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#### EAAS Board

**Dear Colleagues,**

**With the biennial RAAS Conference due to take place in 2008, our forum hasn't met this year. Yet, through the RAAS publications and especially through the e-network, the RAAS Board tried to keep you all informed about our members' activities and initiatives and to bring to your attention opportunities to publish articles and reviews, to apply for various grants and programs and to attend national and international conferences.**

This issue of the Newsletter will hopefully give you an idea about current activities in various parts of Romania. Within the framework provided by the Association, a challenging exchange of ideas and

In other words, we should use all the avenues opened to us by the Association so as to maximize our American Studies activities and at the same time make them/us known nationally and internationally.

As in the past, the RAAS has received constant and generous support from the U.S. Embassy and the Fulbright Commission, for which we are extremely grateful.

We expect a large number of our members to participate in the biennial RAAS-Fulbright Conference "The Sense of America: Histories into Text" (May 22-24, 2008). Though May is a very busy month as far as conferences go, the date was selected in view of a wide attendance by both Romanian and American scholars. As in the past, the association will try to

# Letter from the President

experiences between American Studies programs across the country, has proved instrumental in the elaboration of new two-year graduate programs. Among other achievements I want to stress the initiative of the American Cultural Center and our Bucharest branch to organize student conferences on American topics. Two such conferences were hosted by the American Cultural Center in Bucharest ("Benjamin Franklin", March 2006; "400 Years of New World-Old World Exchanges", April 2007). Taking the lead, it is possible to organize similar conferences at the American Corners opened now in all the main cities of Romania. Since I've mentioned the American Corners I want to remind you of the rich and up-to-date resources of most of these centers. The American Corner in Cluj, for instance, has a remarkable collection of contemporary literature and recent cultural studies. We should take full advantage of such resources and the possibility of making suggestions for future book orders. Similarly, our members should try to benefit from the invitations sent to RAAS, asking for contributions to such international journals as The Journal of Transatlantic Studies, The European Journal of American Studies, AMERICANA- E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary.

make participation an affordable and enjoyable cultural and scholarly event.

The other important American Studies event of the next year is the EAAS biennial Conference in Oslo, 9-12 May, 2008. The Conference program has been published in the May issue of the online ASE Newsletter. Don't hesitate to submit paper proposals and don't be discouraged by the difficulty of getting funded - it's good to remember that six RAAS members participated in the previous EAAS Conference in Nicosia! I am glad to inform you that our colleague, Michaela Mudure, will co-chair one of the sessions; her proposal was selected from among a great number of proposals.

The last set of issues I want to share with you have been raised at the EAAS Board meeting in Wittenberg, 12-15 April, 2007. The EAAS has diversified and intensified its efforts of making the European contributions to American Studies better known across national borders and of providing better opportunities for establishing productive relations among European Americanists. The online EJAS (European Journal of American Studies) and the EAAS Book Reviews Section welcome more contributions from EAAS members. The EAAS website hosts "International Networks"

*continued in p. 3*

## A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

# Ars Docendi: the American Studies

**Do you consider yourself prejudiced? Well, everyone is prejudiced, to a certain extent and from a certain point of view. I myself was prejudiced against America and Americans and this happened merely because media sold me stereotypes, big, fat stereotypes of people and not real humans. Usually non-American people tend to glide between two stereotypical perspectives of America: either the sunny, glamorous land of all possibilities, where anyone can fulfill his/her rags-to-riches dream, or the place without any cultural background, with a bloody and miserable history, the place where everything produced is superficial and worthless and the place where people are heavily manipulated under the rule of a challengeable president. The truth is obviously somewhere in between and none of the above, as all truths are somewhat elusive.**

As a freshman student in the American Studies Program at the School of Foreign Languages in Bucharest, I have begun to grasp certain notions of Americanism in such a way that their ideologies are much clearer to me now. I have learned that for every result there is a cause, that people are such multi-faceted entities, that a country has so much to offer if you open your eyes and take everything in with a clear mind. What I have grown to see as most important about Americans is their diversity. There are surely negative examples, media excess, manipulation etc., but then, did you have a good look at those people who fight against the regime, the preconceptions, the discrimination and the racism? Did you listen to people like Martin Luther King, jazz music or read authors like Kurt Vonnegut, because, if you didn't, you don't know everything about America.

The reason why I applied for the American Studies Department was that my English teacher advised me that the professors are much more open-minded here and the courses are much more diverse than in any other place. I knew nothing about the program, about the curriculum or the teachers. The truth is that I wanted to study British literature. And there I was, in the application room, with a huge list in front of me and asked to select the languages I wanted to study. So I ticked American Studies more out of instinct. After one year of study, it turns out that the professors are indeed more open-minded, having so many ideas to share with us, eager to materialize so many initiatives, and, after all, eager to listen to us and exchange thoughts with us. Then, the curriculum at American Studies is much more diverse than I expected, with courses ranging from politics, common law, literature, art (film, visual arts, etc.), anthropology and many more. This curriculum is constructed in order to create a full perspective of the American society and the American way of life. Taking into consideration the fact that The United States have set important trends in many social areas for a century now, I believe that to understand American institutions and American social entities means to understand many American

imports in any country of the world, such as the concept of corporation, the Hollywood industry, pop culture and so on.

Being a part of this "American" group, I was rather shocked to notice that my ideas really matter for someone, that people are there to listen to you and to hold a conversation inter pares. The papers, when presented, were fully read, discussed upon later and marked appropriately. This may be no reason of wonder for many foreign students, but it is to me, because I was usually part of automatic and superficial systems of education. Moreover, our professors have always offered us such a rich material for discussion, ranging from films, to articles, to books, not to mention that we were granted access to an American library that holds a multitude of titles. Being given such a range of opportunities and feedback, we obviously responded with a positive reaction, even those of us who feel no special calling for humanistic studies.

When it comes to extra-curricular activities, we were almost bombed with so many conferences, parties and exhibits that we barely kept pace with them. Maybe the most flabbergasting was our conference with Francis Ford Coppola, who turned out to be a very normal man, with a normal family and a normal life, but such an open man for his widely acknowledged fame as a director. Then, we had a student conference, where, after hearing a Native American professor speak, many of us 1st year students held our first public presentation, a very special and frightening experience. We've also had videoconferences with Dr. Henrietta Mann, a Native American Professor at Montana State University. All these were hosted by the American Cultural Center that acted like our surrogate mother each time it organized some American-based project. Furthermore, each American or international celebration had a party of its own, with theme-based food and drinks and films. I also won't forget to mention an exhibit of our own with Native American poetry and posters designed by us. Last but not least, our professors came up with the idea to organize an Earth Day action recently, when students and teachers tried to collect the garbage that adorns our lovely parks.

But, hey! Let's forget about everything, all the studies, all the extra-curricular activities, all the stuff that will one day add up in our CVs, all the things we were taught, all the knowledge we acquired. This should not turn into a propaganda article for the American Studies Department, although all the praise is deserved. The fact is that what still keeps me standing here is that I am treated with interest, that I am understood and helped and praised as well. Maybe what I feel is just a selfish like for this group. But the best part is that I've noticed in one of our meetings, that the professors felt as happy and as fulfilled for our success as we did. And it was a sincere happiness, which made me proud to have them as my professors. Maybe this is what still keeps me standing here: pure human connections.

*Alexandra Magearu  
(1st year student)*

## A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

# Department in Bucharest

**I don't think any of us knew what to expect of our American Studies minor in the fall of 2003. At least, I didn't. I applied here because it seemed to be the most appealing of all the other options for a minor. Sure, we all had to decide whether to choose American Studies over the possibility of taking a second language, but I think what attracted us here was the "promise" of it.**

To be honest, in one way or another we all wanted to be a part of something special, and I think that defined us as freshmen. Which is not to say that, in retrospect, we would envision ourselves as the ideal, eager students that every teacher could hope for. I mean, we could say that, but let's not embarrass ourselves, our reputation precedes us. Someone once said there's a reason why it's called the student body – because the head is nowhere to be found. We wanted to stand out of the crowd, for sure, but like any freshmen "freshly" discharged from the battle of admission, we couldn't wait to find a cozy little spot where we could put our feet up and enjoy the ride. We would soon find out, of course, that room 4 was not that place. Not for lack of coziness, but because, from my point of view, you missed out on a lot of good stuff that made for a very fun ride, one that lasted for four enjoyable years.

Of course, like I said, it wasn't what we expected. The film studies class wasn't exactly popcorn and HD. Instead we learned to actually think deeper into films and understand cinema as an art form that expresses as much through technique as it does through content. It was a heck of a start, while also opening the way for new vistas that were broader than we had imagined in terms of understanding and exposure to culture through education. I know that this is what education is mainly supposed to do, but... we've all been there. It was the passion and the inspiration of our young teachers, and I'm referring to all of them now because I believe

youth has little to do with biology, that brought so much fun and interest into the classroom. Even the grueling subject of American politics was patiently spoon-fed even to the most bohemian in our ranks, describing in detail how judicial cases can make for the one of the most interesting approaches to understanding the stages of a nation's history, and making a particular political history teacher's courses to be the most sought after by my colleagues come fourth year.

The Visual Arts course that we literally crashed into in our second semester had all the impact of a happening and all the deliciousness of an installation, while the African-American course that followed shined through our exposure to the underrated beauty of a Langston Hughes poem or the elegance of a turn of the phrase by Maya Angelou.

Cultural Anthropology was, honestly speaking, an arduous undertaking, that was nevertheless worth going through, for the worth of its information and the engaging presentation which, although painfully rigorous at times, was exceedingly worthy of receiving a big bunch of yams come semester's end. I am of course assured that every anthropologically astute colleague of mine will know what I'm talking about.

Though covering every course we took is not possible here, they all contributed to a greater degree of understanding so much more about the mechanisms and particularities of the American presence and influence that we are all aware of in our everyday lives. The benefit of lectures from American teachers was of course a very welcomed endeavor in that sense, as was the increasingly well stocked library and welcoming atmosphere in the American Studies Reading Room.

By the end of the fourth year I would have to say it really wasn't like school at all. It was, simply put, a great, useful, enjoyable experience. And there was not a single moment that it was not totally cool.

*Eliza Ghițulescu  
(4th year)*

*continued from p. 1*

such as "American Studies Network" and "The Postgraduate Forum", which encourage links between various national associations and joint national doctoral caucuses, respectively. (The RAAS representative in the Postgraduate Forum is Dana Mihailescu, [dmihailes@yahoo.com](mailto:dmihailes@yahoo.com)).

The growth of American Studies in Europe, especially in the former communist countries, has been confirmed once more by the unanimous vote of the EAAS Board in favor of Bulgaria's application for membership. Thus the Bulgarian American Studies Association (BASA) has become the 23rd national/regional member of the EAAS.

BASA's membership has reactivated an older debate over the need for more regional, joint associations within EAAS after the model offered by the Scandinavian Association for American Studies, the Spanish and Portuguese Association and the Check and Slovak Association. These joint associations are represented on the EAAS board by one member, each national association taking turns.

Pointing out that the question of joint associations is a structural issue that has to be addressed sooner or later, EAAS president, Marc Chenetier, suggested that Romania and Bulgaria, as countries accepted in the EU together, form such a joint association, but the suggestion was dropped for the time being, when the board decided that each national association should first ask its members' opinion about the best solution for the future of EAAS membership. The question of joint/regional associations will be raised again in the next EAAS board meeting in Oslo. In the meantime, the RAAS board will circulate a questionnaire on this subject which needs to be answered by all our members.

The EAAS board also chose Dublin and Halle to be the Conference venues for 2010 and 2012.

Urging you again to send us your updated addresses so as to benefit from all the announcements and the information we share with all our members, on behalf of our board I wish you all a well deserved summer vacation after the ordeal of the exams is over.

*Warm regards,  
Rodica Mihăilă,  
RAAS President*

A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

# U.S. Embassy Events



## **The Opening of American Corner, Bucharest, March 2007**

Under an agreement with the U.S. Embassy in Romania, the Pedagogical Library has set aside one of its beautiful rooms to house a collection of books, videos, CDs and DVDs and other materials about the United States donated by the Embassy. The donation also includes furniture, computers and other audiovisual equipment.

This collection will be managed by a professional librarian provided by the Library, and will be accessible to the public during regular business hours. A wide variety of materials is made available here, states Ambassador Taubman in his opening speech, "from basic reference collections to great works of American literature, from books about baseball to documentaries about American jazz. There is, we hope, something here for every interest."

This agreement, His Excellency added, is part of an important new library program. "Starting in 2005, we began establishing partnerships with libraries around Romania to set aside rooms for American Corners collections of American materials and audiovisual equipment. Since then, we have opened Corners in Bacau, Baia Mare, Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Craiova, Iasi and Timisoara. Each of these Corners have become important centers for American culture, hosting programs and providing information to interested Romanians of all ages."

Bucharest is the eighth Corner, completing a plan to make American library resources available throughout the country. America, concluded Ambassador



Taubman, "stands ready to continue to help Romania, one of our closest friends and partners. This is why we are here today. We are here to help invest in Romania's future, by investing in its people through one of its most democratic institutions, the public library."

## **Landmarks of New York Exhibit**

**Bucharest City Museum,  
March 20, 2007**



The exhibit Landmarks of New York was one of a series of cultural events dedicated to celebrating New York in Bucharest. Ambassador Nicholas Taubman, opening this event, stated that New York - as "America's most important city, its cultural capital, an economic giant and the first stop for many foreigners who come to the United States" - also "offers a lesson on historic preservation, one that perhaps has some meaning for Bucharest". This exhibit was organized "to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the enactment of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Law. Since its passage in 1965, New York has been in the forefront of what has become an established worldwide historic preservation movement. In New York, this law protects nearly 23,000 structures - from parks and individual trees, to piers and bridges, cemeteries and archeological sites, as well as theatres, factories, museums and forts", added His Excellency Ambassador Nicholas Taubman, emphasizing that the exhibition is meant to celebrate the strong ties between Bucharest and New York, be they through family, business, education or culture.

## **U.S. Embassy Black History Month, February 2007**

Originally established as Negro History Week in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, a noted African-American author and scholar, this event evolved into the establishment of February as "Black History Month" in 1976. The goal of Black History Month is to increase awareness of the terrible consequences of discrimination and acknowledge the strength and character of the black Americans who overcame those obstacles in order to accomplish great things.

During Black History Month, the struggles and accomplishments of black Americans are recognized and special attention is given to their remarkable contributions to American history and culture.

The American Embassy celebrated Black History Month with a number of public lectures and other programs, including a week-long film festival for over 300 students from local high schools. After a brief introduction, the students participated in a lively discussion on the parallels between the treatment of African-Americans and the treatment of Roma. Students then watched a film, selected by their teachers, that illustrates the spirit of Black History Month. The films shown during the week were Glory, Finding Forrester, Mississippi Burning, and The Color Purple.

A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

**2007/08 FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS**

**1. Dr. Robert Eugene ROEMER**

**Arrival:** October 07 – 9 months  
**Topic:** Education, Multiculturalism, and Democracy  
**Romanian University:** University of Bucharest  
**Home University:** Loyola University Chicago, IL

**2. Dr. Domnica Vera-Maria RADULESCU**

**Arrival:** October 07 – 5 months  
**Topic:** Theater and Gender - Theoretical, Performative, and Historical Perspectives; Women in Contemporary Romanian Theater  
**Romanian University:** Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj  
**Home University:** Washington and Lee University, VA

**3. Ms. Rhoda Leslie LIPTON**

**Arrival:** February 08 – 5 months  
**Topic:** Broadcast Journalism: Reporting, Images, Free Press & Curriculum Development  
**Romanian University:** Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj  
**Home Institution:** Columbia University, NY

**4. Dr. Carolyn Marcia KEELER**

**Arrival:** February 08 – 5 months  
**Topic:** Cultural Issues in Teaching and Learning: Teaching methods, curriculum, and assessment that promote an inclusive, culturally responsive environment; Leadership in Romanian and **American schools:** A cross-cultural view  
**Romanian University:** University Ovidius of Constanta  
**Home University:** University of Idaho

**5. Dr. George Martin IZZO**

**Arrival:** October 2007 – 9 months  
**Topic:** Experiential Marketing: Enhancing Romanian Students Learning Experience; A Comparative Assessment

of Marketing  
 Curricula in Romania and the United States  
**Romanian University:** Al.I Cuza University of Iasi  
**Home University:** North Georgia College and State University

**6. Dr. Robert Todd IVES**

**Arrival:** February 2008 – 5 months  
**Topic:** Special Education (SPED) teaching and research methods; SPED development in Romania  
**Romanian University:** Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj  
**Home University:** University of Nevada – Reno

**7. Dr. Sanda CLEJAN**

**Arrival:** Oct. 2007 – 5 months  
**Topic:** Design, Promotion, Implementation and Management of Grants and Technology Transfer  
**Romanian University:** Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest  
**Home University:** Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

**8. Dr. Mark Christopher ALLISTER**

**Arrival:** February 2008 – 5 months  
**Topic:** Teaching American Studies in Romania: environmental literature, autobiography, American popular culture  
**Romanian University:** University of Bucharest  
**Home University:** St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN

**9. Dr. Christopher Scot BAKKEN**

**Arrival:** February 2008 – 5 months  
**Topic:** Modern Poetry; Poetry in Translation; American Literature; Caribbean Literature  
**Romanian University:** University of Bucharest  
**Home University:** Allegheny College, Meadville, PA

**2007/08 FULBRIGHT JUNIORS**

*arrivals in late September, for a total of 9 months*

**1. Ms Noushan NOUREDDINI**

**Topic:** Political Science, Misc.  
**Romanian University:** Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj  
**Home University:** University of Nebraska, Lincoln

**3. Mr. David Perry JESSE**

**Topic:** Sociology, Misc.  
**Romanian University:** University of Bucharest  
**Home University:** Iowa State University

**5. Ms Meghan A. MYERS**

**Topic:** Teaching English As A Foreign Language & Advising  
**Romanian University:** unassigned  
**Home University:** George Washington University graduate

**2. Ms Cristina BEJAN**

**Topic:** Cultural/Intellectual History  
**Romanian University:** University of Bucharest  
**Home University:** Northwestern University

**4. Ms Neah L. MONTEIRO**

**Topic:** Teaching English As A Foreign Language & Advising  
**Romanian University:** unassigned  
**Home University:** College of William & Mary, VA

**6. Ms. Alyssa B. CWANGER**

**Topic:** Photography  
**Romanian University:** University of Bucharest  
**Home University:** University of Pittsburgh, PA

A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

# American Corner

## CONSTANȚA – SPRING 2007

The American Studies Program at Ovidius University – Constanța has benefited from the support of the American Corner on campus since the center was inaugurated over a year ago. The spring joint programs including lectures, screenings and concerts offered American Studies students as well as other participants the chance to broaden their knowledge of the United States.

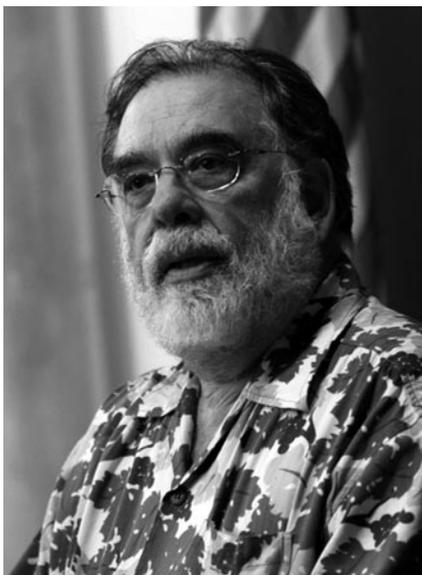
The diversity of topics and insights which the attendees had access to is illustrated by some of the most notable speakers: Robert Tate, Vice Consul of the U.S. Embassy, who presented the most significant trends in American music and played several tunes on his guitar in March or Emery P. Dalesio, journalist and Fulbright professor, who introduced the audience to the latest news by giving a talk entitled "Changes Confronting American Politics, Businesses and Media in 2007" in April.

During the same spring semester, the "Literature and Cinema" screenings at the American Corner included films based on classics by John Steinbeck or Tennessee Williams and directed by Elia Kazan or John Ford. The second year students in American Studies who studied the texts for their Twentieth Century Literature course and developed film analyses under my guidance confirmed that the dialogue between literature and cinema is as enlightening as the dialogue between the American culture and its Romanian reception.

The interest in old films was surpassed by the warmth with which the academic community and the wider audience alike received the American Corner concerts scheduled in Constanța in May. Both the music of the United States Army Europe Band conducted by Major Andrew J. Esch and the interactive art performance of the ICIA Ensemble directed by composer Dinu Ghezzo represented initiations into the American experience. Whether listening to a Dixieland selection by the former or a sequence combining music, video art and

dance improvisations by the latter, the participant was exposed to genuinely American traditions and experiments.

Beyond promoting such events, the American Corner provides all those involved in American Studies with a most valuable permanent book collection that has been substantially increased this spring. A friend and collaborator of the English Department at Ovidius University for a long time, John Quinn generously donated over 2600 volumes that glow on the shelves awaiting their readers. One can only hope that the former owner of these books will as generously lend some of his unremitting love for literature to the American Corner's visitors.



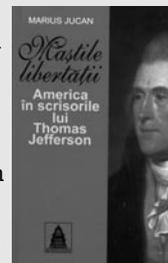
On the occasion of the American Corner's first anniversary on May 17th the center's coordinators, graduate students Senia Babaiani and Anca Vasiliu, screened a filmed interview with Francis Ford Coppola. As the director talked about his coming to Romania to film Mircea Eliade's "Youth without Youth", he unveiled the most surprising circumstances that advanced transatlantic relations in his case and seemed to inadvertently prophesize most surprising transatlantic relations that the American Studies Program will initiate at the American Corner Constanța in the future.

Ludmila Martanovschi

## Marius Jucan. "Măștile libertății. America în scrisorile lui Thomas Jefferson"

Cluj: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2007.

The volume is not attempting a biography of Thomas Jefferson; although a biographical thread can be read between the lines; the interpretation of Thomas Jefferson's letters



focuses on a portrait of America in its beginnings, from the perspective of one of its "authors", whose renown has never stopped being admired, contested, but constantly researched. Thomas Jefferson's letters belong to a time that is unique through its aspirations and contradictions, the 18th century, the constant witness to the question of liberty. By emphasizing the connection with, and departure from Tradition that the Enlightenment brings about, Marius Jucan considered that the term "mask" might better underline the pragmatic understanding of freedom, thus suggesting the metamorphoses of religious, political, economical identity, not least the individual's racial identity and that of the American community at a given time. Without attempting a definitive biography of Jefferson's life and activities, without attempting to exploit the romantic aura of an exceptional personality in relation to the "exceptional" destiny of a nation, Marius Jucan is in fact looking for new "windows" into a plurivalent experience of modernity, the birth of a society which incorporated the symbols of liberalism and democracy. *Măștile libertății* brings proof of a serious and well-argued reading of the essential contribution by one of the founders of the American cultural model.

*Marius Jucan is Programs Director with the American Studies Department at "Babeș-Bolyai" University, Cluj. He is the author of numerous articles and books.*

# Conference Participation



## The Lure of a Heidelberg Spring, May 16-20 2007

Organized by the Center for American Studies at the University of Heidelberg, the 4th HCA Spring Academy well deserves the title of this year's major event for young scholars in the field; all this because it was an intense academic forum for 19 international PhD candidates meeting to discuss their dissertation projects in diverse areas of American Studies.

In keeping with the HCA official mission, to foster interdisciplinarity and intercultural exchange across the Atlantic, the 2007 conference lived up to the expectations given the varied backgrounds of the participants (representing 11 countries – Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Tunisia, the UK, the US) and the diverse topics of research that were broached, ranging from US history and administration policies to politics, literary, ethnic, race and gender studies.

The five days of the conference comprised 10 panels, 4 lectures and outside informal meetings to wind it up. Henceforth sprang the unique character of the scholarly event – plenty of time for in-depth analysis of each presented project by contrast to the usual squeezed schedule of most conferences. You could certainly feel that considering the limited number of participants and the generous time allotted to each speaker – 20 min-

utes for presenting the project and 40 minutes for follow-up discussions and questions.

The initial boost for dialogue was given by "Ms. Spring Academy", Professor Dorothea Fischer-Hornung whose inaugural lecture, "What Is/Are American Studies?", was a survey of the field's history with emphasis on its current challenges. Then, our specific interests were spiced with Professor Nancy Bunge's inspiring lecture about "Writing the American Dream" – an analysis of the patterns behind creative writing programs in the U.S. that suggest a link between American writing and culture. Moving from literature to the field of history, Professor Mary O. Furner from the University of California at Santa Barbara ("the Professional" as we have named her) offered a fascinating talk on the role played by the failure of expectations throughout American history. Finally, Professor Jemeri Suri from the University of Wisconsin honored us with a preview of his new book, scheduled for publication on June 1, 2007 and entitled *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*.

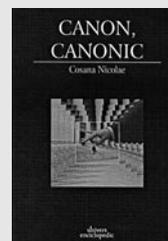
The obvious benefit of these seminal presentations, comments and brainstorming was cross-disciplinary and intercultural exchange. At the end of our stay, we all decided to create a network for young researchers in which learning from the others is to become the keyword.

To be added, the venue of the conference also had a major contribution to its complete success: the Old City of Heidelberg is simply superb and the visit to Heidelberg Castle practically left us speechless. I could not end without mentioning the unexpected role of the sponsor in creating a very closely-knit community among us all as "Deere Friends" (sic!). I really enjoyed my stay in Heidelberg and sincerely hope that other RAAS PhD candidates in American Studies will send their applications for the 2008 Spring Academy and get the chance to feel the Heidelberg experience.

Dana Mihăilescu,  
University of Bucharest

## Cosana Nicolae. "Canon, canonic. Mutații valorice în literatura americană contemporană" București: Univers Enciclopedic, 2006

Winner of the Debut Award of Romania Liberă and one of the five nominees for the Observatorul Cultural Awards, *Canon, Canonic* is an



extensive critical analysis of the concept, evolution, usage and use of these terms. Starting with a history of the terms and on to their evolution, into the present-day usage of the term "canon" in American academia, Cosana Nicolae's book moves quickly into a discussion of the social, political and cultural context underlying the formation of an American canon, especially in the second part of the 20th century. The third part of the book probes into the conflict between a monocanonical conservative American right and the anti-canonical left, then the author opens the doors to the most interesting chapter of the book. This fourth chapter debates the undermining of the dominant canon in various ways and shapes, from the multicultural to the feminist canon, from the ethnic canon to the homocanon, deriving from the theoretical issue of minor vs. major literature, where maybe one of the most interesting topics of the book is touched upon: what makes minor literature minor?

*Canon, canonic* closes with a chapter discussing the academic canon, and concludes that the American canon has moved from an "author-centered" to an "issue-centered" canon, whose investigation is fundamental to understanding the intellectual chronotopes and politics of the United States. The book is an extremely useful and intelligent tool, supplying immense quantities of information as well as a well structured and supported argumentation, a critical endeavor that is bound to leave an impression.

## A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

# Calls for Papers

## EAAS 2008 Conference Theme "E Pluribus Unum" or "E Pluribus Plura"?

**Oslo, Norway, 9-12 May 2008**

The motto "E Pluribus Unum" mostly assumes an institutional and political will. But, from all historical data and possibly even more from contemporary dissensions, it appears that the social and cultural realities of America might well illustrate the possibility for an "E Pluribus Plura" version of the formula. How does the United States negotiate the inner tensions that, because of its constitutive diversity, might threaten its unity? How do traditions (political, artistic, literary...), modes of consensus building (from myth to national icons and patriotic assertions of exceptionalism), the feeling of a wished-for common good counteract potential strife and the tensions of particular interests and particular groups, make up for the aporias of nationhood and communitarian feeling, of ideological consensus and a tradition of dissent? Could it be that there are indeed several "Americas"? Is being an American necessarily being in many ways double? Can the politically unifying, centripetal power of the State, hidden under the neutral Unum, accommodate the centrifugal forces that might generate a societal and cultural "plura" out of the hallowed political and territorial "pluribus"? Do diversities imply, for their survival and development, a "middle ground", a "mainstream", a "tradition" – some kind of American norm? Seen in light of the various subdisciplines of our fields, these are some of the questions that might generate the wished-for contributions to this Conference.

### Deadlines:

January 31, 2007: Deadline for submission of proposals and one-page abstracts for parallel lectures and workshop sessions, to include a 1/2 page c.v. of workshop chairs and individual lecturers. You may

download the workshop guidelines here: [www.eaas.eu/downloads/Workshops.doc](http://www.eaas.eu/downloads/Workshops.doc)

Please do not submit proposals for individual workshop papers at this time.

These will be sent to selected workshop chairs who will be announced in the May 2007 issue of ASE.

**September 1, 2007:** Workshop paper proposals (with 150-200 word abstract) to be sent to Workshop Chairs.

**September 15, 2007:** Deadline for sending the tentative list of speakers and titles of workshop papers to be included in the October 2007 issue of ASE.

**December 1, 2007:** Deadline for submitting FINAL titles of papers and names and addresses of speakers.

**January 10, 2008:** Deadline for information to be included in the 2008 biennial conference program.

*Please send all information via e-mail to the EAAS Secretary General, Jenel Virden, at [virden@eaas.info](mailto:virden@eaas.info)*

## Call for Manuscripts: Contraband in the Americas

We invite chapter proposals for an edited volume that will focus on the representation of contraband in the Americas. We are primarily interested in the illegal movement of goods across borders or other frontiers, and how this contraband economy changes the way the Americas are imagined. At the same time, this volume proposes a broad historical scope: from colonial discussions concerning the mercantile system, to 18th- and 19th-century debates on the free market, to more contemporary representations of the trafficking of music, drugs, humans, organs, and sex in and throughout the Americas. We are therefore interested in different forms of contraband and welcome a variety of approaches and methodologies. Possible themes include, but are not limited to: Literary and cultural representations of contraband; The figure of the

contrabandist, the pirate, the privateer, the filibusterer; Contraband and the imagined community; Smuggling as gendered space; Contraband and race; Contraband and the commodification of the human; Writing as a form of contraband; Contraband as a model for political storytelling. *Send inquiries, 2-page abstracts, or completed essays by November 15, 2007 to Jeremy Paden, [jpaden@gsu.edu](mailto:jpaden@gsu.edu), or David Kelman, [dkelman@learnlink.emory.edu](mailto:dkelman@learnlink.emory.edu).*

## Perceptions of Space and the American Experience

**American Studies Association  
of Turkey - 32nd Annual American  
Studies Conference**

**November 7 - 9, 2007,  
Hacettepe University, Ankara**

This conference seeks to fill the scholarly vacuum that continues to exist with respect to space by removing it from the domain of the sacred, questioning its conceptualization, and exposing its manifestations within American Studies. The American Studies Association of Turkey invites proposals that consider space, broadly conceived. We particularly encourage proposals which incorporate transdisciplinary explorations of space, and welcome proposals from any field of study. Possible themes include, but are not limited to: Sites/Countersites/Utopias/Heterotopias; Subversive/Resistive Space; Space and the Body/Gendered Space; Racial/Ethnic/Political Space; Imaginary/Imagined Spaces/Geographies; Museums/Ethnographic/Indigenous Space; Modern/Postmodern Spaces; Mythic/Sacred/Symbolic/Religious Spaces; Expansionism/Manifest Destiny/Imperialism

The time allowance for all presentations is 20 minutes. An additional 10 minutes will be provided for discussion. We also invite submissions for an undergraduate student panel.

*Proposals for papers, panels, performances, exhibits, and other modes of creative expression should be sent to Tanfer Emin Tunc ([asat2007@gmail.com](mailto:asat2007@gmail.com)) and Bilge Muthuay Cetintas ([muthuay@hacettepe.edu.tr](mailto:muthuay@hacettepe.edu.tr)) and should consist of a 250-300 word abstract in English, as well as a 1 - 2 paragraph c.v./biographical description for each participant. Deadline for submission of proposals: July 15, 2007. Notification for acceptance of proposals: September 1, 2007.*

## A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

**Terrorism and Migration**

**A Two-Day Interdisciplinary Conference at the School of Humanities, University of Southampton, UK. November 17 - 18, 2007**

Contemporary anxieties about terrorism in the mainstream media and politics have clearly articulated the war against terrorism and the struggle for global security to the control of immigration, as well as the criminalisation of Islam. In response to the conflation of discourses of counter-terrorism, global security and the control of migration, this conference invites papers from any area of the humanities and the social sciences that are related to the following topics:

- Terrorism and Migration in Literature, Film, Visual Art and Music;
- Histories of migration, immigration law and political sovereignty;
- Migration, Terrorism and the State of Emergency;
- Ethnographies of migration and terrorism;
- Terrorism, Migration and the Public Sphere;
- Asylum, Imperialism and War

Please submit a 200-300 word abstract via email or post to the address below by September 1st, 2007:

Sandy White, English, School of Humanities, University of Southampton Southampton, SO17 1B7  
E-mail: [sw17@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sw17@soton.ac.uk)

**"Nationalism, East and West: Civic and Ethnic Conceptions of Nationhood"**

**The Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN)  
18th Annual Conference  
April 15-16, 2008,  
London School of Economics.**

The conference will include keynote addresses from leading scholars in the field, along with opportunities for scholars from various disciplines to examine the relevance of ethnic and civic conceptions of nationhood in a series of panel sessions. Suggested themes include: Civic and Ethnic Aspects of Nation Formation, Is Nationalism a European Phenomenon?, Alternatives to Civic and Ethnic Nationalism, Experiences of Historical Migrant Nations, Citizenship and Immigration, Multiculturalism

The application is open to any researcher who is interested in the study of nationalism and/or ethnicity, and PhD students and young scholars are particularly encouraged to apply. The abstracts of the proposed papers should not exceed 500 words and are expected by November 1, 2007. The Committee will notify applicants by November 30,

2007. Please see the ASEN website ([www.lse.ac.uk/collections/ASEN/](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/ASEN/)) for more information and to submit your proposal.

Suggestions for panels and additional themes are also welcome. Papers submitted to the conference will be considered for publication in a special issue of *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism (SEN)*. Please note that ASEN cannot cover travel and accommodation costs. Presenters are expected to register for the conference. Further enquiries are welcome [asen@lse.ac.uk](mailto:asen@lse.ac.uk).

**Fulbright Awards**

**Senior (Postdoctoral) Awards To the U.S., 2008-2009**

Grant duration: between 3-8 months.  
Closing: Nov.5th.

**Fulbright Teacher and Administrator Award to the U.S. 2008-2009**

Please see website below for more information and application.  
[www.fulbright.ro](http://www.fulbright.ro)  
(click on News in upper right corner)

**Richard Wright:  
The Centenary Celebration**

The American University of Paris announces the International Richard Wright Centennial Conference. It will be held 19-20 June 2008 at The American University of Paris and at the Musée des années trente (Museum of the Nineteen Thirties), in Boulogne-Billancourt. The Conference will encourage broad international and interdisciplinary explorations of Wright's life and writing. Paper/presentation proposals should include A brief (250-300 word) abstract and a brief (1-2pp.) vita. Deadline 15. 01. 2008. Submit abstracts to Alice Craven at [Alice.Craven@aup.fr](mailto:Alice.Craven@aup.fr) or William Dow at [William.Dow@wanadoo.fr](mailto:William.Dow@wanadoo.fr)

**The Sense of America:  
Histories into Text**

**The 2008 RAAS - Fulbright Conference  
Bucharest, 22 - 24 May, 2008**

The fifth conference of the Romanian Association for American Studies will be held at the University of Bucharest, Romania, May 22-24, 2008.

The program committee invites proposals from all practitioners of American culture or related disciplines. The Conference theme, The Sense of America: Histories into Text invites participants to explore the many meanings of "America" from the perspectives of both "new" world and "old" world narratives and narrations of life histories that have been translated and transmuted into various registers of fictional and factual text and representation. Touching on the concept of an "America" as a transcultural space shaped by globalization and modes of dislocation, the organizers encourage conference presentations that articulate, nuance, expand and challenge redefinitions of the "sense of America" beyond and across boundaries and to engage in debates about the place of the United States in the cultural dynamics of Europe and the world. The conference focus is on questions of complex identity in a world marked by September 11th – as well as on visions and responses to history issues and individual "histories" in and beyond America, shaped by interpretation, public and private memory from the colonial borderlands to the present.

The committee invites papers, proposals for panels, round tables and performances onsite and offsite and from all disciplinary and interdisciplinary specializations representing the full diversity of RAAS membership. Proposals must be submitted by January 31, 2008 to Roxana Oltean, Ilinca Anghelescu, Mihaela Precup at: [raas\\_fulbright\\_conference@yahoo.com](mailto:raas_fulbright_conference@yahoo.com) [raas.fulbright.conference@gmail.com](mailto:raas.fulbright.conference@gmail.com)  
All proposals must include:  
- a complete mailing address, email, phone number and affiliation  
- an abstract of no more than 300 words  
- a vita cf. no more than 300 words for each participant

# Academic Exchanges

## Such Is Yale

Mihaela Precup

A few years ago, a friend and colleague who had just returned from a year abroad on a Fulbright scholarship told me that it was a mind-blowing experience that placed her forever in a state of limbo. It was one of those statements that you recklessly hope will one day apply to you.

After nine months at Yale on a Fulbright scholarship, her words now have a very true ring to them. The initial feeling that I must have landed on a movie set has never left me, only now I'm a quirky viewer who has already seen the movie dozens of times. It might have something to do with the collegiate gothic architecture which still gives me visual seizures when students clad in work-out clothes emerge from a building which looks like an over-size cathedral but which the map says is a gym. It may also have something to do with finding out that Sterling Library, another gothic revival building, was finished no earlier than 1930. It has to do with entering Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library on a sunny day. And it also has to do with the mind-boggling contrasts within New Haven, a small town around a large rich university, where most of the non-academic part of the population is obviously struggling with poverty and its curses.

At Yale, most of the undergraduates are paying tuition fees, but none of the graduate students do. Every graduate student here is on a very generous scholarship from Yale, which covers everything, and maybe more Romanian students should consider this option.

Yale has more prestigious scholars and visitors than you can possibly keep up with. And I have loved the intellectual buzz in this community. I have loved seeing Art Spiegelman chain-smoking in a pristine event room while going through the whole history of comics in an hour or so of stand-up comedy. And I was a bit staggered to hear Alan Trachtenberg, Susan Gubar, Peggy Phelan, Juliet Mitchel and so many others. I loved watching 35 mm films every Friday at the coquettish Whitney movie theater, and hearing an entire audience roar with laughter during Kiss Me Deadly. I loved hearing people thinking out loud. I loved seeing one of the best music graduate students give a piano recital and put her hand inside the piano to move the keys, Tom-and-Jerry fashion.

Such is Yale. A small sunny place full of students from literally everywhere in the world, where you can find at least one person who shares your exact same interests, no matter how eccentric. Like perhaps any large American university, it offers ample opportunity for many shocks of both recognition and disidentification. And it was somewhere between the WGSS program, the American Studies Department, the Photographic Memory Workshop, the Women's Studies Colloquium and several dozens events where I always saw the same people, who became my friends, that I made my home. It was these fantastic people that made the Yale movie set my own, and who included me in the picture.

## Experiencing Deep America

Mihai A. Stroe

To have the experience of Yale University in the framework of the Fulbright Advanced Research Programme is to have the chance to enter an academic and human labyrinth of mythic proportions, in which you can easily gain the feeling of being a lilliputian inexorably trapped in a giant horse race, taking place not in a hippodrome, but in an 'infodrome' echoing with virtually all the languages of the world, old and new, sacred and profane, poetic and scientific and religious.

My Yale experience started from my establishing a friendly relationship with a professor whose academic status is as controversial as it is prodigious: Professor Harold Bloom has kindly accepted my Fulbright advanced research project entitled "Towards a Science of Paradigms: Paradigm Shifts in Literature and Science from the Romantic to the Postmodern Age". This project has been conceived of as a contribution for establishing paradigmology as metascience in its own right, based on Heisenberg's and Koestler's concept of a 'Pendulum of History'. Also, one of my major interests has been the further extension of Thomas Kuhn's theory about scientific revolutions as paradigm shifts to the field of literature, each revolution being decoded in this perspective as a swing of the historical pendulum. However, Professor Bloom not having a department at Yale anymore (for the past 30 years or so), I had to ask for support from another remarkable Yale personality, Professor Paul Fry, whose works excel in the study of Wordsworth, Coleridge, romanticism in general, and literary theory.

Several things were particularly fascinating for me at Yale: 1. the labyrinthine courses of Harold Bloom, who is a genuine master of the labyrinth of literature and the humanities, being the perfect guide (although he modestly does not consider himself such) for the students who thus get initiated into the endless intricacies of meanings of texts in their revisionary state of total immersion in endless chains of contexts within contexts within contexts, for ever. 2. Sterling Memorial Library, a monumental establishment of culture and civilization (with over 6 million volumes), hosting Yale students and scholars who come here to study from the remotest places of the world, just to have a chance to experience the great variety of sources of documentation.

I had great experiences as visitor of courses of lectures or discussion groups: Professor Paul Fry's course on literary theory, delivered in a perfectly beautiful and friendly lecture room located in Linsley Chittenden Hall, was often a dizzying adventure into the fundamental critical thought; two courses-seminars of Professor Bloom's, one on Shakespeare's tragedies, one on modern poetry.

In an academic context of this magnitude, which, however, is not completely without imperfections (I could, to my regret, meet such in a discussion group), the idea of a deep America thus clears up dramatically from the coalescence of all melting pot elements, including the native American: the sense of the labyrinthine 'infodrome', which is the vast American experience, is to understand ourselves, intellectually, religiously, psychologically, philosophically, scientifically, emotionally, mythopoetically, etc, and our universe, as the uncanny and for ever mysterious receptacles of the ancient languages of reality.

## A M E R I C A N S T U D I E S I N R O M A N I A

# Ph.D. Theses

## **Subversion and Surrender: A Cultural and Literary Study of Beat Prose** Raluca Rogoveanu

Unlike most studies dealing with the Beat generation which focused exclusively either on the dimension of rebellion or on the consumerist values which the Beat art unconsciously contains, this thesis aims to offer a prismatic reading of the Beat text, which simultaneously displays the sense of subversion and the process of surrender as necessary aspects embedded in Beat prose. The elements of novelty propounded by this thesis refer to the difference between the alleged revolutionary spirit of the Beat Generation and their surrender to the standards of popular culture, which parallels the act of renouncing the precepts of subversiveness under the burden of commercial success. The focus of this thesis goes on fiction texts, memoirs, letters and essays of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs, the artists forming the nucleus of the Beat generation.

Rather than labeling the Beat phenomenon either as frighteningly subversive or quietly complacent of the domineering system, and instead of looking for essentialist or totalizing explanations, this reading insists on understanding the ambivalent nature of this cultural structure. The thesis pays particular attention to the mobility, dynamics and change of the Beat group, as well as to the different, diverse and multidimensional relations which they establish with the mainstream America. The Beat phenomenon can be described as a channel for collective action and interaction, a structure of relatively common interests and modes of constructing meaning. Consequently, after demonstrating the way in which the Beat text offers a persuasive critique of the capitalist ideology, the thesis identifies structures and ways in which this critique is undermined by the fascination of the text with the particular ideology which it attempts to destabilize. The overt ideological intention of the Beat generation-of undermining the principles of the "Molochian" regime is suppressed by the ambivalence of the text and the ambiguity of the binary oppositions underlain by the ideological intention: rebellion/acceptance, Buddhism/Christianity, idealism/consumerism.

*\* The thesis was defended in May 2007.*

## **Existentialist Dimensions of Space and Time in William Faulkner's Fiction** Rodica Diana Cherciu

The research of this thesis tries to essentialize the connotations of existence, space and time articulated by the contrastive realities of both modernist and postmodern Faulkner's Yokna-

patawpha meant to become reflexive of truth, a notion always put as a contingent affair. Thinking of these opposite, yet continuous universes of modernism and postmodernism, my study calls into attention the narrator's ability to join metaphysics with ontology in loci of difference induced by the construction and deconstruction of Yoknapatawpha mythical space and time. Herein from the very term "negation", a natural consequence of the change, which does not fragment the literary currents, but reorients the meaning towards depth, diversity, flexibility and connotative openness against the background of paradox. With Faulkner, contradiction does not only dislocate, but restores and harmonizes significance through sudden breaks of meaning that enable the switch of a perspective to another, the move from the space of action to a space of reflection, from one addressee, difficult to spot: the listener, the reader, or simply the narrator's thought to another.

My thesis draws attention on the narrator's art of turning life in Yoknapatawpha as a subjective construct of reality and a replica meant to expose the unlimited multiplicity of existence in spatial and temporal loci where it is manifest as factuality, sign, vision, restoration absence and fulfillment of desire. Born under the perspective of ambivalence, space and time prove to channelize the connotations of being and of the existential anchorage. In the Faulknerian text the paradigm of these two existentialist dimensions has to be analyzed from the subset of significance constantly put under rearticulation through intertextual associations, analogies and the differentiations put forth by the excessive intertextuality and the trans-textuality of the spatial and temporal sign that dominate the narrative. The discourse of space can be read in the mythical, cultural, philosophical and aesthetic inflections that emerge from an ambivalent and indeterminate dialectics of deconstruction and reconstruction through which the repertoire of connotations represents an extensive demonstration of Gabriel Marcel's and Seta Low's theories. Along with the sacred and ritualistic empowerment suggested or expressed in the process of symbolization, the modern representations of space rewrite being in imaginary structures that engender the metaphysical power to rise against mortality. The tragic accents of death panic dislocate the former meanings of the existentialist space and reshape them through imagination as new potentialities of life. To its last variant, the postmodern one, where the artificial space casts doubt on the human existence, the significance stays open, ambiguous, uncertain, able to take in new meanings.

Textuality turns into the tragic script of the agonizing need for a formula of "to be", of the self's reaction to it and of its effort to create its being, irrespective of the parodic, ironical or serious reflection. In this respect, Faulkner himself projected the fictional existence like the great dramas of antiquity since what he revealed was not the tragic fall of existence but its sublime. Without hesitating he turns its story into a legend, and so did the narrator with the concept of being in Yoknapatawpha. He transfigured it into an object of art to which the perspective put forth in this thesis tries to reveal the ontological and metaphysical relevance in aesthetic inflections.

*\* The thesis was defended in June 2007*

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