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Newsletter

Volume 16, no. 2, December 1999

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The RSAA Newsletter is published twice a year.

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REMINDER: All RSAA members who have changed their mailing address and institutional affiliation, or who now also have an e-mail address, are kindly requested to update these data by contacting the editor. he is also collecting the dues (\$10.00) for 2000: please send him your checks (payable to RSAA) as soon as possible. It's never too late!

EDITOR'S NOTE

The new and improved version of the RSAA Newsletter has been made possible through the generous financial support of the Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The funds needed for the production of this newsletter have been provided from the Center's Title VI budget allocated by the U.S. Department of Education.

Having more space, this publication will accommodate not only the usual brief announcements, but also longer contributions submitted by RSAA members who, thus have the opportunity to share their worthy endeavors of enriching the study of the Romanian cultural space. Therefore, I would like to reiterate and strongly encourage my invitation that every one of our readers send in materials concerning their current work and research (presentations of events relevant to Romanian studies, work in progress, books recently published or in print, shorter scholarly papers or their abstracts, academic initiatives, etc.). Their publication in the Newsletter will faithfully mirror the rich and diverse preoccupations of the RSAA members and, at the same time, may turn this periodical into a forum of frank and constructive discussion to the benefit of all. Please accept this challenging invitation!

With all best wishes for the New Year, La multi ani!

Nicolae Harsanyi
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

RSAA on the Web

<http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/RSAA/index.html>

Since the beginning of 1999, thanks to Professor Călin-Andrei Mihăilescu, RSAA has a home page maintained at the University of Western Ontario. You can have easy access to the RSAA by-laws, to the panels at the MLA conventions in San Francisco (1998) and Chicago (1999), as well as to past and present issues of the Newsletter. Please bookmark this site!

1999 MLA Convention, Chicago, IL

Panel # 31 Eastern Fantasies: Memoir, Romance, and Transactions of Identity in Mircea Eliade's and Maitreyi Devi's Fiction

Program arranged by the Romanian Studies Association of America

Monday, 27 December 1999, 3:30-4:45 p.m., Parlor F, Sheraton

CHAIR: Christian Moraru, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

1. "'The Illustration to Some Oriental Tale': Romantic Transgressions in the Forbidden Zone," Nandi Bhatia, University of Western Ontario
2. "Bengali Nights and It Does not Die: The Books Behind the Book," Peter Glenn Christensen, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
3. "The Class Ideology of Representation in Mircea Eliade's Bengali Nights and Maitreyi Devi's Na Hanyate," Ayan Kumar Gangopadhyay, Javadpur University, Calcutta, India
4. "The Extreme Orient of Desire: Genre, Gender, and the Politics of Orientalism in Eliade and Devi," Christian Moraru and Yumna Siddiqi, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Panel # 299 Feminine Figures in Romanian and Balkan Modern Literature

Program arranged by the Romanian Studies Association of America

Tuesday, 28 December 1999, 1:45-3:00 p.m., Colorado, Sheraton

CHAIR: Domnica Radulescu, Washington and Lee University

1. "Torn between the Balkans: Slavenka Drakulic and Her Quest for Identity," Noemi Marin, University

of Maryland, College Park.

2. "The Romanian Literary Canon and Violence against Women," Lucia Cherciu, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
3. "Portrayal of the Romanian Woman-Peasant Character in Ag>rbiceanu's Fefelega," Ileana Orlich, Arizona State University, Tempe

Panel # 477 It's Ending, It's Not: Malaise à Roumaine à la Fin du Siècle

Program organized by the Discussion Group on Romanian Studies

Wednesday, 29 December 1999, 10:15-11:30 a.m., Superior B, Sheraton

1. "Entre Orient et Crépuscule: Dreaming of the End in Mateiu I. Caragiale's Craii de Curtea Veche," Ramona M. UriŪescu, Harvard University
2. "It's the End of the World," Anca Mitroi, Brigham Young University, UT
3. "The End Is a Bend: Dissolving Beauty and Light Death à la Roumaine in Thomas Mann and Milan Kundera, Rodica C. Ieta, University of Western Ontario
4. "Andrei Codrescu's Millennial Novel Messiah," Kirby Olson, Tampere Polytechnic University, Finland

Panel # 716 Open Meeting on Central and East European Literatures Arranged by the Discussion Groups on Hungarian Literature, Slavic Literatures and Cultures, and Romanian Studies

Wednesday, 29 December 1999, 9:00-10:15 p.m., Parlor D, Sheraton

LOOKING BACK AT THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS

My first participation in an RSAA meeting took place in 1983, at a time when I was still trying to figure out not only the complexities of American academic life but also more basic everyday routines in a new country. I had come to the US with my wife (our young children were not allowed by the Ceausescu regime to accompany us), with two suitcases and a lot of hopes and projects. The New York MLA Convention was the first big conference I attended and I would have felt lost and overwhelmed were it not for the very friendly reception I received from members of the RSAA and its president Maria Manoliu Manea. After I gave my paper at one of the two sessions organized by RSAA, Ion Manea interviewed me for "Radio Free Europe" and I spent a few pleasant hours with him, Maria, and a few other members that represented the core of the organization at the time. The draconic Ceausescu regime back home was on all our minds. The words of support that I and my wife received from RSAA colleagues sturried us through the following months of battle with the Romanian authorities trying to get our children (aged 4 and a half and 2) to the States.

Over the following years I witnessed the organization grow significantly, attracting not only American scholars interested in Romanian studies (from Michael Impey and Adam J. Sorkin to Peter G. Christensen), but also a new wave of refugee scholars and writers from Romania (Dorin Tudoran, Nicolae Harsanyi, Cristian Moraru, Calin-Andrei Mihailescu, and so on). While chairing the organization between 1991-1994 I also tried to rekindle the interest of important Romanian-American scholars and writers like Matei Calinescu, Virgil Nemoianu, Mihai Spariosu and Andrei Codrescu in our annual meetings, enhancing the quality of our work and providing (alongside founding members like Maria Manoliu Manea) a form of mentorship for the younger generation. The middle ground between these generations was bridged by inspired, hard working scholars like Alexandra Gruzinska, Ileana Orlich, and Domnita Dumitrescu. RSAA finally had depth, spanning several generations of researchers and a variety of fields, from more traditional areas to newly established theoretical-interdisciplinary ones. Confident that our organization could afford to leave behind certain vestiges of parochialism, I encouraged RSAA members to propose cross-cultural and interdisciplinary topics that, without sacrificing the Romanian focus, would contextualize the discussion in ways that would

make it interesting to other members of the MLA. Our sessions, often focused on topical themes such as the role of the press and of the literary culture in the post-Cold War transition, have managed to attract scholars of related East Central European cultures and even comparativists with Western European or non-European focus. It is encouraging to see that the RSAA has not lost momentum after the 1989 events, that it has, on the contrary, grown in maturity and range of preoccupations, setting the agenda for much of the post-copmmunist/post Cold War discussions at the MLA Conventions. I wish our organization another 25 years of continued growth and great achievements.

Marcel Cornis-Pope
Former President of RSAA

NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN ROMANIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

At the 24th Congress of the American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences (ARA), held in Liege, Belgium, (July 21-14, 1999), Professors Raymonde Bulger and Aleksandra Gruzinska were conferred the ARA Awards for 1999. Congratulations!!!

The 25th ARA Congress 2000 will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, between July 12-16, 2000. The Chairman is Dr. Petru Cocârteu, and Prof. Dr. Nicolae Pavel and Prof. Dr. H.E. Chodosh are the Co-chairmen. For more information, please contact Dr. Monica Grecu, ARA's Secretary General (Dept. of English, University of Nevada at Reno, Reno, Nevada 89557-0077, <grecu@unr.edu>

The ARA Newsletter, edited by Professor Aleksandra Gruzinska is available on the Web at the following address: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~gzl747>

NEW BOOKS AND JOURNALS

Gruzinska, Aleksandra, Editor, *Essays on E. M. Cioran. (R|Ōinari 1911 - Paris 1995)*, Costa Mesa, CA: A.R.A. Publications, 1999, 225 p. ISBN 9975-910-82-3. \$30.00 (includes shipping).

The essays cover a wide variety of subjects and critical approaches. Contributors to this volume explore how Cioran was influenced by Romanian culture, the reception of his works in America, his treatment of history, and the arduous trajectory that led the Romanian philosopher to become a "French" writer. Cioran's preoccupation with our humanity and his reflections on it treat of insomnia and despair, tears and saints, solitude, admiration and friendship, death and God, and more. These ageless human preoccupations become renewed thanks to Cioran's special (though not unique) experience as a "bilingual" write in exile and one who was quite a "linguist" in his own right. It is Cioran's passion and his vision of the world, but mostly his attention to and obsession with style, that provide these themes with new life. French and English.

Antoine Pecquet, *Diverse Thoughts on Man*, translated by Murray D. Sirkis and Aleksandra Gruzinska. (The Age of Revolution and Romanticism. Interdisciplinary Studies. Vol. 27). New York, Washington, D.C./Baltimore, Boston, Bern, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Canterbury: Peter Lang, 1999. ISBN 0-8204-4452-9 ISSN 1045-4497.

This book is a translation of *Pensées diverses sur l'homme* by Antoine Pecquet who wrote in the eighteenth century during the reign of Louis XV. Although he included Pascal among those he admired, he considered Alexander Pope his true mentor. In Part 1 of *Diverse Thoughts on Man*, Pecquet reflects on the Man's responsibilities as an individual; in Part 2, on Man's responsibilities as a member of society. Among the responsibilities he included human and social concerns, such as parental and filial obligations, and the transfer

of wealth between generations. In the tradition of Montaigne, Pecquet intended his *Diverse Thoughts on Man* to help his readers learn more about themselves. Although he felt that those who would profit most from his book were readers who had not greatly pondered about themselves, he believed that every reader could find something of value in it.

A volume on oral and literary epic co-edited by Margaret Beissinger (University of Wisconsin) has appeared as Margaret Beissinger, Jane Tylus, & Susanne Wofford, eds., *EPIC TRADITIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: THE POETICS OF COMMUNITY* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999]. Her contribution is "Epic, Gender, and Nationalism: The Development of 19th century Balkan Literature."

THE ROMANIAN JOURNAL OF LIBERAL ARTS is a semi-annual English-language publication of the Civic Education Project, presenting a new forum for the scholarly exchange of contemporary research in the humanities and social sciences.

Among the essays and articles featured in the first issue, (Fall 1999):

- "Falling Through Time With Cioran," by Michael A. Weinstein;
- "The Island of Euthanasius or Identity Through Utopia and Parody," by Mihaela Czobor
- "The Metaphysics and Morality of Desacralization in Mircea Eliade," by James P. Cadello
- "Brâncuși's Endless Column and Park at Târgu Jiu," by Ann Albritton

As the first liberal arts journal in Romania, the RJLA seeks to encourage dialogue and debate with the expectation that scholars from different disciplines will develop research partnerships. The journal accepts original and significant research on Romania and its physical and cultural environs. Editors of the journal also welcome review articles as well as essays that respond to articles that have been published in the journal. By publishing in English, editors of the RJLA hope to advance knowledge of Romanian society and culture to a broad-based international audience.

Free copies of the RJLA are available from the Civic Education Project, Inc. (CEP).

For more information about obtaining copies of the Romanian Journal of Liberal Arts, or to submit articles or correspondence write to: Editor, Romanian Journal of Liberal Arts, Civic Education Project, P.O. Box 22-196, Bucuresti, Romania (or, email=yloidi@dent.ro).

IREX offers travel grants for scholarly projects in the humanities and social sciences involving Central and Eastern Europe. Support is available for brief visits (about two weeks) for individuals who do not require administrative assistance from IREX. Projects should demonstrate academic merit and relevance for the American academic community studying these regions, as well as a positive impact on public, cultural and historical knowledge of these regions through dissemination of research results.

Grant provisions:

- Grants do not exceed \$3,000.
- Per diem for up to 14 days, not to exceed \$100/day (for food, lodging, and local transport only).
- The grant may cover incidental expenses, such as conference registration fees, visa fees, and research expenses.

Application and Review Process:

- Application deadlines: February 1, 2000; and June 1, 2000.
- Review by a rotating panel of experts.

Limitations:

- Individuals may apply for only one trip and one project per application deadline.
- IREX-funded project activity must be completed within one year of the application deadline.

Activities Funded by these Grants:

- Individual scholarly research visits to archives, libraries, museums, etc., or for conducting interviews.
- Presentations at scholarly conferences focused on and located in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Collaborative projects such as joint publications or comparative surveys.
- Limited funding is available for support of international scholars from IREX's program countries for collaborative research in the United States.

* More information is available at: www.irex.org/programs/stg/stg-about.htm

Romanian Studies Association of America

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