

RSAA NEWSLETTER

Romanian Studies Association of America

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Special Guests:

Adriana Gradea & Richard Garrett



Adriana Gradea is a Ph.D. candidate in English Studies at Illinois State University, specializing in visual rhetoric and cultural theory. She graduated from “Romulus Ladea” Visual Arts High School in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (1986). She has a BA in English and Romanian from “Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania (1992), a Graduate Certificate in Advanced International Studies from The Johns Hopkins University in Bologna, Italy (1994), and an MA in English from Bradley University (2010). Her research and teaching interests are in visual, spatial, and cultural rhetorics, material culture, postcolonialism, and post/totalitarian studies. Her works have been published in *Rhetoric Review*, *Illinois English Studies Bulletin*, *Grassroots Writing Research Journal*, *Euphemism*, *Narrative Magazine*, and *Fine Lines*, and she has two articles forthcoming in an edited collection and a special issue of *Film Criticism*, respectively. Her article

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Richard Garrett has a Ph.D. in medieval comparative literature from the University of Iowa. He has worked for ten years at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, where he is a senior lecturer of English. He enjoys teaching in the university’s exchange program with South Central University for Nationalities in Wuhan, China, where he spends a few weeks every summer. Dr. Garrett lived in France for two years, where he taught EFL and other English courses at schools in Paris and Rouen. He spent a year and a half as a Fulbright Scholar in Moldova from 2012-14.

At the American Center in Chisinau, he created a permanent reading group and organized in collaboration with the Moldova State University’s American Research Center numerous round tables for the academic year.

He also participated in the annual conferences of the ARC and the round table

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Adriana Gradea: Biography (2)

"Embroidered Feminist Rhetoric in Andrea Dezso's *Lessons from My Mother*," published in *Rhetoric Review* in 2014, received the 2014 Florence Howe Outstanding Feminist Scholarship Award from the Women's Caucus of the Modern Language Association.

A promising young scholar, her article "Communist Romania's Authoritarian Discourses and Practices in Romanian New Wave Cinema." appeared as a chapter in *Commanding Words: Essays on the Discursive Constructions, Manifestations, and Subversions of Authority*, Lynda Chouiten (ed.), Cambridge Scholars Publishing (May 2016).

She has also published creative essays. For "Thirteen Ways of Looking at Cluj" she received the best essay award at the James

Ballowe contest of Bradley University, Peoria, IL.

Three other essays by Adriana can be found in the literary magazine *Euphemism* (Illinois State University).

In this issue we publish one of her fiction stories, "The Unbearable Light of a Saturday Afternoon," rooted in a real life experience.

Besides writing and teaching, she is an editor for Taylor and Francis, a wife and proud mother, and a dedicated contributor to Romanian Studies in the diaspora community.

Adriana is also a new RSAA member, the 2016 chair of the Romanian Forum (an MLA group), and a contributor to the special issue ***Romanian Values, Spirituality and the Global Challenge*** that is to be published in 2018.

Adriana Gradea

The Unbearable Light of a Saturday Afternoon

Walking through the downtown of an American small town, her parents beside her on their first visit to the New World, she enjoyed the sunny day. She wanted to show them the American way of life, or as much as she understood of it. She'd been there a short time. At the street level, there wasn't much to do or show her parents in that town, especially on foot, but because during the week they stayed in while she was at work, the weekend was a good time to wander around. So that Saturday, she picked the nicer part of downtown for exploration.

The warm sunlight was pouring down in waves. They came around a tall church. In the quiet street's golden light, few people were passing by. At that particular moment, they were probably talking about her new job, or maybe her father was arguing about the difficulty of the English language for the hundredth time. "It makes no sense, don't you see? Why would people write something and read

something else? To make it difficult? What did you say? "Zeh"? "Teh"?" He liked to crook his mouth and stick his tongue out in an effort to show her how irrational it was for hard words containing the "th" sound to even exist in any language. She remembered how, years before, when she was an undergraduate student in English, he'd often made fun of the word "Macbeth," purposefully pronouncing it with a raspberry at the end just to annoy her. Or maybe they were simply walking, saying nothing at that particular moment, trying to ignore how deserted the streets were, so unlike European streets while still similar in the way the old houses were guarded by lined-up mature trees. They took in the calm spring day with yearning, as if sunbathing, mainly looking for things that were alike rather than different from their hometown across the globe. Spring was warm and pure, and they enjoyed it finding it sort of familiar.

Adriana Gradea: *The Unbearable Light of a Saturday Afternoon* (2)

"Excuse me, young lady," a man's voice said out of the blue. The voice came from nowhere, right after they crossed a small street and entered a residential neighborhood. He almost fell out of the sky, she thought. Turning her head to the right, she saw him standing at the street corner.

She was surprised to see him standing there. Later, she wondered how long he'd been waiting for someone to pass by. Her parents' presence beside gave her a sense of security. Growing up, they were good at shielding her, their only child, from life's imperfections. They'd always given her wise advice and the understanding she needed, guiding her through life with sane judgment and unconditional love, rarely truly deserved but necessary for artists to be. And they had all the answers. "Be yourself," was her mother's best advice. "Be smart. The world is full of stupid people," was her dad's. She always had trouble reconciling these. Suddenly, she remembered that, though she was their only child, they'd let her, indeed encouraged her to go half the way across the world, trustingly. Living up to their expectations and love had always made her want to become a better person. How would she ever be grateful enough?

"Excuse me, again, young lady. I'd like to ask a favor of you, if possible," said the same voice.

But her gaze went right through the man, as she wasn't ready to acknowledge him yet. Still thinking about the unexpected revelation growing in her lately, about filial feelings—and about life in general and what was to come—it dawned on her that the roles were starting to reverse. She constantly had to interpret and translate for her parents, explaining the New World; they depended on her for everything. They couldn't be her support anymore, but she was becoming theirs, and a day was approaching when they would count on her entirely. She was almost thirty, yet none of them was ready for the reality that she wasn't their little girl anymore. They were proud she'd followed her dream, even though she knew it hadn't found her yet. Had she given up everything for nothing? If it was for material things, she didn't have them yet. Where was it all leading? Will she have the

life she'd hoped for? What was she supposed to do with her life? How would she make a difference?

After the moments it took her to think of all these things she found so important and rather life-changing, her eyes finally focused on the man in front of her. He was determined to bring her down to the dust level of the quiet street.

"Could you please come into my house and just turn on the light?" asked the man in a timid, calm voice, somewhat embarrassed. Before she could notice his attire or open her mouth to answer, she thought he had some nerve! Maybe he was joking . . . To turn on his light!? Why couldn't a healthy, grown man turn on his own light? How was she even going to translate and explain this to her parents? Crazy man.

Attempting a smile, almost scared with the absurdity of it all, she asked slowly: "Why can't you do it yourself?" She looked at him closer, in suspicion, and saw a tall, thin, dark, bearded man, dressed in black. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw he had a small hat-like thing on his head, but before she could think, he spoke again.

"It's my religion. It's the Sabbath today. Really, if you could just come in and turn the light on, that's all. It would mean a lot to my family. It would only take a minute."

She stood still and fixed him with her stare. Time expanded for that long moment while it took her to realize what was happening. A step away from her, to the left, her parents were patiently waiting to find out what was going on.

"Sure," she said abruptly. "Sure. I'll do it."

She told her parents to come and wait for her outside the house.

The tall, calm man pointed to his house, which was right there, on the corner lot of the alley, by the intersection where they stood. A mere few steps away, the

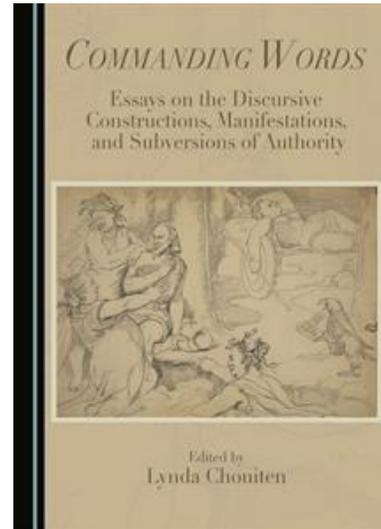
Adriana Gradea: *The Unbearable Light of a Saturday Afternoon* (3)

house looked tall and heavy, with a black wrought-iron fence in front. She climbed the few stairs and entered a spacious foyer through enormous doors. The foyer was bigger than her bedroom of her first apartment in Queens, she thought. On the floor, a classic rug lay in tones of blue, on which a miniature dog was acting important, amusingly running around and making noises. The house smelled like honey mixed with cinnamon. The entrance door remained open as she stepped into the kitchen, some more steps to the left. There, a beautiful family in the rather dark room was sitting quietly at the large, set table. There was no window in the large kitchen. Light was coming in faintly from the living room yards away, traveling through enormous space, and barely reaching them in their seats. The living-room windows were shaded by tall trees, which made the house seem even darker than otherwise. The man's wife was sitting there, together with three children, the smallest of which still in a high-chair. The wife---a young woman with light-brown hair, no makeup, and a genuine look---turned her face from the baby to see the woman entering the kitchen space. All these people were waiting in silence and hoped for the light to be turned on by someone so they could have their dinner. As if in a trance, she felt a spotlight on herself as everyone waited patiently for her to play her part. She felt like in a French film, with no music, but she couldn't take her eyes away from the scene. The calm displayed by those people, their naturalness, as well as the stillness of the house overwhelmed her, forcing her to open her eyes in search for every detail of that special moment. A second later, by the turn of the switch, she allowed the light into that family's kitchen and house. Once on, the light made things seem slightly different, but it revealed a simple family in a simple house about to have their Saturday dinner. She smiled politely, and after exchanging a couple of polite phrases, she left.

She was back in the street, into the afternoon, where warm sunrays were coming down like rain, in straight yet oblique lines, through the leaves of the old trees lining up along the alley. Her parents were quietly waiting for her, steps away. She told them

what she had to do, as they unhurriedly resumed their walk.

* * * * *



In a twenty-first century which celebrates freedom and equality while also beginning to question the lax attitudes and methods which have triumphed since the late Sixties, reflecting on the concept of authority is as necessary as ever. What role does, and should, authority play in political, social, and academic organization? Should one plead for stricter or more flexible authority? Where does the frontier between authority and authoritarianism lie? In examining these, and other related questions, this volume, postulating the interconnectedness between authority and discourse, also discusses the rhetorical strategies whereby authority is constructed, manifested, and resisted.

Pertaining to subjects as various as politics, culture, literature, history, and pedagogy, the twenty chapters which constitute this book offer an interdisciplinary, yet thematically coherent, coverage of the question under discussion, and encompass a wide historical and spatial scope, which ranges from the Islamic Middle Ages to twenty-first century America, passing through nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe, India, and North Africa on the way.

<http://www.cambridgescholars.com/commanding-words>

Richard Garrett: *Moldovan Diaries* (1)

“Travelling outgrows its motives. It soon proves sufficient in itself. You think you are making a trip, but soon it is making you—or unmaking you.”

--Nicolas Bouvier, *The Way of the World*

Before my Fulbright experience in Moldova, from 2012-2014, I had travelled abroad fairly extensively and had lived, and taught, abroad for almost three years, but it was my experience in Moldova that, more than any other, “made me,” as Bouvier so aptly writes in his classic travel book. I spent a year and a half as a teaching Fulbright Scholar in Chisinau, Moldova, and this experience continues to shape me professionally and personally.

My tenure as a Fulbright Scholar in Moldova deepened my international outlook and extended my role as an American working closely with the local population, instilling, but also acquiring, fresh ideas and strengthening partnerships between the US and other countries. I loved my experience in Moldova and became close to many of the people I met there. The Fulbright’s guiding principle is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries, and I think my experience in Moldova successfully reflected that philosophy. I certainly learned a great deal in this mutually beneficial endeavor.

I arrived in Moldova in August 2012, accompanied by my wife Catherine Douillet, also a recipient of a Fulbright grant to Moldova the same year, and my two young children, ages two and four at the time. We thought we would be staying ten months, the length of our grant. But after about eight months in Moldova, we were so enthralled with our lives there that we requested an extension of our grant. Fortuitously, both the State Department and University of Wisconsin-Platteville granted us a five-month extension, enabling me to complete some of

the work I had begun at my host institution, Moldova State University in Chisinau.

It was my good fortune to be assigned to *Universitatea de Stat din Moldova*. USM, as its name suggests, is a public institution and the largest university in Moldova. Specifically, I worked at the American Studies Center of Moldova (on campus), and I worked closely with its director, Dr. Elena Crestianicov, who is also the Chair of the Department of Germanic Languages at USM. During my tenure there I taught Academic Writing to both undergraduate and master’s students, and also Masterpieces of English Literature to a class of third-year English majors. Perhaps the highlight of my university teaching in Moldova was an American Literature and Culture course to master’s students. Teaching this course and these students was significant because it enabled me to be actively involved in resurrecting the moribund Master’s Program in American Studies at USM.

Working in tandem with Professor Crestianicov and the staff at the American Studies Center, I enjoyed helping to revive the master’s degree in American Studies, which, due to lack of students and thus lack of funding, had been discontinued for the previous four or five years. My two main responsibilities in this effort were to recruit new students into the program and to help develop a new curriculum, adding new courses to the program. Fortunately, we succeeded in enrolling a new cohort of strong students, many of whom I personally recruited into the program. About half the students in the new cohort had been in my Masterpieces of English Literature course the

Richard Garrett: Biography (2)

presentations/discussions organized with other Fulbright colleagues at the Institute for International Relations and the Moldova Free University (Fall, 2013). Dr. Garrett’s research interests include Translation Studies, and he has recently written articles on Geoffrey Chaucer and William Caxton as translators. Currently he is working on a project comparing academic dishonesty in Moldovan and American universities. Dr. Garrett wrote a special essay for the RSAA in which he shares his experience in the Republic of Moldova.

Richard Garrett: *Moldovan Diaries* (2)

previous semester. It was certainly rewarding to see these students continue their education and pursue a graduate degree. I still keep in contact with a few of them and am happy to hear about their new careers since their graduation in December 2015. While some have landed positions in Chisinau with international organizations such as IREX, others have established themselves with major corporations in the United States.

In addition to my assigned courses, I served as a guest lecturer for a number of classes at my host university, including courses in Translation Studies and in the History of the English Language. My primary responsibilities as a Fulbright grantee were to teach these writing, literature, and language classes at USM, and while teaching university students in a traditional classroom setting was certainly rewarding, it was a different kind of teaching, in fact, that I found most gratifying. One of the joys of being a Fulbrighter in a small, somewhat obscure country like Moldova was that we three or four US Fulbright Scholars there felt like the proverbial big fish in a small pond. As an American academic, native English speaker, and English professor/instructor, I was flooded with opportunities to speak to Moldovans and to work with them in a wide variety of settings. To provide just a few examples, I taught evening writing, TOEFL, and vocabulary workshops to small groups of high school and university students in the Educational Advising Center of Moldova; I led, along with my wife Catherine, a monthly English book club for local community members at the American Resource Center, part of the US Embassy; I led numerous writing and teaching workshops at various locales throughout Chisinau; and I hosted a weekly English conversation group with some of my university students.

One of the amazing things about being an American Fulbrighter in Moldova was the impromptu and indeed serendipitous character associated with some of these teaching or speaking opportunities. One such incident occurred at a downtown library one evening, where my wife and I were attending an

“International Youth Night” event in which young (generally high school-aged) Moldovans were presenting some projects they had created related to their recent stays in other countries. I noticed a young woman there with an “Iowa Hawkeyes” logo on her backpack and, being an alumnus of the University of Iowa, I struck up a conversation with her. A few minutes later this young woman, who was a regular volunteer at the Speranta Center for disabled youth in Chisinau, had arranged for me to give a talk on “anything American” or “anything English” at the center a few days later. This speaking engagement turned out to be an amazing experience, as a group of about twenty disabled children and teenagers, most with excellent English comprehension and speaking skills, sat in rapt attention to my informal talk, enthusiastically asking me countless questions about American life and culture. This memorable experience is just one example of numerous presentations, projects and other opportunities in Moldova that seemed to just magically materialize for me. Another young Moldovan, a student in my writing and vocabulary workshops at the Educational Advising Center, approached me after class one day and arranged a radio interview in which my wife and I spoke live to a local talk-show host on a major Moldovan radio station.

The Moldovan people, despite living in arguably the poorest nation of Europe, are nonetheless passionate about life. They love festivals, dancing, music, and art. They are *gurmand* and justly proud of their food and particularly, their incredible wine, which is one of the world’s best-kept secrets. Indeed the Moldovan food, such as the mamaliga, a Romanian dish, and borsch from Russia, is emblematic of a fascinating Romanian-Russian cultural/linguistic divide in Moldova. The politics of language in Moldova are fascinating.

Most Moldovans are bilingual Romanian and Russian. As children most Moldovans learn these languages sequentially rather than simultaneously, with the majority speaking Romanian as their first language.

Richard Garrett: *Moldovan Diaries* (3)

Romanian is the official, state language (the “Moldovan” language is, essentially, Romanian), but on the streets one is just as likely to hear Russian as Romanian. And thus it should come as no surprise that while numerous Moldovans identify with Romanian culture, many others identify with Russian culture. This rift is palpable and fraught with tension, as many Moldovans proudly manifest their pro-Russian sympathies in the face of compatriots who unabashedly side with Romania and thus Europe and the EU.

As an illustration of these cultural/linguistic battle lines, I can provide an interesting personal anecdote: one evening I telephoned a taxi service in Chisinau and reserved a cab for a trip across town. When the taxi arrived I got in the car and started to explain to the driver, in my halting Romanian, where I wanted to go. The driver angrily interrupted me and said, in Russian, that I should speak Russian and made it clear that he wasn’t going anywhere until I did. Although I could understand a bit of Russian and thus could generally make out what he was telling me, I could speak only a few words of Russian. So I decided to speak in English. When the driver realized after a few words that I was a tourist and not a Moldovan, his demeanor changed completely, he became quite friendly, and he immediately drove me to my destination.

This scene succinctly exemplifies the linguistic conflict that continues to roil the Moldovan people. Language in Moldova is not only fraught with nationalistic concerns but also marked by gender politics. It has also become a vexing problem vis-à-vis gender relations. As an English professor teaching language, literature, and writing, most of my students in Moldova were, as one might expect, women. A few of my brightest, most ambitious students expressed frustration with the Romanian language, saying, for example, “the language has not kept up with the times” and “it doesn’t match our everyday reality.” They underscore the point that, in recent years, with more and more women graduating from university and achieving prestigious professional positions, the Romanian language, particularly its lexicon, with numerous gendered nouns, has presented some difficulties. On the one

hand, such words as *prefect* (prefect), *comisar* (commissioner), *primar* (mayor), and *critic* (critic) are used only in masculine gender in Romanian, and simply do not have a feminine form, suggesting that these referents traditionally weren’t considered as possible women’s occupations. On the other hand, there are certain words in Romanian that have only feminine gender, for example, *bonă* (nurse), *soră de caritate* (medical attendant), or *moașă* (birth attendant). Just looking into the words, we can draw a picture of how the roles, historically, were divided between men and women.

In the domain of education, all the high-ranking positions at the University have only masculine gender: *decan* (dean), *prodecan* (vice-dean), *prorector* (vice-principal), *adjunct* (deputy), *rector* (principal), *lector superior*, *lector* (lecturer), *docent* (assistant professor), *doctor în doctor habilitat* (doctor of science), etc. When I asked some of my female colleagues, professors at USM, how they would like to be addressed, they responded that they definitely wished to be addressed in the masculine gender, because it accorded them more status. Moreover, now in Moldova one sees the interesting paradox of feminine titles used in conjunction with masculine nouns, such as *doamna director*, *doamna avocat*, etc.

Indeed it is this paradoxical nature of Moldova that is part of its appeal, with strong traditions going back to the time of its legendary national hero Stefan cel Mare (late 15th century), yet passionately struggling to emerge from and throw off its archaisms, engaging in globalization and the post-modern world. One striking example of this cultural tug-of-war can be seen in an excursion I took during my final weeks in Moldova. A young woman who was one of my master’s students at USM, an aspiring professor, invited me and my wife to her home (where her parents lived) in a village about an hour’s drive from Chisinau. We took a bus that dropped us off about two kilometers away from her home. As we walked along the slushy, sodden roads of the village that cold December day, and I observed the dilapidated houses and shops interspersed with one or two old Orthodox churches, I was struck by the incongruity of this young, well- educated woman, a future

Richard Garrett: *Moldovan Diaries* (4)

professional, dressed very fashionably and elegantly in her tailored, brightly-colored dress and high heels, the way most of my university students there dressed, gingerly stepping through the rubble-strewn, muddy paths and roads of her gray village. This sense of incompatibility grew even stronger when we arrived at her home, marked by no running water and an outhouse. Yet the dinner she and her parents provided for us was sumptuous.

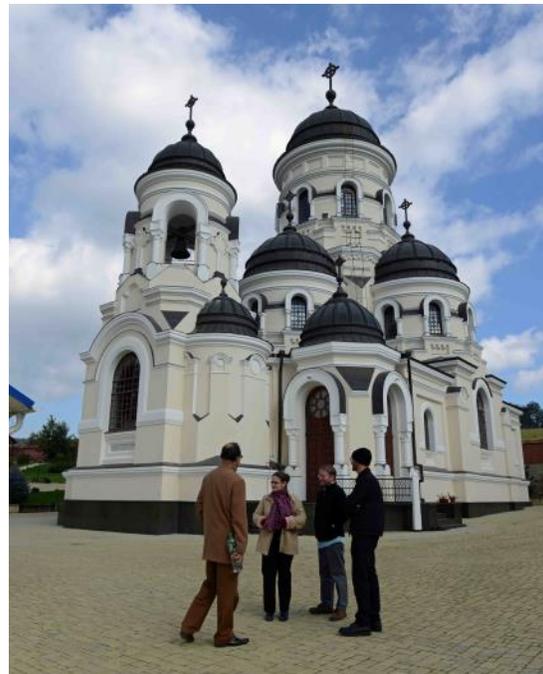
This country that most call the poorest in Europe is nonetheless rich in so many ways—richer indeed than its wealthy Western counterparts. My family and I treasured our time there, delighting in the many simple yet marvelous places, experiences, and opportunities that Chisinau afforded us but our American hometown cannot. Thus perhaps it is appropriate to close with the following anecdote: a couple of days ago, on a warm weekend afternoon, my eight- and six-year-old daughters and I were driving around town, searching for an ice-cream parlour that was open, but to no avail. We finally ended up going, I must admit, to McDonalds for ice cream. Before that, as we approached the doors of a parlour to see if it was open, my eight-year-old daughter summed it up best when she asked, somewhat incredulously, “But Papa, why do we have to go *inside* to get ice cream? In Moldova all we had to do was walk to the Central Park and we could buy ice cream there any time we wanted!”

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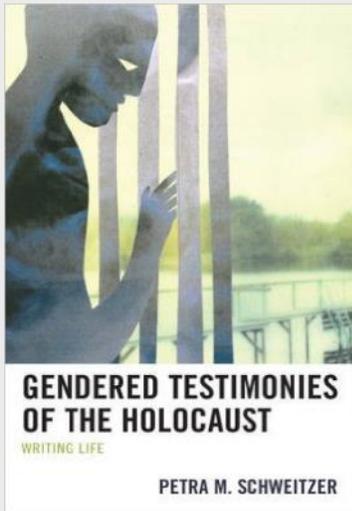
Photos: After School Book Club: *The Namesake*



Below: Dr. Garrett at the Capriana Monastery with spouse Catherine Douillet and fellow Fulbrighters.



Recent Publications



Dr. **Petra Schweitzer's** article "Remembrance of the M/Other/Tongue: Paul Celan" appeared in her recent volume *Gendered Testimonies of the Holocaust: Writing Life* (Lexington Books, 2016).

Gendered Testimonies of the Holocaust: Writing Life begins with the premise that writing proves virtually synonymous with survival, bearing the traces of life and of death carried within those who survived the atrocities of the Nazis. In reading specific testimonies by survivor-writers Paul Celan, Charlotte Delbo, Olga Lengyel, Gisella Perl, and Dan Pagis, this text seeks to answer the question: How was it possible for these survivors to write about human destruction, if death is such an intimate part of the survivors' survival?

This book shows how the works of these survivors arise creatively from a vigorous spark, the desire to preserve memory. Testimony for each of these writers is a form of relation to oneself but also to others. It situates each survivor's anguish in writing as a need to write so as to affirm life. Writing as such always bears witness to the life of the one who should be dead by now and thus to the miracle of having survived.

*This book's claim is that the act of writing testimony manifests itself as the most intensive form of life possible. More specifically, its exploration of writing's affirmation of life and assertion of identity focuses on the gendered dimension of expression and language. This book does not engage in the binary structure of gender and the hierarchically constructed roles in terms of privileging the male over the female. The criteria that guide its discussion on *Gendered Testimonies* emerge out of Levinas's concept of maternity.*

<http://www.amazon.com/Gendered-Testimonies-Holocaust-Writing-Life/dp/0739190075>

Dr. Petra Schweitzer earned her doctoral degree from Emory University. She is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, and director for the Women Studies program at the Shenandoah University.

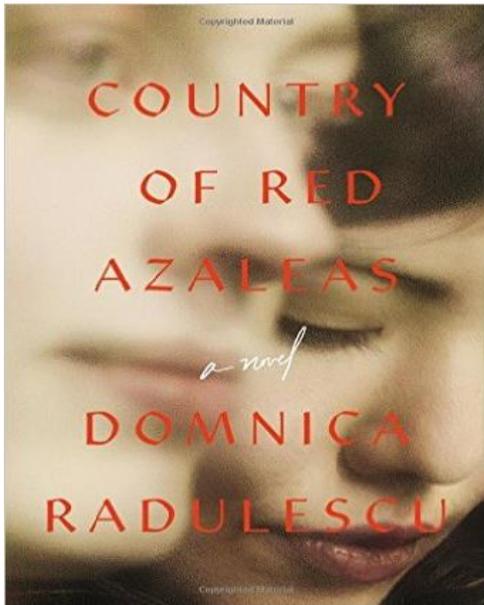
Dr. Schweitzer's scholarly work and teaching integrate a number of fields within the discipline of Comparative Literature, especially French and German Holocaust literature. She teaches French and German language courses, and her research focuses on the Holocaust, particularly women in the Holocaust. Additionally, she teaches First Year Seminar courses with a concentration on Global Genocide studies.

She is a recipient of the Wilkins Award, FYS Teaching Excellence Award, Shenandoah University's Board of Trustees Resolution of Appreciation, and Four Years FYS Service Award. An active member of Shenandoah's community, she engages in collective projects co-organized with Shenandoah colleagues or other institutions.

She is an active member of Winchester's film community and has co-organized global film festivals on campus with Gina Daddario, Professor of Mass Communication, and Andrea Smith, Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies, including SU's annual Tournées Festival.

[\(http://www.su.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/petra-schweitzer/\)](http://www.su.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/petra-schweitzer/)

Domnica Radulescu: *Country of Red Azaleas* (2016)



Twelve Hachette Book Group, NY, 2016
ISBN 978-1455590421

From the moment Marija walks into Lara's classroom, freshly moved to Serbia from Sarajevo, Lara is enchanted by her vibrant beauty, confidence, and wild energy--and knows that the two are destined to be lifelong friends. Closer than sisters, the girls share everything, from stolen fruit and Hollywood movies as girls to philosophies and even lovers as young women. But when the Bosnian War pits their homelands against each other in a bloodbath,

Lara and Marija are forced to separate for the first time: romantic Lara heads to America with her Hollywood-handsome new husband, and fierce Marija returns to her native Sarajevo to combat the war through journalism behind Bosnian lines.

In America, Lara seeks fulfillment through work and family, but when news from Marija ceases, the uncertainty torments Lara, driving her on a quest to find her friend. As Lara travels through war-torn Serbia and Bosnia, following clues that may yet lead to the flesh-and-blood Marija, she must also wrestle with truths about her own identity.

Told in lush, vivid prose, *COUNTRY OF RED AZALEAS* is a poignant testament to both the power of friendship and our ability to find meaning and beauty in the face of devastation.

"A moving portrait of humanity's best overcoming humanity's worst."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Filled with full-bodied, multifaceted characters... a profoundly uplifting and optimistic novel...a gripping story, important for its poignancy as well as its insights into the human condition."—*Washington Independent Review of Books*

<http://www.amazon.com/Country-Red-Azaleas-Domnica-Radulescu/dp/1455590428>

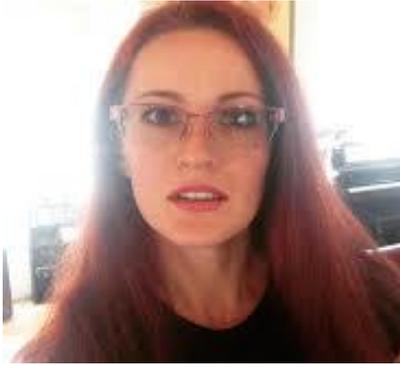


Domnica Radulescu is a distinguished professor of French and Italian literature at Washington and Lee University, a Fulbright scholar, and an award-winning playwright. She escaped the Communist dictatorship in her native Romania in 1983 and settled in the United States as a political refugee.

She is the author of two best-selling novels: *Black Sea Twilight* (Doubleday 2010 & 2011) and *Train to Trieste* (Knopf 2008 & 2009). *Train to Trieste* has been published in twelve languages and is the winner of the 2009 Library of Virginia Fiction Award.

Her scholarly book titled *Theater of War and Exile from Eastern Europe and Israel* was published by McFarland Publishing in 2015.

New RSAA Members: **Christene D'Anca**



Christene is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she specializes in French medieval studies, tracing thirteenth century female participation in the creation and dissemination of arts through scribal activities, patronage, and historiographic accounts of female networks.

She divides her time between medieval scholarship and modern literary studies focused on nineteenth century and modern inquiries into the literary and artistic culture of Eastern Europe, namely Romania and adjacent territories.

Christene is also a lecturer at Los Angeles, Pierce College in the English department, a wife and proud mother of two.

Although early in her doctoral studies, she has already participated in a significant number of conferences, such as:

“Eurydice Speaks – Speech as Agency Through the Physical Manifestation of Intent,” Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association. Vancouver, Washington, 2013

“So Chaucer Wrote *Gamelyn*.... Now What?: Tracing *Gamelyn*’s Origin and Order Within *The Canterbury Tales*,” Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association. Riverside, California, 2014

“Assassin’s Creed and Medievalism in Popular Culture: A Connection to the Past and Its Significance Today,” Popular Culture Association. New Orleans,

Louisiana, 2015

“Carving Piety From Romance: One Woman’s Prerogative Within the *Lancelot* Cycle,” Intersection of Power, Kinship and Gender Colloquium at the University of Minnesota, 2015

“Female as Shapeshifter – Bodily Boundaries of the Grotesque,” Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association. Portland, Oregon, 2015

“*Celi ki lescrist’* : Female Scribal Activities Reshaping Romance,” Modern Language Association. Austin, Texas, 2016

“*umbra unei lumi’*: Doina Rusti’s *Fantoma din moara* Uncovers Romanian Heritage in the Shadows,” Modern Language Association. Austin, Texas, 2016

“*Mout avetz faich long estatge’*: Straying from the Trobairitz Tradition,” International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2016

She is also contributing an article to the upcoming special issue **Romanian Values, Spirituality and Global Challenge** to be published by the *Journal of European Studies* (2018).

Christene came to the US as a child, but continued to speak the language and celebrate together with family all things Romanian.

She joined the diaspora family of Romanian Studies scholars while specializing in a global field of the humanities and doing additional research on Romanian literature and the evolution of the Romanian consciousness in the diaspora.

Christene joined the RSAA at Austin, Texas, at the 2016 MLA convention.

We welcome Christene both as colleague and researcher that brings energy and enthusiasm to our community!

Upcoming conferences (I)

First International Conference of Psychology

From Individual to Society – Applied Psychology for a Sustainable Community

The Faculty of Psychology and Education
Sciences
Transylvania University of Brasov

This conference intends to become a beautiful tradition in Romania, enjoying a large participation of psychologists in all areas. Psychologists, academics and practitioners alike, are welcomed in the city from Tâmpa's foothills. Special guests and personalities from prestigious universities have confirmed their presence.

The event will take place in "Sergiu T. Chiriacescu" Aula of Transylvania University of Brasov, 41, Iuliu Maniu street, in **22– 23 September 2016**.

We invite you to Brasov, the most beautiful city in Romania, to capitalize on your scientific achievements, to meet again, to enjoy the presence of leading figures in psychology.

For additional information, please visit our website: apsconference.unitbv.ro/ Should you have any questions about registering to the Conference, please contact us at: apsconferencebv@gmail.com

The "State Artist" in Romania and Eastern Europe

Faculty of Political Science
University of Bucharest
5 November 2016

The establishment of communist regimes in Eastern Europe brought for the visual arts, the establishment of the "state artist" (Haraszti). Artworks were commissioned by the state, which offered extensive rewards for the artists, obliged to comply with the political and ideological rigors of the regime. As part of the research project "From the "state artist" to the artist dependent on the state: the case of the Union of Visual Artists (1950-2010) – the Bucharest branch", this conference seeks to explore the different transformations that the artists underwent in order to comply with the extensive role assumed by the totalitarian state in the arts. We invite contributions on the broad topic announced, that of the state artist in Romania and Eastern Europe with a specific focus on visual arts, but we are also interested to discuss other instances of collaboration with the regimes in place (1950s-1990). The conference aims to discuss the state artist in the context of communist regimes from multiple points of views.

Organizing committee: Caterina Preda, Alina Popescu, Dan Drăghia.

Place: The Institute for Political Research, Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest.

2016 RMMLA Convention

October 6-8, 2016: [Salt Lake City, Utah](#) at the [Hilton Salt Lake City Center](#)

The 2016 special topic session on Cioran at the RMMLA is:

E.M. Cioran's French and Romanian Oeuvre: Ses Contemporains et ses Amis.

For questions on this session contact:
Aleksandra Gruzinska, gruzinska@asu.edu

Upcoming conferences (II)

The English Department of the
University of Bucharest
18th Annual Conference

Cultural Representations of the City **2-4 June, 2016**

Venue: The Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Str. Pitar Mos 7–13, Bucharest, Romania

Invited Speakers:

Prof. Sir Drummond Bone (Balliol College, University of Oxford)

Prof. Monica Matei-Chesnoiu (Ovidius University of Constanța)

Dr Bart Eeckhout (University of Antwerp)

Prof. Augustin Ioan (Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest)

Playing a crucial role in the construction of cultural identity, literary representations of the city may be regarded as “archi-texts” which appropriate empirical topographies with the purpose of projecting and transforming them into utopian, eutopian or dystopian images of urban lived experience, imaginary lands and communities, pastoral or sublime landscapes of the mind, phantasmagoric visions, national myths, archetypal spaces, symbolic cities, sites of memory, individual and collective self-reflexivity, secluded, anonymous, alienated or invisible spaces, sexual idealizations of the self, colonial and postcolonial geographies, highly technologized cities of the future or posthuman cityscapes.

The aim of the conference is to address issues related to how the city has been perceived, represented and imagined in literature and the arts, to the manner in which representations of the city have been shaped by various social, cultural, economic, historical and political contexts and, last but not least, to how literary and other cultural texts reflect and influence our perception of cityspace.

The conference fee of **50 euro** (or **200 lei** if paid in Romanian currency) is payable in cash on registration, and covers lunches and refreshments during the conference, but not evening meals.

For further details and updates, see:

<https://acedbucharest.wordpress.com> and http://www.unibuc.ro/depts/limbi/literatura_engleza/conferinte.php.

(Enquiries regarding the Linguistics section of the conference, which will be running at the same time as the Literature and Cultural Studies section, should be sent to conf.eng.ling@lils.unibuc.ro.)

Journal of European Studies: 2018 Special Issue

The 2016 presenters at the Austin RSA and Romanian Forum panels joined their efforts into publishing a volume with the tentative title **Romanian Values, Spirituality and Global Challenge** by the *Journal of European Studies*, (a SAGE Publications) a leading peer reviewed interdisciplinary humanities and cultural studies journal.

The articles in this special issue aim at establishing possible connections between seemingly disparate facets of cultural representations of Romanian identity, in an attempt to shine light on the synchronous recreation of a national selfhood in the context of an emergent globally active society. It also assays to reveal how Romanians see and/or have seen themselves, both presently and via collective memories, to explore their diverse motives for choosing international migration, and to reiterate the need of a spiritual recentralization, within the diaspora and/or at home.

Upcoming Conference Panels and Papers in Romanian Studies

Modern Languages Association Convention

Philadelphia, 2017

RSAA Panel:

Refugees, Exiles and Migration: Past and Present Journeys

Panel proposed by **Noemi Marin**

Chair: **Christene D'Anca**

This panel addresses narratives of crisis and the role of media in order to engage with cultural examinations of current and past identity constructions of refugees, exiles, and migrant communities in post-communist Eastern Europe.

Focusing mainly on the narratives part of Eastern European post-communist experiences and of Romania in particular, the panel addresses the role of media (and social media) as narrative-construction agents that redefine narratives of national identity in relation with transnationalist, multicultural, and politically complex contexts of a globalized world. By looking at theoretical approaches on narrative paradigms as public arguments for cultural portrayals of refugees and/or exiles both past and in current times (i.e. the refugee crisis in European Union), the panel invites contributions from the rich body of literature on cultural studies, film, and literary studies that address the role of narratives in post-communist Eastern Europe and Romania.

Dr. Lenuta Giukin will present "Igor Cobileanski and *The Unsaved*" at the international conference **Conflict and Controversy in Small Cinemas, Krakow, Poland (September 28-30, 2016)**.

Cobileanski works in the minimalist style of the Romanian new wave and adapts perfectly to the Moldovan context Corneliu Porumboiu's script. The film depicts the deep conflict that divides a country's imaginary, its ethnic groups and especially its citizens within the same community. History as a cumulus of heroic deeds is represented as a series of acts, as consistently destructive processes. The singular phenomenon of a "national" body foundation in a context marked by heterogeneity reveals the artificiality of the political body, as well as the gap between centuries old ideologies and post-modern social possibilities.

MLA, Philadelphia 2017

Romanian Forum Panel :

Teaching Central/Eastern Europe And Its Communist Past

Chair and organizer: **Adriana Gradea**

How are Central/Eastern European cultures and history being taught, both within and outside the region? What has changed in the ways these countries have contributed to the understanding of the cultural configuration of the region or the continent? What should educators include in various curricula? How do we teach the communist period to new generations and/or to the West and the rest of the world?

Eastern Europe's communist past is still in need of better representation in artistic productions. Representations of the communist totalitarian period lag behind those of the Nazi period, although communism lasted longer and is closer to the present.

Theories and concepts developed outside the post-communist spaces have not always consistently and extensively been applied to Eastern Europe. How should these be applied and taught? What are the lessons of communism and post-communism? What do examinations of Marxist and post-Marxist Eastern European societies bring to the understanding of new materialisms?

Recent Publications

DADA/SURREALISM, Nr. 20 (2016)

The International Dada Archive is pleased to announce the publication of issue no. 20 of our journal *Dada/Surrealism*, a special number entitled *From Dada to Infra-Noir: Dada, Surrealism, and Romania*: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/dadasur/vol20/iss1/>.

Co-edited by Monique Yaari of the Pennsylvania State University and Timothy Shipe of the University of Iowa, our thematic issue includes eighteen articles by scholars and critics from North America, Europe, and Israel, as well as a selection of primary documents newly translated into English and a substantial bibliography. *From Dada to Infra-Noir* is the first essay collection in English on the subject of Romanian Dada and surrealism in literature and the visual arts, both within Romania and in the (largely francophone) diaspora.

Special thanks are due to WESS (the ACRL Western European Studies Section), since *From Dada to Infra-noir* had its origins in a much more modest project on francophone Romanian avant-garde literature in Bucharest libraries, funded by the 2010/2011 Coutts-Nijhoff grant.

Dada/Surrealism is the peer-reviewed, free and open-access journal of the Association for the Study of Dada and Surrealism, and is published by the International Dada Archive, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.

International Conference: **National Identity, Social Cohesion and Civil Society** **in the Republic of Moldova**

Chisinau, June 17, 2016 at the Moldova State University

The Moldova State University in collaboration with the Free International University of Moldova, Moldova for Democracy and Development Association, and Project Casa Mare organizes the international conference *National Identity, Social Cohesion and Civil Society in the Republic of Moldova*. We seek to analyze from multidisciplinary perspectives various narratives on Moldovan national identity, social cohesion and the civil society paradigm. The organizers propose to create a discussion platform among scholars, researchers, journalists, and community representatives for a constructive dialogue on this important subject. The conference is opened to scholars and (graduate) students as well.

Positioned at geopolitical cross-roads, in proximity of much larger and more powerful states, Moldova's internal tensions reflect greater regional and global conflicts while revealing, at the same time, its internal political narratives. Although the current political

discourse in Moldova echoes the East-West split in its political agenda, there is a paucity of dialogue related to the country's national identity and social cohesion rooted in its present division.

The conference organizers propose therefore to explore concepts of national identity and unity essential to the future of the country: What does it mean to be Moldovan? What are the Moldovan's cultural and historical legacies? Can Moldovans solve ethnic and political tensions to achieve social unity in their own country? Could a model of social unity be created?

For additional information on participation and conference arrangements contact

Alla Rosca: alla_rosca@yahoo.com or

Vadim Moldovan: moldovan@york.cuny.edu

People in the News



Domnica Radulescu with the actors.

Exile is my Home by **Domnica Radulescu**

Domnica Radulescu's first full stage play premiered April 28 at the Theater for the New City in Manhattan, New York.

The 16 weeks performance show directed by Andreas Robertz enjoyed a four week run.

The "play's poetic and tragic comic actions and language" have been well received by audiences although its themes deal with major social issues: "As millions of people in our world today are being displaced from their homes and swept across tumultuous seas and often unwelcoming lands in their desperate need and desire for the safety and basic comforts of a home, immigrant theater has a crucial role in raising consciousness about these wrenching realities of our world." (<http://www.exileismyhome.com/>)

Additional information on the play can be found at: <http://www.rgmagazine.com/exile-is-my-home-theater-for-the-new-city-a-review-by-frederick-r-stal/>

Noemi Marin, o retorică a performanței

Monday, April 25, 2016, TVRi presented a feature documentary by Marius Constantinescu « Noemi Marin, o retorică a performanței. »



Dr. Marin's appearance on Romanian National Television was well received at Florida Atlantic University whose campus was often the background for discussions. It is the first time FAU has been featured on Romanian television, a historic moment for the university . Dr. Marin is a well-known public figure in the American and international academia and this documentary emphasizes her status among Romanian intellectuals.

The documentary can be seen at:

<http://www.tvrplus.ro/editie-lumea-si-noi-440080>



Dr. Marin at the University of Lisbon, 2015 in front of a flyer of her presentation.

Find us at: <http://www.thersaa.org/>

Contact: lenuta.giukin@oswego.edu

INVITED GUEST

Bogdan Ștefănescu:

Postcommunism / Postcolonialism: Siblings of Subalternity.

Bucharest: University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2013. ISBN: 978-606-16-16-0244-5

From Chapter 1:

“Claiming the Critical Territory. The Case for an Analogy between Postcommunism and Postcolonialism”

Ideologies and the Relational Construction of Identity

The persistence of a foundationalist agenda in the discourse of most postcommunist critics must be an abomination to most Cultural Studies scholars from both the West and the Orient, and it must smack of their arch-enemy—traditional Western ideology. Post-communism may well sound to such critics like the very attitude that they have been opposing in their effort to assist in the emancipation of groups that were marginalized by the alleged universalism of capitalist modernity. To postcolonial cultural critics it might look as if the postcommunist world operates in a reactionary mode as it regresses to a liberal humanist and capitalist mentality.

And yet, is not the philosophy of Cultural Studies an anti-essentialist insistence that all discourses are historically situated and that their significance is entirely contextual? For the sake of consistency, then, postcolonial cultural criticism should valorize each strategy of postimperialist emancipation according to the context of its occurrence. Postcolonialist cultural critiques should not mechanically revile liberal postcommunist forms of discourse as universally and essentially inadequate, but rather judge them in their proper historical context as antiimperialist. Conversely, it is just as inappropriate to mechanically hail a supposedly context-free, immutable Marxism as essentially just, no matter what its historical situation might be.

In other words, I am proposing that the political and pragmatic function of ideological paradigms is dependent upon historical and cultural variations of context and that on occasion this function can be reversed accordingly. To be a

Marxist *in the context of postcolonialism* is to be a progressive, reformist critic of late capitalism and an advocate of decolonization from Western hegemony, whereas to be an impenitent liberal humanist might well be seen as a retrograde, conservative or reactionary position. By contrast, however, to be a liberal humanist and a supporter of the core values of capitalist democracy *in the context of postcommunism* may equally prove a progressive, liberating stance, whereas to entertain Marxist ideas under the same circumstances can function as a regression to the oppressive ideology of communist totalitarianism. (endnote 1)

Assessing ideology in relation to the particular determinants of historical and geo-cultural contexts allows for a more flexible critical understanding that is occasioned precisely by the manner in which postcommunism complicates the simple binary oppositions and destabilizes the order and direction of progress which we employ in our usual mapping and chronicling of cultures. The postcommunist situation calls for a new critical approach grounded in a relational understanding of the space and time issues that are involved in the reconfigurations of cultural identity once imperial dominion has been shed. Rather than conceive of history in a teleological manner as a fixed chronological succession from primitive to more evolved stages of consciousness, researchers might do better to assess events and epistemes in terms of the opportunity, the occasion, or the “season” for their occurrence in particular historical situations. This would mean that historical situations need to be reconsidered not in terms of traditional chronology, but in terms of a *kairology*, that is, an awareness both of the peculiarity of historical and cultural contexts and of the recognizable generic scenario when one critically considers the worth of a kind of discourse as *kairos* or appropriate moment. (endnote 2)

In these terms, one must reconsider how opportune a Marxist discourse may be in the context of a former communist country. From the perspective of its kairotic value, preaching Marxist values to subjects who were forcibly indoctrinated with Marxism-Leninism might be just as pointless as trying to help someone who is recovering from near-drowning by offering them a glass of water. We tend to think that water is something essentially beneficial, but disregard the fact that water can be damaging if we take into account issues of quantity and proportionality (as in the case of catastrophic flooding) or of contextual appropriateness (as in trying to extinguish with water an electric fire without cutting off the power supply).

Postcommunism and postcolonialism are not rigorously coeval. Because historically unsynchronized, postcommunism and postcolonialism have often been declared unrelated phenomena. However, if we shift our focus from chronology and the valorization of historical dates to kairology as the assessment of successive stages in a process (a descriptive rather than an axiological concept, that is why I shun terms like development, progress, evolution etc.), then postcommunism and postcolonialism are consistent with each other in terms of the structure of their transformation.

A similar fixity seems to inform our spatial representations of colonization. We usually think in terms of colonized “spaces” which we assign to remote, clearly defined areas on geographical maps. However, more sophisticated accounts of coloniality talk of internal colonization, whether “internal” means inside the borders of the very metropolitan center (endnote 3) or in the inner world of our consciousness. (Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, and others have shown how minds can be colonized more efficiently and lastingly than territories.) These nuances of colonization have prompted a subtler understanding of colonized space by dislodging our representations of coloniality from questions of locale or physical/geographical space to those of sites of colonization. In doing so, one must heed to Arjun Appadurai’s analysis of “locality as pri-

marily relational and contextual, rather than scalar or spatial” (178) and to the “new ways of thinking the relationship among geography, culture and identity” that Janice Radway talks about or to “the radical disturbance in the links between culture and space” detected by George Lipsitz (qtd. in Mihăilă 135). Rodica Mihăilă has chronicled the new critical process of problematizing and transgressing borders in the construction of virtual (American) identities:

The new American Studies has mainstreamed the border discourse and, at the same time, operated a reevaluation of the category of border through a shift of emphasis from „border” as „periphery” in relation to a center, to a relational idea of border/boundary as Janus-faced, a hybrid place of multiplicity. (134)

Rogers Brubaker has similarly indicated the need to move away from the realist accounts of nationalities and ethnicities as “substantial, enduring, internally homogenous, and externally bounded collectivities” (292) and to reconsider questions of locating such communities:

The constituent [ethnocultural] blocs may be intermixed in space, for their ‘blocness’ – their boundedness and internal homogeneity – is conceptually located not in physical but in social and cultural space. (295)

A geographical approach to postcolonialism and postcommunism may help with more detailed and particular *descriptions* of these phenomena, but not with their *systematic explanation and structural understanding*. For the latter, we need to shift our focus from *locale* to *sites* of hegemonic relationships. This should facilitate the realization that the territorial positioning of groups is *not* an essential factor in understanding imperial domination strategies. If one looks at related forms of hegemonic domination like gender and sexual orientation, hyphenated identity groups/ethnic minorities, social classes, age/generation cultures etc., one surmises that they are para-territorial, although most studies deal with geographically determined phenomena. In the case of Orientalism, postcolonialism and postcommunism, critics

generally focus on trans-territorial hegemony, that is, one imposed at a distance onto a different political/administrative territory. Naturally, this kind of imperialism is often found in history, and the assertion, augmentation, and preservation of trans-territorial hegemony may require different techniques, strategies, and instruments than the exercise of hegemony in co-territorial situations. But we should not be distracted by these differences in the arsenal of subjugation when we ascertain that, in fact, we are dealing with *structurally* the same type of hegemonic *relationship* and the same *goals*.

To use an analogy, people may kill other people in a wide variety of manners: they can run them over, shoot, stab, drown, strangle or poison them, inculcate suicidal tendencies in them, deprive them of food or water, push them off a cliff, bomb them from an aircraft etc. Some of these methods involve proximity others kill from a distance, in different circumstances and for different reasons. What remains of paramount importance, despite the wide discrepancies in motive, techniques or strategies, is that we are still dealing with a crime, that is, with the similar scenario of someone trying to kill someone else. In this case, it is the *structural* relationship that defines the action as killing and the subjects as perpetrator or victim. The significance and social or moral value of the action depends entirely on situation and circumstance, therefore we ought to be looking for a *contextual* relationship.

One may conclude that an ideological description of postimperialist identities, whether postcolonial or postcommunist, should, therefore, look for structural relationships between colonizer and colonized, rather than to the particulars of colonization. In the contextual understanding of (post)colonial/communist relations, kairological and situational analyses replace the chronological and spatial accounts, which focus on mere physical determinations. The worth and function of the different ideological discourses is not inherent and absolute, nor does it depend on synchronization with a supposedly universal calendar of progress—rather they are the outcome of being situated in the particular historical and cultural

context of their own evolution. This is why Marxism and liberalism may acquire similar emancipatory values in the circumstances provided by postcolonialism and postcommunism, respectively. One may, therefore, recognize a similar structure and situational value in the relationship between the two ideological discourses and the contexts of their occurrence. This homology will be the subject of the next section.

The Contextual Relevance of Postcolonialism and Postcommunism

Postcolonial cultural studies focus on marginal, alienated or underprivileged cultures and communal identities whose evolution was coerced by an alien power (another culture with a privileged, colonizing or majority status). This new critical field operates with the hindsight provided by decolonization, and with the accompaniment of economic or cultural neocolonial tendencies. The new political situation of postcolonialism involves a *redressing though rupture* from colonial domination as well as a *continuity* through the lingering effects of colonization and of residual cultural colonialism. The newly acquired political situation calls simultaneously for a retrospective reevaluation of colonialism and the projection of strategies for identity reconstruction, both of which are performed on the basis of an allegedly new, liberated and liberating episteme.

In the case of postcommunist countries, we are similarly dealing with identities which were forcibly and abruptly altered, their evolution broken off and pushed into an unexpected and “unnatural” direction. Such countries and cultures eventually became liberated and regained their right to reconstruct themselves. As with the case of former colonies, new historical retrospects are produced together with projects for immediate renovation.

Postcommunism and postcolonialism (as well as the study of these phenomena) are compatible not just because they share what seems to be the same general historical situation, that of cultures recovering from traumas inflicted by imperial

oppressors, but also on account of their contexts of emergence.

Postcolonialism occurred at a time when, after WWII, there was an accumulated potential of discontent and revolt against the major imperial powers of the time. The political inability and instability of France, the United States, and the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s (the French-Vietnamese war of 1946-1954, the Korean war of 1950-1953, the war in Algeria between 1956-1962, the prolonged Vietnam war, Kennedy's assassination and the Watergate scandal, but equally the repression of the 1956 anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968) made the younger generations feel disgruntled and distrust political and cultural authorities, which led to a series of uprisings and micro-revolutions of the marginalized groups. The *Beatniks* and the Angry Young Men in the 1950s, the *hippie* movement in the 1960s, the student uprising of the French May 1968 were landmarks in the emancipation of the younger generations. The feminist movement picks up momentum at the end of the 1960s, the blacks launch widespread activist movements (the Rastafarians beginning with 1953 and the Francophone critics of negritude in the late 1950s, the rise of the Nation of Islam in the United States under Malcolm X. They are accompanied by the Gandhian movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960s), the Chicano movement emerges in the late 1960s and the 1970s, and the homosexual who begin to clamor and win civic rights in the United States from 1969 onwards. All of these movements raised public and governmental awareness and triggered social reforms for underprivileged cultural communities.

Intellectually, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the ascent of poststructuralism and of postmodern philosophy which mobilized critical intellectuals and students to press for a reform of the educational system. In the 1970s, MA programs in Cultural Studies are designed by red-brick universities on the pattern proposed by Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall at the University of Birmingham between 1969-1979. The United States adopt the episteme and develop their own version of cultural studies in the 1970s and 1980s. Under this gen-

eral heading sprouted feminist, youth, and popular culture studies, Afro-American criticism, Latin-American and Chicano/a Studies, Orientalism and subaltern studies, gay and lesbian studies etc. The general outcome was that the combined pressure from activist movements and the intellectual community caused a mutation in mentalities and a series of reforms in public policies. Western society and international organisms became more aware and tolerant of the multicultural structure of human communities with their parallel values and cultural practices and showed growing support for minority rights.

On the model of Frantz Fanon and the negritude critics (Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi, Léopold Sédar Senghor), the 1960s and 1970s yield the first statements from spokespeople of the colonized or marginalized cultures and culminate with Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978. By the 1980s and particularly the 1990s postcolonial studies had become an established field in the academia and the press.

The particular political and cultural context for the occurrence of postcolonialism and of postcolonial studies is characterized by three coordinates. Firstly, a new political militancy for the emancipation of underprivileged cultures surfaces as a result of the regression of Western empires from domination to predominance (that is, traditional military, economic, and political forms of imperialism collapse and are replaced by neocolonial strategies of influence and prevalence on the economic and political stage). Secondly, the post-modern and poststructuralism emerge as the new intellectual paradigms in representations of history and culture. Thirdly, the states consent to a reformist policy regarding educational and cultural institutions.

The question, therefore, is whether Romania and the other postcommunist countries exhibit a similar kairologic context, even though chronologically there is roughly a forty-year lapse. I think there is evidence of the same three coordinates of the postcolonial condition in the political and cultural context of emergence of postcommunism and postcommunist cultural studies.

Firstly, one can notice similar mutations in international politics, that is, the crumbling of the

Soviet Empire and Russia's new politics of predominance in the Soviet Union area. Former communist countries, like the former colonies, negotiate their political emancipation through regional alliances and integration in broad international structures.

Secondly, there is evidence of an infusion of the poststructuralist and postmodern paradigm among the intellectual elites, especially the younger scholars in the humanities and social sciences who won academic degrees and went on study trips to the West. The result is a more serious and unfettered reflection on the ideological and political aspects of culture, on the subjectivity and relativity of cognition, and on the constructed nature and diversity of our (self)representations. A sluggish and hesitant reform of education is still under way and it has yielded new disciplines, new departments and study programs, and only occasionally new research, teaching, and evaluation methods. In the public sphere, divergent discourses on the reconstruction of traumatized cultural identities compete and intersect one another and the former hegemonic discourses acquire new status and function.

Thirdly, in domestic affairs, some postcommunist countries have become more democratic and tolerant to the free expression of hitherto underprivileged groups which have had no public voice before, like women, ethnic minorities, the youth and the less educated, the homosexuals etc. Though the activist performance of such communities is generally unimpressive, the central authorities have met it with indulgence and a moderately reformist attitude, mostly because these new or refashioned states are seeking recognition from international organizations and from the public opinion, and feel under scrutiny.

The respective contexts of state and cultural emancipation for the former colonies and the former communist countries, though not concomitant, are structurally homologous. The actors may be different, but the roles are the same. The conditions for a posttraumatic restoration of cultural identity are similar, even though some of the actors may have switched characters, such that those who formerly played heroes are now villains and vice versa. This may serve as an example for what

Ernesto Laclau calls "floating signifiers" and the "relational" nature of discourse and identity (in Docherty 335-7).

*From Chapter 3:
"Thinking in Pairs. Problems in the Comparative Study of Postcolonialism and Postcommunism"*

The Comparative Conundrum

This chapter examines the context of and grounds for, a comparative approach to postcommunism and postcolonialism. Comparing implies that two different things may be alike or equal when in fact they are not. They remain irreducibly different and disproportionate. Ranking one over the other is always a simple choice, really. But comparisons also speak indirectly about the comparers themselves. The very act of comparing is itself conditioned by the status of the comparer (who may be, for instance, a Western, a Third-World or an Eastern European intellectual), just as it is affected by the position of the subject in the academic field or in the larger epistemic horizon of a culture.

Sadly, in this post- or neocolonial age, we can no longer be seduced by the metaphor of a "free" global market being driven by an "invisible hand". The hand is only invisible because the puppeteer is cautious enough to disguise it. The recent recognition of exotic cultural market products such as Romanian cinema or fiction is just temporary and is only tolerated when it may serve the interests of the main market players. The new wave in Romanian cinema is no more than a fling as was the presence of Romanian writers in the edition dedicated to them by the French annual festival *Les Belles Étrangères*. (Consider the title of the festival itself, which institutionalizes the stereotypical assimilation of the exotic with the feminine that Said and other postcolonial critics have talked about.) Romanian art, the minion of the day, is no more than a momentary thrill and like all non-Western cultural products is already condemned to ephemeral consumerism. Such

fleeting pleasures are usually the subject of pornography.

By contrast, Western cultural products remain something permanent, the stable ground for the Western life style and worldview. And not just for the West. They are exported and many marginal cultures “buy” them, taking Western standards and models to be universal yardsticks. The West will occasionally open to Romanian or other exotic cultural products in order to either validate its own established values or justify their revision, but never in order to embrace the values of that exotic other. Hence, such works will remain evanescent, brief encounters. The transient function of their strangeness is either sensual or comic. Note that the received work of Brâncuși, Cioran, or Ionesco, who are now considered French artists and have been canonized there and elsewhere in the West, is almost entirely purged of any native or pidgin accent, which may very well have been a condition for their Western assimilation.

The asymmetric dynamic of the relationship between the metropolitan center and the colonial margins has been carefully and extensively investigated. It is by now part of the axiomatic grounding of postcolonial studies that the colonized culture is relegated by colonialist ideology to an inferior position where it can be disregarded or minimized. This situation affects all comparative attempts which are, in fact, the very substance of postcolonial criticism:

In a way, cultural and postcolonial studies are what comparative literature always wanted or claimed to be but in reality never was, due to a deliberate and almost desperate clinging to Eurocentric values, canons, cultures, and languages. The closest parallels in the many debates within the field of comparative literature from the 1950s and 1960s are those involving the French comparatist René Etiemble, who pleaded for an open and planetary comparativism that would address questions of coloniality and examine literatures outside the Euro-American center. No discipline is unaffected by the colonialist paradigm, and every discipline, from anthropology to cartography, needs to be decolonized. (Gugelberger 385)

Though we can be comforted by the belief that globalization and the onslaught of postcolonial

studies have somehow brought us closer to a “planetary comparativism”, the task of decolonizing every discipline – including comparativism itself – is still far from completion. Formal inclusion in global or international structures is not in and by, itself a solution to neocolonial discrimination and inequality.

Sukehiro Hirakawa (1979) saw comparativism as an exclusive Western club in the 1950s, just as postcolonialism was making its entry on the intellectual scene of the West:

It is true that great scholars such as Curtius, Auerbach and Wellek wrote their monumental scholarly works in order to overcome nationalism. But to outsiders like me, Western Comparative Literature scholarship seemed to be an expression of a new form of nationalism – the Western nationalism, if I may use such an expression. It seemed to us an exclusive club of Europeans and Americans. It was a sort of Greater West European Co-Prosperity Sphere. (“Japanese Culture: Accommodation to Modern Times” qtd. in Damrosch 8)

David Damrosch is partly right in claiming that “this situation has changed dramatically in recent years, and both the globe and the map of Europe itself have opened up” (8). However, the real world of globalization may look slightly different to postcolonial countries. Opening the EU door for less developed, former communist countries or opening the cultural market for marginal and exotic literatures or arts (take, for instance, the “new wave in Romanian cinema”) did not automatically generate the conditions needed for genuinely even-handed comparisons. I am afraid that any parallels, juxtapositions or analogies between what are still seen as the major Western cultures and the minor non-Western ones are going to remain asymmetrical.

In fact, they are just as asymmetrical as the political balance of European and world power. Though the European Union claims to be a club of peers, some of its members have a privileged position and increased powers, just as in the case of the United Nations. That is why Germany and France could put up a discretionary (and for some even discriminatory) opposition to Romania and Bulgaria accessing the visa-free Schengen space. If it were only for the discourteous way in which

French president Chirac admonished Eastern European states (Donald Rumsfeld's "New Europe"), especially the still aspiring EU candidates Romania and Bulgaria, for supporting the US intervention in Iraq and we would still understand how former communist countries are perceived by the West:

They missed a great opportunity to shut up. . . .
If they wanted to diminish their chances of joining Europe they could not have found a better way. ("Chirac Lashes Out" 1)

One finds that the positioning of both Third World and Eastern European cultures versus Western ones is constantly asymmetric, as is scholarship of these regions itself. In spite of all efforts to redress this *a priori* inequality and even in the context of the new international dynamics of globalization, there is a huge disparity between the attention given to products coming from Western literatures (especially in English) and that elicited by Third World or Eastern European ones. This can only increase and modulate the hegemonic position of the West in both the field of literary and cultural production and in the academic study of this field.

Since scholarship is itself a part of the culture it belongs to, it is ideologically ranked accordingly. Moreover, it is still no more than utopianism to believe that enlightened scholars from different parts of the globe can sit together and exchange ideas as peers in a global environment. Peer-reviewing itself hardly operates among peers, we are not equal, there is no comparison, if only because to compare the West with the rest is always done in the terms set by Western institutions and practices.

Additionally, there is also the question of institutional positioning in the politics of knowing. Postcolonial cultural critics are entitled to operate within the institutionalized arena of the *humanities*, one that has been authorized by the Western academe as the medium for militancy and the propagation of culturalist agendas, where postcoloniality is a *mainstream, canonical subject*. The legitimacy of postcommunist cultural scholars, on the other hand, extends only as far as the *social sciences*, which appear to be more innocuous and neutral from an ideological standpoint,

and even there they are seen as quirky and *marginal*. Though accepted without reservations as a valid field by the Western academe, postcommunism as an academic subject populates a rather marginal domain. There are, consequently, institutional and social limitations to the comparison between postcommunism and postcolonialism.

An implicit hierarchy attends all comparisons, as well as the dramatic story of success and failure that accompanies them. And comparers are part of this story. To be an East European comparer is to be doomed to an ineluctable sense of failure. This has been convincingly argued by the Bulgarian cultural historian Alexander Kiossev:

The hypothesis of this text is, therefore, the following: the birth of these nations is connected with a very specific symbolic economy. It seems that the self-colonizing cultures import alien values and civilizational models by themselves and that they lovingly colonize their own authenticity through these foreign models.

Yet which are, in fact, the cultures that we call, using a strange metaphor, "self-colonizing" cultures?

From the point of view of the modern globalization of the world, there are cultures which are not central enough, not timely and big enough in comparison to the "Great Nations". At the same time they are insufficiently alien, insufficiently distant and insufficiently backward, in contrast to the African tribes, for example. That's why, in their own troubled embryo, somewhere in the periphery of Civilization, they arise in the space of a generative doubt: *We are European, although perhaps not to a real extent . . .*

Aren't we then forced to describe the historical rhythm of such traumatic, self-colonizing cultures as a constant repetition and return? Maybe the constitutive traumas cannot be overcome and they will occur over and over again in the form of various historical symptoms - as a *Wiederkehr des Verdrängten* - a recurrence of the suppressed?

Or maybe this is just a reminder that the history of Modernity could not be written as a composite history consisting of the histories of many separate nations (that means as histories of the Native and the Alien), but should be written (described, analyzed, criticized, etc.) globally, as a history of the entire process of asymmetrical modernization,

transgressing the boundaries of the established historiographical narratives about states, cultures and ideologies? (115, 118)

Comparison, by which the minor cultures might hope to assert themselves in relation to the greater ones, is a Trojan horse. Maria Todorova has denounced historians, anthropologists, economists, and political scientists for working with a “rigged” comparative concept, that of an *origin* of ideas or models (always Western) which can only be “pirated” and “copied” by sluggish Central and East European nations (Todorova “The Trap of Backwardness” 145 and *passim*). She notices that the commercial metaphoric imagination which is at work in comparisons between Western and Eastern accounts of nation-building (150) condemns marginal nations to an eternal life in the past, in a different time, constantly lagging behind and hopelessly aspiring towards modern models. The metaphor of the race is constitutive of modernity which is a temporal construct. One’s modernity consists in leaving the others behind: the primitive and the obsolete, the tardy and underdeveloped nations etc. In this cultural race, those who get there first become the origin, the source, the genuine article, whereas the others are left to copy and mimic. Todorova proposes that within a Braudelian perspective of the *longue durée* one ought to abandon the obsession of genealogies and adopt the notion of relative synchronicity in spite of chronological precedence. This is predicated upon the anthropological observation that similarities exist even when cultures are not in immediate contact (149).

Todorova’s proposed concept of “relative synchronicity” can be complemented by my kairological perspective on historical comparativism. The traditional notions of synchronicity and synchronization that are being revised by Todorova are vestiges of a chronological understanding of historical events and they call for evaluation of actions and phenomena based on their *timing*, that is, on the synchronization with a fixed calendar whose value is implicitly considered to be universal and absolute. Historical and cultural value is predicated on the synchronization or deviation from that timetable of “human” evolution. If some process or event happens at its prescribed calen-

dar time it is validated and, if it occurs earlier, it becomes exceptional. Belated occurrences are thought to be a sign of backwardness. By contrast, the kairological interpretation of history disregards the time of an event in relation to a putative universal calendar of human evolution and instead tries to evaluate the *timeliness* (i.e. the opportune or seasonable nature) of phenomena in their particular historical and cultural sequence. The question is, therefore, not whether the culture under scrutiny undertook the same evolutionary steps at the same time and in the same order that is recommended by the calendar of progress of the standard culture by which it is measured, but rather which is the relative contextual relevance of certain actions or discourses and whether they occur at the right moment and are beneficial in the historical situation of *that* culture.

While the old, chronological comparison between cultures of the West and the rest of the world is still in place, East European scholars such as myself cannot help being painfully aware of traumatic disproportions. Such asymmetries are replicated and sometimes augmented in the global environment by the metaphorical arsenal that attends the comparative imagination.

What this subsection has tried to illustrate is that different, unequal contexts work to make the comparison implausible if not impossible. Comparisons and evaluations are usually engineered by nationalist agendas just as attempts at neutrality in comparative studies are thwarted by the metaphors of origin and originality or of modernity and progress as a race. The insights of such post-communist critics as Maria Todorova and Alexander Kiossev suggest that figurative representations of world culture contaminate the study of transnational cultural phenomena and that a new historical and comparative framework needs to be used to avoid nationalistic and hegemonic images in present-day scholarship.

The Awkward Positioning of Eastern European Identity

The problematical mechanism of cultural and political positioning of East European countries is

cause for further nuisance in establishing their (post)colonial status. It also complicates the usually simple process of comparing two things and establishing such familiar and comfortable binary oppositions like “us” versus “them” or colonized East versus colonizing West:

At the foundation of this “orientalization” of Others were such binary oppositions as we vs. they, West vs. East, Europe vs. the rest of the world, whites vs. blacks, better vs. worse. Recently, scholars have argued that such facile binarism falsifies the realities of other civilizations and drags them onto the Procrustean bed of Western concepts and social customs. (Thompson, “Whose Discourse?” 1)

Romania and similar cultures in the region already possessed the heritage of a neurotic, insecure Europeanism before their communist trauma, situated as they were at the Eastern extremity of the continent. We have seen Kiossev submit that marginal and transitional cultures at the Eastern edge of Europe are apprehensive about their identity, one that they are prone to relinquish in a strange act of “self-colonizing” and of “lovingly coloniz[ing] their own authenticity” (114).

To make things much worse, Soviet colonialism obfuscated the previously banal in-betweenness of this cultural space which Tötösy de Zepetnek has described in terms of “(post) colonial in between peripherality” (*Comparative Central European Culture* 13). Once Eastern Europe was simply poised half-way between the Western civilization and the exotic Orient and it combined features from both extremes of this binary opposition. With the interpolation of the Soviet Empire, Eastern European countries were forced to adopt what I would call a “triangular identity formation”. A third pole was added and the usual binaries of (post)colonial imagination (West/Orient, us/them) were replaced by what may seem to most like an impossible positioning of the East European self between *three* instances of the Other, all of which are at one and the same time adversarial and contaminating: The West, the Soviet Union, and the “Orient” (the colonial primitive).

Anca Băicoianu is only partly right when she offers a slightly more complicated identification scheme for postcommunist Europe (“double-

centred peripherality”) in contrast to the simple opposition between peripheral self and imperial other with which postcolonial identification operates and when she talks of the Manicheism by which the Eastern reference point is demonized while the Western one is idealized (51). What I propose is an even more complicated relationship, where the colonial periphery (the Orient or the Third World) becomes a third center or reference point in the awkward positioning of the Sovietized Eastern European.

Also, instead of the simple Manicheism, I would suggest that all three centers were at once repulsive and hypnotically powerful. The West was both coveted for its freedom and opulence and vilified for its betrayal and naiveté. The Soviet Union was, on the one hand, a national adversary and criminal oppressor and, on the other, an impressively massive and sly victor, as well as the champion of the poor and the unexceptional many. The Orientals/Third World colonial subjects were at once the spectre of the Eastern Europeans’ own failure and barbaric backwardness, but they were also natives of a romantic paradise of exotic opulence, as well as former subalterns who had gained their freedom just as the Eastern Europeans were losing theirs. All of the three reference points had something that the Eastern European lacked: a definite identity. The Sovietised Eastern European was neither a clear winner, nor a clear victim, neither Western, nor Eastern, neither entirely civilized, nor an utter barbarian or natural man. To be a Sovietized Eastern European was to be *almost* like any of the three stable identities —*but not quite*— in an area of endless interference. (endnote 4) Life inside this unstable area is further complicated by gradual scale of Orientalization. Milica Bakić-Hayden proposed the notion of “nesting Orientalism” as the ripple effect or mise-en-abyme whereby “a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised” generates a “gradation of ‘Orients’” with orientalized cultures further orientalizing their neighbors to the south and the east [918 and passim].

The disparaging stereotypes of Orientalism and Balkanism are sometimes embraced by the mimicking victims only to perpetuate the harm to

themselves and to their neighbors or other cultures pushed into submission. This behavior was analyzed by Ewa Thompson under the rubric of adopting a “surrogate hegemon” (“Whose Discourse?” 5 and *passim*) and her examples of Poland treating the Euro-Atlantic organizations to which it is a member as “an assembly of judges” hold perfectly true for Romania and other post-communist countries.

Romanian and to some extent East European intellectuals display a certain discursive and ideological duplicity, a rhetoric of resentment and table-turning typical of the trauma of marginalization that is still confined to a canonical essentialism as it proclaims allegiance to the great and eternal values of humanity. Such marginalized elites scramble for a privileged minority status, the merit badge of honorary secondariness: Central Europeans over (South) East Europeans, the Second World over the Third World, Asian over African immigrants (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in Brydon I, 57-8). Subaltern elites sometimes adopt the vocabulary of discrimination against “inferior” cultures (sometimes with racist overtones) in order to ease the pain of their own dismissal by and inferiority to, the West.

Inside such a vague and shifting area, Romania seems like the prime candidate for ambiguity neurosis. Romanian elites have traditionally defined their nation as a mongrelized cross between Greek Orthodoxy and linguistic Latinity, a Balkan culture in the eyes of most which, nevertheless, obstinately refuses to accept its Balkan identity, and a country that is neither entirely Central, nor entirely East European, as illustrated, among others, by Timothy Garton Ash:

The term East Central Europe combines the criteria of post-1945 Eastern Europe and pre-1914 Central Europe. By post-1945 Eastern Europe one means the formally independent member states of the Warsaw Pact, apart from the Soviet Union. The term Central Europe is, of course, more problematic, but for the period before 1914 it may be taken to mean those countries that, while subsumed in one of the three great multinational empires (Austro-Hungarian, Prussian-German, or Russian), nonetheless preserved major elements of Western traditions: for example Western Christianity, the rule of law, some separation of powers, a measure of constitutional government, and

something that could be called civil society. The Western Ukraine and the Baltic states are thus excluded by the first criterion, while Bulgaria is excluded by the second. *Romania is a borderline case.* (qtd. in Neumann 145, *emphasis mine*)

Such convolutions are, no doubt, a challenge for postcolonial critics as well, if we take Hélène Gill’s word that postcolonialism is “a strand of oppositional, radical thought. . . [which] is tempted to adopt strongly contrasted binary positions. By the same token, it tends to be uncomfortable with in-between situations: unclear ethical dilemmas, ambivalent political attitudes, divided loyalties” (qtd. in Bonnet 98). The unsettled significance and complicated place of postcommunist identities makes difficult all comparisons between postcommunism and postcolonialism, as well as between these forms of subalternity and the no less intricate shapes of imperialism. [...]

The Discourse of Soviet (Post) Communism and Its Rapport with (Post)Modernity

Postcommunism (also referred to as “postsocialism” or the “post-Soviet”) is *chronologically* the period that follows closely after communism, or, more exactly, that comes after the fall of the Soviet empire, the toppling of communist regimes in the Eurasian communist bloc, and the dismantling of the USSR. As postcommunism is predicated on its temporal, structural and epistemic consecutiveness to communism, some radical critics have questioned the very reality of postcommunism by claiming that communism proper never existed. The totalitarian Soviet rule (and its national Central and East European off-shoots) allegedly had nothing to do with the communist ideals and the spirit of Marxism, hence communism as a utopia, the ideal projection of a redeemed society, is presumably unscathed by the collapse of the USSR and the communist bloc. This argument is aimed to boost the morale of Marxist supporters and to legitimize their critiques of capitalism from such utopian perspectives, more than to actually provide a better description and analysis of what communism was and what

follows it. The Marxist argument against the use of postcommunism as a term to describe the aftermath of the USSR and of Soviet-type regimes in Europe hopes to counter the over-exuberance of unconditional supporters of liberal capitalism like Francis Fukuyama who have proclaimed the end of history and of ideology by suggesting that the fall of the Soviet bloc and the end of the Cold War prove that capitalist democracy is the unavoidable superior stage in the development of all human societies and that all other civilizational models were shown to be unsustainable.

But when nominal quibbles are left aside, there is no significant number of critics who would deny that communist regimes actually existed and that they were based on terror and discrimination, on mass murder, on deportation of entire communities and violent repression, on inefficient economies which pauperized the lives of ordinary citizens, on large-scale lying and forgery, on systematic brainwashing, on generating hatred and suspicion among individuals and social groups, and on disregarding, humiliating, and curtailing the basic rights of the individual (when that individual was left alive), such as, for instance, the right to hold and express personal opinions, to travel, to exercise free will, to elect and be elected, to associate freely, to own property, to decide whether to procreate or not, to enjoy equal opportunities, etc. Also, communism was shown to employ imperialist and colonial practices including the appropriation and/or control of foreign territories, the curtailment of national rights to self-representation, the subordination of the resources and economies of other countries, which it forcefully annexed or turned into satellites, the imposition on such countries of self-serving propagandistic campaigns, the misrepresentation, abuse, and traumatizing of the identities of ethnic or religious groups by the control over their administrative, political, economic, and cultural institutions. In other words, although professing Marx's liberating doctrine and implementing his economic, social and political solutions, communist societies were themselves oppressive, discriminating, and bigoted and the communist power center was just as ravenous a colonial empire as the capitalist ones, even though

there was no body of water between it and its colonial possessions.

Systemically, postcommunism is the awkward interdependence between this new stage in the organization of former communist societies and its eponymous predecessor against a context of pressures from the forces of postindustrial globalization. Whether the various postcommunist countries and regimes are trying to discard, surpass or merely tone down the totalitarian *ancien régime* with its party-state rule and its centralized planned economy, they remain under the shadow of their previous communist condition. This ghost may revisit the new postcommunist societies in the shape of lingering mentalities, or as the conversion of the older communist into new capitalist networks of influence, inside information, and preferential allocation of resources.

Finally, from an *epistemic* standpoint, postcommunism (though one should more correctly talk of "postcommunist studies") may sometimes denote indiscriminately all efforts to generate an understanding of the communist past and of its connection with the present, yet the term is more frequently used to refer to critiques of this field grounded in postmodern(ism), poststructuralism, and the cultural studies paradigm.

Chronological, systemic, and epistemic accounts of postcommunism all rely on its antecedence to communism and on the backdrop supplied by the no less problematic relation between modernity and postmodernity. Bauman is one of several important thinkers who take communism to be a manifestation of modernity:

Like socialism (and all other staunch believers in the modern values of technological progress, the transformation of nature and a society of plenty), communism was thoroughly modern in its passionate conviction that a good society can only be a carefully designed, rationally managed and thoroughly industrialized society. . . . Communism was modernity in its most determined mood and most decisive posture; modernity streamlined, purified of the last shred of the chaotic, the irrational, the spontaneous, the unpredictable. (Bauman 166-7)

However, for Bauman communism was also a frozen image of modernity, both as an episteme and as economic and social practice. As such, it

was unable to adapt and keep up with world evolution in late modernity/postmodernity. A prey to the dogmatism of Marx and Lenin, who were obsessed with their own feud with the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century, Soviet-type communism took over that model of modernization, (“the nineteenth-century steam and iron ideal of modern plenty”) and mobilized its societies for a competition in those terms. But it was unprepared for the spontaneous shifts of market-driven economies or for the reorientation towards services which was brought about by postindustrialism and it consequently could not go like capitalism from metallurgy to semiurgy, as Baudrillard puts it. Communism could not survive in the postmodern age, because communism is dictatorship over needs and choices, whereas postmodernity is a proliferation of needs and a redefining of happiness in terms of consumption (Bauman 169). This view has sometimes been adopted by social scientists who, using “harder” empirical methods of investigation, still conclude that postmodern social changes include “the decline of the state socialist systems” (Inglehart 6).

For Lyotard, an unrelenting critic of the modern and an advocate of cultural postmodernity, the Enlightenment-driven totalizing episteme together with its Marxist revival is “the ultimate source of the totalitarian and ecological nightmares that have bedeviled the twentieth century” (Boyne and Rattansi 3; cf. Lyotard 12-13 and *passim*).

No doubt that, in the eyes of many anticommunists and victims of the Soviet-led nightmare, to consider Soviet-inspired totalitarianism or national-communism off-shoots of modernity is an undeserved compliment. The reality of communism displayed for the eyes that remained still open and clear a *feudal* mentality at best. Outhwaite and Ray evoke as indices of *pre-modern* practices and mentalities the gerontocratic organization of decision-making and the use of forced labor employed in the very process of modernization (92-3). Communist dictatorships did use nepotism and vassality, personality cults and courtly fawning on such a scale that they at times resembled an absolutist monarchy, rather than a modern democracy. Though no more than a sham, they did mimic modern Western societies in the

comprehensive use of science and technology, industrialization and massification of production, as well as in the features included in the Parsonian model of modernization: “bureaucratic organization of collective goal-attainment, money and market systems, generalized universalistic legal systems, and democratic association with elective leadership and mediated membership support for policy orientations” (Outhwaite and Ray 92). Not least of all, the Enlightenment did inform the overt mentality, the public discourse, and the official ideology of these societies.

The “modernity” of communism is hard to ignore. Whether we take communism to be a legitimate or illegitimate alternative to capitalism, a utopian excess, a disease of modernity or a competitor against Western modernity, communism is trapped in its mimic-and-outperform rapport with the discourse, ideology, and practice of modernity. What of postcommunism, then?

Postcommunism is seen by most as a “transition” (Balcerowicz 1994 and 2002, Nodia 1996, Pickles and Smith 1998, Berdahl, Bunzl, and Lampland 2000). Few realize the comparative implication of the term, since transition theories first emerged in the study of Third World countries from Latin America attempting to move from dictatorship to democracy. Postcolonialism itself has often been considered a “historical transition” (Parry 3). Some analysts of postcommunist societies believe that once former communist countries shake off their totalitarian regimes, they will automatically revert to the Western models of development constructed on liberal democracy and capitalism. This journey, which for some of the European postcommunist nations is seen as a return, is commonly referred to as their “transition” period, a very popular representation of postcommunism even outside academic circles. But additional factors like the speed of development and the fidelity to the Western economy *cum* democracy model have turned this voyage into a competition where some countries are seen as faring better than others:

Societies are relatively equivalent in this culture [of transition], and the successful can become exemplars for the rest. Estonia, for instance, is disciplined and open to the world, while Ukraine is beset by a parliament that obstructs privatization

and has an economy grounded in the informal. (Kennedy 273)

Obviously, the arbiter of postcommunist performance is usually the West. Various authorities like the European Union, NATO and the United States, the rating agencies, and great creditors like the IMF or the World Bank are in the business of sanctioning postcommunist countries' overall economic and political performance, and in their books it seems that the Central European (the Visegrad Four) and the Baltic states (the first wave of postcommunist states to be admitted in the EU in 2004) have overtaken the Eastern-European and the Balkan countries (Romania and Bulgaria are late comers into the EU that still need monitoring in certain areas), which in turn seem to be doing better than the former Soviet republics. Consequently, both a hierarchy and a calendar of transition separate postcommunist countries.

There are occasional optimists like John Mueller, who think that transition is over and that most former communist countries are democratic and capitalist. The totalitarian "cultural legacies" (Stephen Holmes) which produced anti-capitalist deformities of mentality were not that strong to Mueller. Democracy is all about leaving people free to complain, and capitalism is all about leaving them free to be greedy. Despite its opposite, negative image, capitalism rewards honesty, fairness, civility, compassion, and heroism (Mandelbaum 102-4). Democracy and capitalism are not necessarily connected, they can exist independently. They can also work well without people understanding them very well. Intellectuals, whose views are revered in such countries, can be detrimental because of their idealized image of democracy, and their embittered image of capitalism (105). Democracy can work without institutions that are traditionally considered essential (right to vote etc.). All it takes is that people agree not to overthrow the government by force, and the government agrees to allow people to overthrow it by any other means. Hence, political officeholders are responsible to the citizenry (107). The evolution of postcommunist countries has called for a reconsidering of traditional idea(l)s concerning capitalism and democracy.

If one considers all the above arguments for considering communism to be an alternative or an exacerbation that took modernity too far down the road of totalization and uniformity, than it is strange that instead of conceiving transition as a *horizontal* shift from one branch of modernity to another, or as a temporal *regression*, a retracing of steps to the previous historical node, most critics take postcommunist transition to be an acceleration of progress in order to catch up with the West. This is obviously the result of using the constrictive metaphoric representation of history whereby humanity progresses in a single file along the single, one-directional ladder of modernization and anyone who fails to fall in step and in line is evicted from the catalog of modernity.

Some "post" critics hope to modulate that historical understanding, though. For Gabardi, change and continuity coexist in postmodernity:

Social theorists who contend that our condition is late modern rather than postmodern offer accounts of the present that stress the theme of change within continuity, rather than radical rupture. They grasp our transition by working within the modernization paradigm. Thus despite their differences, Jürgen Habermas, David Harvey, and Anthony Giddens all agree that we are still operating within a modern world, albeit "late" or "radically reflexive." (Gabardi 22)

Gabardi is trying to moderate the accounts of institutional changes from (neo)moderns like Habermas, Harvey, and Giddens, as well as those of proponents of the postmodern cultural shift like Baudrillard, Lyotard, and Bauman when he puts forward his notion of "transition":

I contend that our present condition is neither a radical rupture with modernity, nor a continuation of the Enlightenment project of modernization. Rather, it exhibits the features of what I call *our late modern/postmodern transition*. (Gabardi 29)

Gabardi's proposition is not just a good compromise between radical supporters of either modernity or postmodernity. It also offers the basis for a comparative study of postcommunism and postcolonialism, both of which have been described as transitional stages, against the background of post- or late modernity. He may be

speaking of the logic of “post-“ historicism, one that was introduced by postmodernity.

However, the very concept of transition has come under attack from postcommunist critics, especially since transitologists seldom agree on whether all postcommunist countries will eventually become capitalist democracies (or even whether they are all really heading westward), on the basic concerns and strategies for a successful transition, or on whether one and the same postcommunist country has just taken the first steps or has already completed its transition. Perhaps the discrepancy between critical evaluations is all quite understandable given that postcommunism is a *sui generis* phenomenon with a considerable portion of the world having embarked on a daunting and unprecedented project in history, “the attempt to construct a form of capitalism on and with the ruins of the communist system” (Pickles and Smith 2). The task is more difficult and uncommon than what other nations had to face before because communist economies were not so much underdeveloped, as misdeveloped (Mandelbaum 11), which means that these new capitalist democracies are not going to arise spontaneously and evolve at a natural pace, but will have to be force-grown in unusual conditions and rushed “back on track” at a dazzling historical speed. Originally, transition theory emerged in the appraisal of Latin American and Southern European states that were shaking off authoritarian regimes and advancing towards more democratic governances, but those countries’ reconstruction could rely on some existing forms of capitalist economy and democratic political institutions, no matter how frail or perverted. Postcommunist countries, on the other hand, though once functioning on capitalist and democratic institutions, at least some of them, were entirely communized and transformed into centralized dictatorial party-states and now have to discard entirely their old communist structure and start from scratch.

Critics have variously objected to the metaphor of transition, especially when applied to postcommunism, because it rests on the assumption that this period is merely a fleeting stage in a process of acquiring genuine liberal democracy and free-market capitalism, because it implies there is a

necessary linear progress towards the Western ideal of capitalist democracy as the only feasible end of developing civilizations, and because it suggests that postcommunist societies are late in getting there. Alternatively, there are proposals that not all postcommunist states may be advancing anywhere, that some may be stagnating or even regressing to authoritarian or feudal-like structures, and that this type of postcommunist society, that appears to many as transitional, may prove definitive for certain nations. Students of postcommunism are also reserved as to the appropriateness of such “deficit models”, in Michael Burroway’s phrasing, whereby postcommunist countries are described in terms of what they lack, rather than by features of their own which they actually exhibit (Gans-Morse 334, Sakwa 1999, 119-22).

The debate over transition theories and analyses raises interesting questions about the rhetoricality of postcommunist discourse which are mostly asked within a comparative framework. The complaints about the inaccuracy of transitology and its explanatory patterns for the postcommunist situation occasionally have prompted comparisons with postcolonialism and the Third World. While some scholars find that the post-Soviet states of Central Asia and the Caucasus could aptly be described as decolonized nations whose evolution is similar to that of postcolonial Africa, others extend the analogy to Eastern Europe. As part of her comparative study of nationalism, Maria Todorova exposes traditional representations of the Eastern European and Balkan area for operating on prefiguring tropes of the lag, of the painful need to catch up with the speedier and more developed West, of the planting on the native soil of imported or “pirated” Western ideas etc., which have all ingrained an image of the Balkans and Eastern Europe as a backward area, with a separate, slower or belated flow of time. She professes bemusement at the similarities between the Eastern European and the postcolonial worlds and goes on to describe them:

Accordingly, the main categories of analysis of the past are ones that pertain to emptiness: lack, absences, what one is not, incompleteness, backwardness, catching up, failure, self-exclusion, negative consciousness, and so on. And in both

cases the reasons for the backwardness are external. (Todorova, "The Trap of Backwardness" 160)

While she is not the first or only critic to have dwelt on the similarities between postcommunism and postcolonialism, Todorova notices something else besides the usual and painful differences between the West and Eastern Europe, the Orient or Africa. She finds that the lag-and-lack trope is not a stranger to Western European culture either and illustrates it with the cultures of Germany, Italy or Spain. Moreover, she reminds us that some Balkan and East European states were created at the same time or even slightly before Italy and Germany (145). She consequently suggests that the trope (and "trap") of East European backwardness be replaced with the concept of "relative synchronicity" within the broader historical paradigm of the *longue durée*, where the quest for national emancipation and the push for civilizational progress were the common outcomes of a modernization process that spread through the whole of Europe, making the east and the west of the continent contemporary for all practical reasons.

Nevertheless, the backwardness trope remains a *topos* in the popular mentality which is informed by Balkanism and it perpetuates the anguish of the postcommunist subject. Apart from the physical and mental abuse inflicted upon them by communist dictatorship over an extensive period of time, such subjects have had to take the additional insult of having not just their personal, but also their collective identity humiliated and estranged. Eastern and even Central European countries have always been considered strange and inconsequential. Surely, the non-European postcommunist cultures have their own history of exclusion, but at least they have a definite status, whereas to be a Central or Eastern European is to be a failed European, one who is not classifiable either as European or Asian. The rejection by the West of this "other" Europe has always been a cause for suffering and it brought about disastrous consequences as British PM Neville Chamberlain's appeasement speech of September 27, 1938 demonstrates, in which he argued, in a typically Western European fashion, for non-intervention on the part of Czechoslovakia, "a small nation" and a "far-away coun-

try" locked at the time with Germany in "a quarrel between people of whom we know nothing". The war and its aftermath meant that these minor non-Western European countries were dismantled, traded, won or lost by the great Western powers and the USSR until they became mere satellites of the latter. This meant having to bear the humiliation of being regarded as barbarous, uncivilized communist dictatorships with meager living standards and inefficient economies, deprived of freedom and of basic individual rights, brainwashed into robotic caricatures of the utopian Soviet new man.

Larry Wolff amply documented in his imagological study *Inventing Eastern Europe* (1994) how the stereotype of depicting Eastern European, Balkan, and Slavic peoples as barbarians was constructed by Voltaire, Diderot, Levesque, Marat, Herder, Gibbon, Rousseau, and other Western authors starting with the Enlightenment and that these clichés have been perpetuated through the canonization and recurrent citation of such texts throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries until as late as the 1990s. Such references to the backwardness of East European and Asian cultures have constantly shaped the popular opinion as well as the foreign policies and military strategies of Western governments. This cliché of barbarism obviously permeated into Eastern European intellectual circles and generated an inferiority complex.

One of the ways in which the traumatized personality of the Eastern European dealt with this burden was by what Alexander Kiossev has called "self-colonization" in which these marginal and ailing cultures "import alien values and civilizational models by themselves and that they lovingly colonize their own authenticity through these foreign models" (115). Their emancipation from the forced communist colonization of land and mind is achieved by a welcoming of Western neo-colonization, since these have been the only alternative models available to this marginalized European region by representations of the Cold War and even of the history that preceded it. It looks, then, like postcommunist countries, especially those at the edge of Europe, have traded one form of colonial subalternity for another as they join the

global political and economic networks with a painful sense of their lacks and imperfections and of the need to shape up in the vain hope that they will become equals in this game (Kennedy 272-4 and passim) and “return to normalcy” (Holmes 335).

Postcommunist cultures seem condemned to vacillate between ingrained forms of Western and Soviet subalternity that they cannot seem to shake off. Bauman brings to our attention some of the postcommunist frustrations that may explain various manifestations of *Ostalgie* (longing for the communist past of Eastern Europe) when he notes that the forces or agents which brought down the communist system, such as the workers in state-run industrial dinosaurs, did not reap the benefits in the new system (Bauman 160-2). One perfect illustration is the reaction of one of the most notorious anticommunists, Lech Wałęsa, at the 2011 commemoration of victims of the Gdansk strike of 1970, in the *Europe News* report:

‘It was such a big victory, but the effects are not on the scale of that victory,’ Wałęsa said at the Gdansk shipyard. ‘Look, for one, at this yard. It’s dying.’ (“Poland marks anniversary of Solidarity’s legalization”, *Europe News* Aug 31, 2011)

Postcommunist societies obviously display traumatized collective identities. Humiliation and marginalization, as well as the adulteration of their self-images by imperialist and colonial propaganda are features that bring postcommunist and post-colonial countries under the same rubric. Whether they are European, Asian or African, new states that have relatively recently emancipated themselves from colonial or imperial oppression are first and foremost cultures in distress. This may explain the difficulties of posttraumatic states in coping once more, even after apparently having secured their freedom and independence, with rules imposed by the new world powers and authorities of the day.

Postcommunism as a discipline of study is riddled with theoretical and ideological conundrums and is still tardy in instituting itself as a unified field of scholarship. A major obstacle is the absence of a common idiom for the postcommunist space, both because there is no *lingua franca* in place after the fall of the USSR in spite of its long

Russification campaign, and because there is no common theoretical core that grounds the various approaches to this subject (Oțoiu 88-91). Apart from the linguistic and geo-cultural diversity that hinders the circulation of scholarly findings and precludes the necessary debates, there are also competitive rather than co-operative attitudes between the different sciences and ideologies of postcommunism scholars. Just as there is a difference of status and prestige between the various postcommunist countries, there is a similar hierarchy at play between, on the one hand, the “harder” disciplines like economics, sociology, political science, or even history and anthropology, which claim to be relying on “factual” evidence and to be providing more “objective” and verifiable truths and, on the other hand, the “softer” approaches like discourse analysis, rhetoric, and cultural studies, especially when they espouse post-structuralist and leftist agendas. It may be that postcommunism has generated its own divisions and hierarchies of knowledge, different locally than in the West, in the same way that postcolonialism has, both part of the “Cold War division of intellectual labor” (Pletsch 1981, Chari and Verdery 2009).

On the other hand, it is to be expected, perhaps, that, in a culture which has been submitted for decades to a blatant distortion and mystification of both past and present events, to a sweeping and unashamed propagandistic campaign consisting of lies, defamation, and a reversal of broadly acceptable moral standards, the first order of business would be to restore the basic “facts” or “truths” about the past (especially the recent history of crimes and abuses). The priority in such contexts is to reestablish a firm and more “natural” system of values that would prevent further slippage and capsizing in the future, rather than to insist on the interpretive and rhetorical nature of our “truths”, on the inaccessibility of ultimate “facts”, on the in-built indeterminacy and ambiguity of all knowledge, or on the relative nature of moral values.

This justifiable bias, given the circumstances of emerging from communist dictatorship, is seen not just in certain scholars and intellectuals, but also in most citizens of postcommunist countries.

With no acceptable cure or compensation for their communist trauma, postcommunist societies may be expected to backlash and, in a rather perverse twist of fate, mimic the intolerance of their former oppressor. The ideological wars both in the scholarly disciplines and in society at large are consequently fierce and the opponent is often deemed not just wrong, but unacceptable and not even entitled to the opportunity to voice and exercise his/her options.

Under the circumstances, it often proves an uphill battle to promote analogies with the postcolonial condition and advocate theoretical infusions from postcolonial cultural studies. Various scholars have recently pressed for a connection and recontextualization of postcommunism and postcolonialism, as well as for devising new multidisciplinary approaches. However, there is still considerable apathy in the greater part of the academic community which displays inertial attitudes when it comes to this association. What is sorely missed from this rejected analogy is an understanding of the full extent and real nature of domination—whether (post)colonial, (post)communist or otherwise—of the problematic nature of power relations, of the ubiquity of discrimination, exploitation, and repression, which are just as likely to be found in capitalism and communism, in liberal individualism and in Marxist collectivism, in the West and in the East. Postcommunist studies could also benefit from the focus on the posttraumatic subject and from the subtle instruments for analyzing mind, discourse, and power relations that were developed over the past half-century by postmodern, poststructuralist, and postcolonial critics. Postcolonial studies would in turn benefit from the opportunity to revise and sharpen their theoretical and ideological grounding by looking at the intricacies, subtleties, and complexities of communist imperial/colonial forms of domination which include colonization in all its forms: semi-colonization, double colonization, self-colonizing (Kiossev), reverse-cultural colonization (Chioni-Moore), and “filtered” or secondary colonialism (Tötösy de Zepetnek).

Chioni-Moore has made an eloquent case for the connection between the two regions and areas of expertise and invited that “the term

‘postcolonial,’ and everything that goes with it – language, economy, politics, resistance, liberation and its hangover – might reasonably be applied to the formerly Russo- and Soviet-controlled regions post-1989 and -1991, just as it has been applied to South Asia post-1947 or Africa post-1958” (115). Other critics have also insisted that there are certain features that postcommunist and postcolonial societies share such as the experience of trauma (Kiossev 1999, Şandru 2005, Sztompka 2000, Ştefănescu 2009), hybridity and liminality (Oţoiu 2003, Mihăilă 2005), dependency and marginalization, structures of inclusion / exclusion, structures of othering, renegotiations of cultural / political identity (Şandru 2005: 37), as well as “durable external influences on sociopolitical [and economic] development” of the colonized (Carey and Raciborski 214).

In this light, postcolonial and postcommunist countries can be seen as (post)imperialist victim-cultures whose identities have been violated by a foreign oppressor and are now recovering in a posttraumatic interval. Despite the obvious differences between the particular contexts of occupation, submission and liberation, and irrespective of whether there was a body of water between them and the imperial force that subdued them, or whether they were conceived as the West’s religious, racial, ethnic or ideological Other, the generic historical situation of postcommunist and postcolonial societies is analogous: they are cultural communities that were conquered and marginalized by modern empires, they fought for liberation and emancipation, they achieved state-independence, and they engaged in national (re) construction and in the political and aesthetic restoration of their cultural identity.

From the perspective of postcolonial criticism, the polarization of reformist elites in postcommunist Romania may be viewed as a double process in which its cultural identity is both decolonized and neo- (or re-)colonized. The 1989 radical rejection of the *coercive* communist domination was supplemented by the rediscovery of an older form of *consensual* domination by Western culture, a “self-colonization”, to use the term coined by Alexander Kiossev in his controversial article *Notes on Self-colonising Cultures* to describe self-

inflicted identity traumas in Eastern European postcommunism.

The process of modernization in Romania both before and after the communist interlude often took this half-masochistic form of submissiveness. While Westernizing/modernizing the country was appreciated then and now as a strategy for recovering from Turkish, or Soviet domination, the fact remains that Romanian culture willfully positions itself as subaltern, minor, peripheral to a superior West. Since the latter cultural asymmetry is traditionally conceived as more “natural” in canonical accounts of Romanian history, the self-colonized subjects are placed in the perplexing situation where their emancipation and assimilation to the “civilized world” and to “universal culture” is achieved by embracing a subservient status and succumbing to a self-mutilating shame.

Ironically, this new colonization is duplicitous and perplexing. The coveted Western critical paradigm, which informs not just scholastic pursuits, but also public projects for social reform, lacks homogeneity and proves, in fact, to be a *Janus bifrons*: to some it offers the traditional values of capitalism and liberal humanism, to others the rebellious Marxist ideals of many Western scholars in the humanities. Moreover, as shown in section 1.4 above, the liberal and radical discourses are dislodged from their usual Western contexts and are transposed in a postcommunist situation where their significance and function undergo a process of conversion.

Additional complications arise from the reemergence in the cultural public sphere of several formerly suppressed and marginalized competitors: the discourse of precommunist interwar modernism, the discourse of the late modernism of the 1960s, the postmodernist discourse of the 1980s. Not least of all, an anticommunist realism of a documentary nature (operating as a counter-discourse to the mandatory socialist realism) was now free to engage fully the sordid and scandalous aspects of “real” life under communist totalitarianism, without fear of censorship and persecution.

NOTES

- (1) The contextual reversal of the political function of Marxism and liberal humanism is but one in a fas-

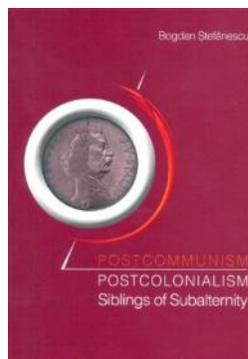
inating series of overturns typical of the emancipative discourse of the humanities in postcommunist Romania. Whereas postcolonial studies aim to re-read the context of oppression by bringing a new understanding of culture as directly engaged in, and instrumental to power struggles, a number of important cultural personalities in Romania still evoke theories of the autonomy of philosophy or of the aesthetic. These idealist precommunist vestiges still earn a good deal of public respect in postcommunist Romania, as they continue to be perceived as a subversive strategy of resistance against communist dictatorship through culture (usually conceived as a Eurocentric high-culture canon).

- (2) I am using the terms *kairos* and *kairology* devoid of their significance for theologians and motivational gurus and more in keeping with the rhetorical understanding of the opportunity for discourse.
- (3) Such is, for instance, Michael Hechter’s discussion of the relationship between center and Celtic fringes in the British Isles or the African-American activists Eldridge Cleaver, Kenneth Clark, and Stokely Carmichael on the coloniality of Blacks in the United States.
- (4) The concept of “interference” was put forth by Sorin Alexandrescu in his study on the fractured Romanian identity (*Identitate în ruptură* 12, 35-42).

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Florida Atlantic University, March 2015. Conference organizer, Dr. Marin with Dr. Ștefănescu who presented part of his book as a keynote speaker. The conference was sponsored by the Peace Studies Program on colonizing discourse as part of Eastern European and Eurasian Studies.

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