms (and elements) better. In other words, comparatists are now in greater need of distant reading, not so as to replace, but to improve close reading, and they now need to favour the "integrational" function of literature in order to better explain its "differential" function. (46)

Export criticism is a highly recommendable read for all literary scholars, since it touches upon topics of general interest in academic practices. In particular, it addresses scholars and students interested in the current state of Romanian criticism in relation to the idea of transnational criticism, the status of comparative literature, and the factors which generate the Romanian identity. Ultimately, it is a thorough analysis of the problems facing the export of literary criticism, and, at the same time, an invitation to dialogue.

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Matthew L. JOCKERS. *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2013. Print. 208 p.

The book is focused on digital humanities, more specifically on the study of literature, ways of doing research, methodology, all seen from the point of view of data processing. The first part of the book offers a comprehensive history of the concept of digital humanities, while the second part is centered on analyzing different types of data processing and their possible uses. The third part is a manifest for the digital humanities, as a part (not the whole) of literary research.

The content is well structured, divided into ten chapters organized into three parts, each having a very clear topic. The first part, entitled "Foundation," encompasses chapters 1 to 4 and describes the basis of what we now call digital humanities. The first chapter, "Revolution," begins with a motto suggesting that the digital revolution surpasses in importance the invention of writing or printing, but then goes on to argue that, up until now, gaining knowledge from texts by digital means has involved an impractical amount of work. The second chapter, "Evidence," further develops the context of digital humanities by discussing the relevance of evidence in literary studies compared to sciences. It begins by suggesting that literary scholars, like scientists, may construct hypotheses about literary works and then search for evidence to support their assumptions, thus employing similar methodologies. It further states that opinion is the basis of literary interpretation, but that some opinions are to be preferred, as they are "better informed, better derived or […] more believable" (6). Traditional (close reading) and innovative (big data) methodologies for the analysis of texts are then discussed and the conclusion reached is that both methods should be used in order to achieve a better understanding of literature. The chapter concludes by stating that this book is centered on evidence gathering and literature. The following chapter, "Tradition," integrates digital humanities into a lineage of text analysis methods via computational approaches, emphasizing that this concept is not new—on the contrary, its history spans half a century. Some say the popularity of the digital humanities in recent times is due to a crisis affecting literary studies, but another suggestion is that this success might be a result of larger access to digital resources. This chapter also notes that there is no clear definition of or general agreement as to what the digital humanities are. The importance of studying the history of the concept of digital humanities is also emphasized, as digital humanities, as an academic field of study, have become increasingly popular over recent years, despite their vague definition. Various tools (software, internet databases) are recommended for academic research and there is a general acknowledgement of the importance of tools for processing and altering texts. It is suggested that the somewhat limited use that has so far been made of the many digital resources at our disposal stems from traditional training, which does not encourage the insights required to realize the potential of the electronic processing of texts. Franco Moretti's concept of "distant reading" is offered as a complementary type of analysis to "close reading"—one that can lead to new research paths. The advantage of macroanalysis appears to be that it offers both close scrutiny and a broader view of the object of analysis. The last chapter of the first part, "Macroanalysis,"

discusses a new approach to the study of humanities. The novel idea of macroanalysis proposes a change in the object of analysis, from contextualized singularities to "trends and patterns aggregated over an entire corpus" (24), which leads to the discovery of details previously unavailable through close reading. The "systematic examination of data" (25) is emphasized here, and yet Jockers does not advocate replacing the old techniques with the new one; instead, he suggests that both levels of analysis be used together. The computer—the medium of digital humanities—is seen here as a tool that enhances the reader's perception beyond human capabilities, greatly increasing the scale of contextualization and allowing us to better understand the degree to which texts are influenced by other texts and cultural factors. In this way, patterns previously unobserved can be investigated. The author advances the idea that literary interpretation can be based on verifiable evidence, thus describing text analyses in terms of "findings" rather than "interpretation", and yet Jockers makes it clear that the weight falls on the interpretation of facts (data) once we have gathered them. In the context of digital humanities, the main point this chapter makes is that literary texts "should be approached not simply as an examination of seminal works but as an examination of an aggregated ecosystem" (32). One of the aims of this book is to show that originality in literary texts is determined by factors beyond the writer's control.

The second part of the book, "Analysis," begins with a chapter titled "Metadata," explaining the importance of having good metadata for every text to be subjected to macroanalysis. The author notes that even though metadata alone, without the actual text, can be a powerful tool for extracting information about trends in literature, it has not been used very frequently or to its full potential. The Irish American database is given as an example of research conducted solely on metadata from literary texts, but the selection of the works which were included in the database is deemed to have been subjective at times. However, Jockers remarks that before electronic processing had been made available, the study of Irish American literature depended on studies of individual authors from the canon. Applying the macroanalytic perspective brought forward a correction to the previous perspective (for instance, a generation that had previously been deemed lost has been better identified and described via this study). Before electronic text processing, the way in which literary periods were analyzed was generalization from a selection of sample texts. However, this practice can be dangerous if the selected texts are not representative of the entire period; the discovery of evidence is the aim of theory as well as methodology, and even though evidence gathered through macroanalytic procedures is different from that gathered through close reading, it is still important evidence. Metadata analysis is a complex tool, its most basic use being counting and sorting the texts, but a database with rich metadata can even answer queries about the way in which literary style varies across different regions. Titles are mentioned as another undervalued research resource: the comparative analysis of titles is just a starting point; by taking into account lexical richness, it is possible to investigate whether the wording of titles from a given period is homogenous or not. The conclusion of this chapter is that factors like ethnicity, gender, geography and time determine the form and subject of literary texts. The following chapter, "Style,"

describes the means to investigate the authorship of literary works not by searching for similar content, but based on the author's unique style. A comprehensive analysis of style can also lead to a better understanding of the way literary works are influenced by other texts and phenomena. In order to assess style processing "high-dimensional" data, principal component analysis, supervised classification and linear regression are required. The results of the examples of processing were found to suggest that genres also have distinguishable styles, and further investigation is needed in order to determine which expressions are typical of different genres and which can be said to make up an author's style. This further shows how procedures normally used to identify authors can also be useful in other investigations. All the examples offered in this chapter serve to emphasize how close reading needs the contextualization provided by macroanalysis in order to avoid misinterpretations. In chapter 7, "Nationality," the author asserts that each nation has particularities of style. Both frequently used words and rarely used words are important in studying the particularities of national styles, and since most words have meanings, an interesting picture of important themes and subjects emerges. The following chapter, "Theme," begins with a discussion of Veselovsky's hypothesis on literary history as "a series of recurring narrative plots, motifs, and devices that overshadow and dwarf the minor contributions of individual authors" (119). It is suggested that this hypothesis can now be tested with the help of "big data" and electronic text processing. One tool for testing this idea is the Google Ngram Viewer, though Jockers warns that it is inefficient when extracting meaning from words. Other possibilities are searching for keywords and collocates, the latter being more efficient than the former; however, the most effective seem to be the probabilistic latent semantic indexing and the probabilistic topic modeling employing latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA). Topic modeling is a simple and scalable method for pairing words with meaning and creates word clusters which can later be identified as themes. Topic modeling works even if two words are not next to each other in the sentence, but it works better if a large text (a novel, for instance) is divided into smaller sections for the purpose of identifying prevalent or absent themes. The conclusions of the research described in this chapter suggest that we can establish relationships between historical events, literary themes, the authors' nationality, the authors' gender, etc. Interesting conclusions are drawn from the analysis of data concerning nationality—some stereotypes are confirmed, while others are not. The last chapter of the second part, "Influence," shows that the examination of style and thematic macropatterns creates rich context for the close reading of texts. The aim of this chapter is to investigate whether overt or covert links to other writings are coincidental or purposefully made and if there is such a thing as literary evolution or influence. The literary world appears to be chaotic, but it is suggested that in order to discuss influence we must search for order in this chaos, and only the tools provided by digital humanities can achieve this. The theory of "information cascades" is further described in relation to literary texts, with reference to the practice of individual authors who choose to recycle a theme instead of using their own independent ideas, because of "some herd instinct" (157). This information exchange theory is deemed worthy of exploring as a means of explaining literary influence. The conclusion reached after modeling literary influence

through this method is that the corpus is akin to a network, each book having been influenced by those written before it. Each new generation of writers learns from its predecessors and then innovates; thus, changes occur over time. This type of analysis can even calculate "ego-networks," revealing the influence range of a particular book, and can measure the importance of each book compared to the other books in the network. The data obtained using this method need to be corroborated with the results of close readings in order to be confirmed and clarified. An important insight is that books are never isolated and perhaps shouldn't be treated as if they were. Each text is part of a long tradition that is constantly growing. Macroanalysis may be able to help us find those books Jockers calls the "orphans of literary history" (168).

The third part of the book, entitled "Prospects," consists of the last chapter, "Orphans," which emphasizes the fact that close reading is no longer sufficient as the only tool for literary research. The main argument of the book is restated: text mining, or "macroanalysis," is a necessary addition to the arsenal of the literary scholar, providing important contextual references to literary works. The idea that literature may and must be seen as an evolving system is also put forward. This chapter is a meditation on digital preservation, orphan works and the future for macroanalysis. The issues that copyright law creates for digital humanities are briefly described.

Without being a textbook like *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, edited by Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman (Blackwell, 2008), *Macroanalysis* is a passionate manifest in favor of digital humanities, and goes beyond offering a comprehensive view of the subject. Unlike Julie Thompson Klein's *Interdisciplining Digital Humanities: Boundary Work in an Emerging Field* (U of Michigan P, 2014), it does not make such bold statements as proclaiming the complete transformation of traditional institutions due to digital humanities. The theoretical and practical examples offered are convincing and captivating without going into too much technical detail. *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History* argues that digital humanities should not be perceived as a replacement for the traditional approach to literary study, but rather as a complementary set of tools that can facilitate results which traditional methods cannot achieve.

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Adrian CURAJ et al., eds. *Higher Education Reforms in Romania: Between the Bologna Process and National Challenges*. Springer International Publishing, 2014. Print. 228 p.

Romania played an important role in the European higher education sphere in the second half of the 20th century: the European Center for Higher Education (CEPES) was founded in Bucharest in 1972 and, during the same decade, Romania was one of the top fifteen countries hosting students from abroad (18-19). The question whether the decline of the communist regime and the transitional turmoil that followed had a negative impact on the Romanian higher education system is, in all respects, pertinent and aptly addressed in the book, both diachronically—with regard to the changes produced over the last decades—and synchronically—with insights into the process of internationalization. The purpose of the research on which this is book is based—the "Higher Education Evidence Based Policy Making: A Necessary Premise for Progress in Romania" project, implemented by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) and conducted between 2012 and 2014—was to establish an appropriate informational platform, able to provide statistics and analyses of the state of affairs in the Romanian Higher Education Institutions, both at a national level and in comparison to other EU countries. Containing eleven articles that explore all the dimensions connected to the field of higher education—history, society, evaluation, research, students' subsidies distribution, equity, and internationalization (a key concept in the present study)—in a manner which "provid[es] food for thought for both practitioners and researchers" (22), this book offers a comparative and objective approach to the dilemmas raised by the present educational system.

The article titled "Romanian Higher Education in 2009-2013: The Bologna Process and Romanian Priorities in the Search for an Active European and Global Presence" (written by Adrian Curaj, Ligia Deca, and Cezar Mihai Hâj) explores methodological shortcomings from a historical perspective. After the fall of communism, the number of HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) experienced rapid growth, as well as an important metamorphosis: the diversification on the axis of *public* and *private* forms of education (3). The discrepancies between EU standards and national circumstances did not disappear after Romania signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999 and joined the European Union in 2007; instead, they lead to one of the highest rates (twice the European average) of social exclusion from higher education (most affected are those who belong to an ethnical minority, those with physical disabilities and those who are confronted with poverty), proving thus that Romania is not yet fully prepared to ensure the universal right to education. In these dire circumstances, a serious approach in light of the principles of "equity, internationalization and internal quality assurance" (17) was urgently needed. Therefore, for the period in which Romania hosted the Bologna Secretariat (2010-2012), these were the watchwords of the Third Bologna Policy Forum and of the Bucharest EHEA (European Higher Education Area) Ministerial Conference (17).

"The Role of Impact Evaluation in Evidence-Based Higher Education Policy Making: The Contribution of Transparency Tools" (by Lucian Ciolan et al.) and "Why Do Romanian Universities Fail to Internalize Quality Assurance?" (by Koen Geven et al.)

are two complementary articles which deal with matters concerning quality assurance and the accreditation of HEIs. ARACIS (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) manages the process of accreditation of a program or an institution at a national level, but faces several problems: the severe lack of comparable data as a result of the deficient self-evaluation of the Romanian HEIs, and the need of standardized reports with means of *cross-comparison* (between different institutions) and *longitudinal comparison* (between different stages in the evolution of one institution). Quality Assurance remains a heavy burden at a formal level for most Romanian HEIs, a phenomenon which can be explained historically: a community that experienced the strictness of the communist regime (i.e., was familiar only to external control) needs more time to accommodate to the idea of internal ways of evaluation (i.e., self-evaluation). Moreover, in "The Quest for Quality in Higher Education: Is There Any Place Left for Equity and Access?", Gabriel-Alexandru Vîiu and Adrian Miroiu highlight the inconsistency of the quality assurance process in Romania: although the authority which sets the functioning criteria for HEIs is ARACIS, a state-established institution, the regulations only refer to accreditation (the finality of the quest for quality in educational institutions), all the while ignoring internal quality assurance. We can speak, in this sense, of "compliance with a set of minimum standards" (180). "Evaluation Capacity Building as a Means to Improving Policy Making and Public Service in Higher Education," by Nicolae Toderaş and Ana-Maria Stăvaru, offers a solution in the understanding of evaluation as a habitual activity, as means to improve, not just to control or to discipline.

"Equity from an Institutional Perspective in the Romanian Higher Education System," by Jamil Salmi, Cezar Mihai Hâj and Daniela Alexe, deals with a crucial aspect of HEIs—equity, which can be understood as equality of participation. The Romanian educational system, however, has a long-lasting tradition of awarding scholarships according to merit, and without a decent and functional loan system, the financially disadvantaged groups don't have the chance to pursue higher education. *Student Centred Learning* is a key concept here: first elaborated in the works of theorists such as Dewey, Piaget and Rogers, it came to designate an active pattern of learning, according to which the student-teacher relationship is one of interdependence. This pattern encourages the student's critical thinking, a key concept that is broadly discussed in the chapter titled "Student Centred Learning: Translating Trans-National Commitments into Institutional Realities: The Romanian Experience." Nevertheless, according to Jamil Salmi, Cezar Mihai Hâj and Daniela Alexe, although the Law of Education No. 1/2011 includes a chapter called "Student Centered University," the concept is poorly understood and does not reflect a general practice: "Romanian HE system as a whole is characterised by a continuing focus on information transfer (belonging to the traditional methods of teaching), rather than on the learning process" (112). The articles titled "Internationalisation of Higher Education in Romanian National and Institutional Contexts" (by Ligia Deca, Eva Egron-Polak, and Cristina Ramona Fiț), "Building and Deepening a Comprehensive Strategy to Internationalise Romanian Higher Education" (by Hans de Wit and Laura C. Engel), "National Strategies and Practices in Internationalisation of Higher Education: Lessons from a Cross-Country Comparison" (by Liviu Matei and Iulia Iwinska) deal with a crucial

and topical matter: how can Romanian HEIs be relevant to the international arena and vice versa. According to J. Knight, who authored a book on HE (*Higher Education in Turmoil: The Changing World of Internationalisation*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2008) internationalization (which is not an aim in itself, but rather the effort towards an efficient teaching/learning process which can encapsulate the perception of cultural alterity as well) can be of two types: "internationalisation abroad," with reference to student/staff mobility; and "internationalisation at home," achieved through specific mobility programs which develop multicultural awareness.

From a broader perspective, *Higher Education Reforms in Romania: Between the Bologna Process and National Challenges* takes on two important tasks with respect to the state of the Romanian educational sphere: it makes a diagnosis (with solid empirical insight and relevant theoretical foundation) and prescribes a remedy (detailing the steps to be taken towards a standardized financial, social and cultural environment for HEIs).

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Ray SIEMENS and Susan SCHREIBMAN, eds. *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2008. *Digital Humanities*. Web. 30 July 2015. 620 p.

The posthumanism implied by the digital technologies that code and, thus, rewrite realities has at its core a "pressure toward dematerialization," as N. Katherine Hayles puts it in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (U of Chicago P, 1999). This pressure is configured under the spell of an autonomy phantasm, where retrieving information no longer depends upon spatial or physical world coordinates. Although the content is fluid, it does become ubiquitous, surrounding us and re-establishing, every time, the center of the world inside the point of access. This is not a gesture of control, an attempt to dissolve ourselves in the abstract realm so as to distinguish ourselves from controllable objects, as Baudrillard argues, but a gesture of self-positioning inside the cyberspace. We are not asserting ourselves as *presence*, but as *pattern* inside the new regime of representation discussed by Katherine Hayles. The pattern/randomness dichotomy that has replaced the presence/absence world model has evolved from an understanding of reality as a collection of empirical presences to a way of tracing reality within the occurrence of *sameness*. I believe that the new narrative of man as *informational circuit* solves the anxiety created by serialization and the modernist, postindustrial impossibility of establishing an origin, because it opens up the possibility for man to become his own origin in cyberspace, where the algorithmically dictated *becoming* reassembles continuity and self-continuity by means of digital agency. It is only by understanding the new imaginative expressions and the new perceptive codes of the type of world we are experiencing that we can start talking about digital humanities and the way they integrate not just new means, but new worldviews.

The 2008 Blackwell *Companion to Digital Literary Studies* edited by Susan Schreibman and Ray Siemens is now open for free access. As such, the companion becomes an open-source collection of thirty studies concerning the social, trans-individual, economic, architectural, generative, etc. effects of digital literary studies gathered up under the arch of an independent discipline. The text is displayed in a user-friendly format that keeps the contents of the *Companion* ready to access on the right-hand side of the screen. Each chapter functions as a hyperlink and can also be read in a print view that isolates it from the rest of the collection. The platform offers a search module, in order to make the scholarly approach of the text not just relevant, but also efficient. The architecture of the online version of the companion is in perfect tune with the principle which states that digital humanities do not concern themselves only with the aesthetics of re-presentation, but also place an emphasis on the enactment of virtual contact itself. *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies* is divided into four major parts: an "Introduction," where Alan Liu discusses the narratives of the encounter with the new media as a space that negotiates meaning and creates significance from within the tension between media determinism and the de-centralized forces of the internet. The second part of the companion is called "Traditions" and comprises seven papers that deal with the manifestation of digital choreography in literary texts. Issues about accessibility, online resources, textual performance, new forms of human connectedness and the road to a new intertextuality,

paved by the hyperlink, are being questioned and addressed within a quantifiable way of making sense of digital literary studies. "Textualities," the third part of the volume, concerns itself with the way hyperfiction and programs generating narratives shape and change the way storytelling functions at a cultural level. Storytelling is no longer a way of creating identity and integrative human coherence, but a means of turning human behavior into a predictable set of goal inferences.

The metaphorical sense of the terms we use to designate user acts like "browsing," "surfing," "clicking" points towards the fact that the web is understood as a text that is not meant to be read, but selected. Enhanced operations work based on an *elimination* principle in order to render relevant searching engine results. When we browse we acquire mobility among texts that are not ours (not even the search result is ours) and digital literary aesthetics aims at a re-appropriation of the text. I believe that the sense of property that codifies some of our perceptions in relation to a text can be surpassed and replaced by a sense of linked circulatory versions of an object we possess in common. This common possession is not linear, nor accidental, but dictated by the texture of a structured invisibility that traverses the cyberspace and turns it into a process always loaded with a collectively joint possibility. Some would tend to say that this invisibility is the programing itself, but I want to link it to a connectivity that is feasible beyond programing, inside the hypertext of universal postdigital sharing.

In this section, there is also a paper about the way in which the weblog changes the text into a practice; since it involves a digital personal diary, the weblog opens up as a medium of the community. The fourth part, "Methodologies," examines quantitative narrative, the cybertext, electronic editions, textual encoding and other digital tools and methods of transgressing the face and the reach of literary texts.

A Companion to Digital Literary Studies understands its responsibility in analyzing all the aspects mentioned above not only from utilitarian points of view, but also ethical ones. The digital space has not managed to completely undermine the commodity character of literary or non-literary textual productions, but by means of peer-to-peer distribution nodes, file-sharing networks, cooperation enhanced by different applications and social platforms, modifications of video-game narratives by the general public, etc., it has succeeded in the democratization of access and the democratization of narrative structures that cannot be captured in pre-established routes and diagrams, because there is always yet another level of the story in the digital medium. All these aspects are forcing us to redefine the concept of intellectual property and the way we want to apply it to network behaviors and to a *sharing economy* brought forth by the forms in which information manifests itself in the virtual space.

The interface is the new face and voice of our books, magazines or personal writings, and unlike the printed piece of paper, which was looking back at us from the depths of a secluded and pre-defined human act and from behind material flows, the interface is looking back at us in defacement and dis-figuration, because there is "nothing" behind it, just as bluntly as there is nothing beyond codification and signifiers. The truth of mirroring and transparency has been replaced by the truth of a non-reflective screen that allows us the imaginary loops of gestures (like throwing something in the recycle

bin), but not the imaginary loops of world stratification. How is hermeneutics influenced by the digitalized text, which does not carry a bedded structure, but a display structure that generates perceptive levels towards the outside and not the inside? Are both the fictional and the real world losing depth to acquire variational frequencies and embedded screenings? Although digital literary studies understand the medium as being the message, as yet, they do not answer these questions. In research and literary production, the possibilities opened up by digital technologies are infinite and inseparable from our deepest actions and perceptions, because they have not simply encoded something that was previously there, but they have generated meaning within the polarizing forces of digits. *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies* offers us the discursive possibilities of acknowledging daily digital practices that we tend to perceive as natural, and thus, makes us aware of the fact that by being simple users we are actually developers, because we create pattern inside the web, which is not a mere installation, but a living organism. Limitless reality and the quest for liberating education from the boundaries of schools and libraries are the main driving forces of digital literary studies as a pioneering field of investigation. Even if taking things at their interface value means "getting rid" of the beautiful phantasms of inwardness, we still have to search for new signifying mechanisms which can handle interiority-exteriority projections.

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Marina Cap-Bun and Florentina Nicolae, eds. *Literatura, teatrul şi filmul: În onoarea dramaturgului Matei Vişniec* [*Literature, Theater and Film: In Honor of Matei Vişniec, the Playwright*]. Constanţa: Ovidius UP, 2015. Print. 394 p.

Publishing fiction, poetry and drama in Romanian and French since the 1980s, Matei Vişniec has been involved in the translation and negotiation of cultures and genres over several decades. As his plays have been performed on various stages around the world, his acclaim has exceeded the boundaries of his home and host cultures. A volume dedicated to elucidating his role in the context of contemporary literature and theater could have been published in any of the places where his work has been embraced or has received accolades, but it is only fitting that it was put out in Romania, the country where he was born, where he spent his formative years, where his plays are most often staged and where he continues to be awarded prizes and academic titles, such as the Honorary Doctorate he received from "Ovidius" University in October 2014.

The collection of essays entitled *Literatura, teatrul şi filmul: În onoarea dramaturgului Matei Vişniec* comprises two sections: "Opera lui Matei Vişniec" ["Matei Vişniec's Work"] and "Dialogul artelor: literatura, teatrul, filmul" ["Dialogues between Literature, Theater and Film"], which group thirty-five articles written by researchers from Europe and the Americas. The articles are written in Romanian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and English. At the same time, the collection boasts an interdisciplinary approach, which becomes a major asset in its presentation to readers today.

Some of the notable contributions from the first part of the volume try to determine Matei Vişniec's place in European culture and his indebtedness to famous literary predecessors, as well as the source of his work's humor and universal relevance. Drawing both on theater studies and literary studies, the section dedicated to the exegesis of Vişniec's work is multifaceted, offering readers a comprehensive journey through the Romanian-French corpus under consideration.

One of the most remarkable articles included in the collection adopts the perspective of theater studies as Didier Plassard ("Paul Valéry" University) underlines Vişniec's fascination with the word, which remains the focus point of his work. According to Didier Plassard, Vişniec's drama belongs to "the verbal-iconic mode, due to the harmony established between word and image" (27, my translation). Using the same perspective, Deolinda Catarina França de Vilhena (Federal University of Bahia) contributes with information concerning Vişniec's Brazilian reception, as the staging of his plays by local directors has given the audience the opportunity to become acquainted with the Romanian-French playwright's vision since 2012.

The literary studies perspective is auspiciously illustrated by Evelio Miñano Martínez (University of Valencia), who focuses on the relationship between animals and humans, a less discussed aspect of Vişniec's work, revealing the fantastic and symbolic aspects of the fauna on stage. Elsewhere in the first part of the volume, Florica Ciodaru-Courriol (University of Lyon 3) falls back on a theoretical essay by Michel Meyer and looks at the ways in which Vişniec creates humor, "playing with the referential function through mental associations and substitutions" (97, my translation).

When it comes to filiations and influences, Gilles Losseroy (University of Lorraine-Nancy 2) traces Vişniec's ties with the literary family Kafka and Borges are part of, insisting that at the center of his work lies an overwhelming "anxiety to be violently or insidiously destroyed by the vampires of dictatorship, as well as gently seduced on the battlefields of the Society of the Spectacle" (79, my translation). The intertextual connections to Kafka's fiction are also discussed in the essay penned by Ileana Alexandra Orlich (Arizona State University), who chooses to address Vişniec's prose—more specifically, *Domnul K. eliberat* [*Mr. K. Released*]—in order to investigate whether the protagonist's life after prison might not be "a faint yet not so distant echo of the space beyond Schengen and its inhabitants" (55, my translation). Jozefina Komporaly (De Montfort University, Leicester, U.K.) attempts a comparative study, placing Matei Vişniec side by side with András Visky and discussing the two playwrights' staging of history. She pertinently shows that that theater is "a powerful forum for keeping cultural memory alive, and a platform capable of advancing plausible hypotheses regarding the relationship between historical acts and their immediate and long-term consequences" (117). Similar aspects are explored by Dana Monah ("Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Jassy, Romania), who dedicates her article to the play *Despre senzaţia de elasticitate când păşim peste cadavre* [*On the Sensation of Elasticity When Walking on Corpses*], where Vişniec points to the role of Eugen Ionescu's writings in communist Romania.

Professors at "Ovidius" University contribute to the first part of the volume with careful reconsiderations of Vişniec's work, illustrating the breadth and depth of the interest expressed among academics in Constanţa. Starting from the metaphor of the "human trashcan," significant for Vişniec's universe, Marina Cap-Bun examines the avatars of the postmodern condition represented in his plays. In her turn, Cristina Tamaş discusses the author's relationship with his characters, referring to the tradition inaugurated by Pirandello. *Mansardă la Paris cu vedere spre moarte* [*A Paris Loft with a View on Death*] is the focus of Alina Buzatu's article, which analyzes the techniques used to stage as well as deconstruct Cioran's life and philosophy. The same text and its theater festival circuit, discussed from an actor's perspective, constitutes the starting point of the intervention signed by Iulian Enache (Târgu Mureş).

The wealth and variety of the remaining first section ranges from theater studies articles dedicated to the performing arts (Simona Simionof) and the management of the acting space (George Zaragoza) to literary studies articles dedicated to the mythical stratum (Lăcrămioara Berechet) and the representation of evil (Olga Duţu); from studies focusing on one single work, such as *Despre sexul femeii—câmp de luptă în războiul din Bosnia* [*The Body of a Woman as a Battlefield in the Bosnian War*] (Mirela Mihaela Doga, Simona Nicoleta Minciu) to studies of broader spectrum (Corina-Mihaela Apostoleanu, Simona Palasca, Dana Trifan Enache, Maria Monalisa Pleşea).

Despite the heterogeneity of the second section of the book, the articles it comprises are all dedicated to illuminating various aspects of the interdisciplinary dialogue between literature, theater and film, all of which are artistic fields Matei Vişniec has been involved in over the years. Among the highlights of the section, two stand out through the fresh insights they provide into the world of theater. In his study dedicated to ancient Greek

drama, Heinz-Uwe Haus (University of Delaware, Newark, USA) discusses the challenges of contemporary performance in its treatment of pain, wounding and victimhood. Tackling a similar issue when investigating male tears in two Shakespearean history plays, Jean-Jacques Chardin (University of Strasbourg, France) reaches the conclusion that both texts "insist on the role of male tears in the experience of self-knowledge and underline the value of emotions in the process of self-fashioning" (240).

Ștefan Velniciuc (The National University of Theatre and Film, Bucharest, Romania) delineates the role of the professional actor during cultural recession, Daniela Hanțiu ("Ovidius" University, Constanța, Romania) underlines the importance of theater anthropology, while Petre Gheorghe Bârlea ("Ovidius" University, Constanța, Romania) analyzes the theme of the "urban jungle" from the perspectives of literature and cinema. Although the field of film studies is, unfortunately, underrepresented in the volume, two essays touch upon the subject: Biatrice M. Popa's discussion of what stage, film and television have in common in contemporaneity and Enache Tușa's investigation of the use of feature films in shaping public opinion and controlling the masses in communist Romania.

In an ambitious impulse to cater for all tastes, the second section becomes even more diverse than anticipated, and there is something for everyone in it. Readers interested in medieval studies can choose Florentina Nicolae's discussion of Dimitrie Cantemir, while those interested in Folklore can opt for Cosmin Căprioară's presentation of folk theater around the figure of Constantin Brâncoveanu. The other essays grouped in this part of the volume encompass a wide range of topics: the world as a stage in Marin Sorescu's work (Olimpia Varga), vivisepulture with Poe and Caragiale (Ancuța Gurban-Dinu), German-Romanian short fiction (Olga Kaiter) or *l'écriture féminine* in Romanian literary histories (Victoriția Encică).

Testifying to the fact that the "Romanian Studies in International Context" Research Center at "Ovidius" University, Constanța delivered yet another publication worthy of attention, the volume invites scholars as well as the wide audience to (re-)discover Vişniec and get (re-)acquainted with the debates currently animating literature, theater and film circles. Through its comprehensive scope, international dimension and accessibility to readers, *Literatura, teatrul și filmul: În onoarea dramaturgului Matei Vișniec* represents a success.

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