



International Conference Edith Wharton's New York

Bucharest, September 19-20, 2013

International Conference:

EDITH WHARTON'S NEW YORK

Bucharest, September 19-20, 2013

Venue:

Academia Română

Institutul de Lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti”

Calea 13 Septembrie, 13

050711 București, România

<http://www.lingv.ro/>

Organisers:



European Study Group of Nineteenth Century American Literature



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
Institutul de Lingvistică
„Iorgu Iordan-Al. Rosetti”
București

PROGRAM

Thursday, September 19

9:00-10:00 Opening lecture by Professor Daniel Walkowitz (New York University)
Elites in Crisis: Edith Wharton's Old New York confronts Modernity.

10:00-10:30 Q&A

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:30 General discussion led by Professor Walkowitz around the following questions:

1. Does New York matter in Wharton's writings and how? Could she have as easily set her work in other American cities?
2. Describe the non-New York social geography – domestic and foreign – of her work. Today we might describe this as destination tourism; how would that characterization limit or clarify the places Wharton's characters visit and what they do there?
3. Describe the [changing] social geography of Wharton's novels. What are the social, cultural and political meanings of place and space?
4. New York is an immigrant city. In the first half of the nineteenth century, German, and Irish predominate; the latter half of the century sees a shift to southern and eastern European origins, notably Jews and Italians. How do immigrants shape her stories; how are they differently depicted?
5. Recent historical scholarship has produced a veritable cottage industry in whiteness studies that suggests race in America has marked many seen as 'others.' In her novella *The Old Maid*, Wharton engages race directly. But does race operate below the surface throughout her work and to what affect?
6. In what ways do gender politics animate Wharton's work—masculinity and femininity, feminism and the history of suffrage? The Cult of True Womanhood, a middle-class ideology which becomes powerful in the 1840s as the country industrializes and working-class families come to rely on women's wages informed Victorian/Edwardian notions of respectable womanhood,. How are Wharton's women shaped by this ideology and/or respond to it?
7. New technologies of work and discipline (i.e., scientific management) in the shift from laissez-faire to monopoly capitalism dramatically change the character of work and labor at the end of the nineteenth century in New York, with accompanying growth of consumption, fashion, advertising and a white collar service economy. How does Old New York figure in this changed world and what are the strengths and limitations of Wharton's understanding of old and new capital?
8. Working-class radicalism — the roles of socialists, Wobblies (anarcho-syndicalists in the Industrial Workers of the World), labor radicals and the culture of radicalism -- all animate Greenwich Village bohemia around and about Wharton's social geography. What does their presence or *absent presence* tell readers?

9. Who is Old New York and why is it Old? Is there a New NY and how does it originate and differ? How well does Wharton chronicle and give shape to the changing history of these elite class fractions?

10. Progressive era reform revises the role earlier embodied by Lady Bountifuls. How does Wharton represent the older role of reformers and the new world of women like Jane Addams and Mary Simkovitch?

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Conference session, Q&A

Chair: Verena Laschinger

14:00-14:30 Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour (Paris, France) **Nature versus architecture in *The Age of Innocence* and *The House of Mirth***

14:30-15:00 Hristo Boev (Constanța, Romania) **Pale Spaces in *The House of Mirth* – Images of a Disembodied New York**

15:00-15:30 Oana Alexandra Alexa (Iași, Romania) **Social Conflicts and Change in Edith Wharton's New York**

15:30-16:00 Coffee break

16:00-17:30 Conference session, Q&A

Chair: Nadina Vișan

16:00-16:30 Brigitte Zaugg (Metz, France) **From Fifth Avenue residence to boarding-house: setting in *The House of Mirth***

16:30-17:00 Irina Dubský (Bucharest, Romania) **The Interplay of the Outward and the Inward Enacted against the Canvas of New York's Reality in Edith Wharton's Fiction**

17:00-17:30 Nicoleta Petuhov (Bucharest, Romania) **Dinner and Society in Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence***

18:20:00 Walking Tour

20:30 Dinner in downtown Bucharest

Friday, September 20, 2013:

9:00-10:30 Conference session, Q&A

Chair: Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour

9:00-9:30 Raluca Andreescu (Bucharest, Romania) **"Traditions that have lost their meaning are the hardest of all to destroy": Divorce in Edith Wharton's New York**

9:30-10:00 Ralph Poole (Salzburg, Austria) **Having Sex like a Man: The Postfeminist Single Girl in the Age of Un-Innocence**

10:10:30 Nadina Vişan, Ruxandra Vişan (Bucharest, Romania) **Translation issues in the representation of Edith Wharton's New York**

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:30 Conference session, Q&A

Chair: Ralph Poole

11:00-11:30 Daniela Daniele (Udine, Italy) **Letters from New York by Lydia Maria Child: a New England Reformer corresponding with her Bostonian fellows**

11:30-12:00 Camelia Anghel (Bucharest, Romania) **The City as a Narrative Device: Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* – Ian McEwan's *The Innocent***

12:00-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:30 Conference session, Q&A

Chair: Anca Peiu

13:30-14:00 Verena Laschinger (Erfurt, Germany) **The Function of Photography in *The House of Mirth***

14:00-14:30 Mariana Neţ (Bucharest, Romania) **Edith Wharton's New York: A Narcissist City**

14:30-15:00 Anca Peiu (Bucharest, Romania) **A Rose for Edith: Avatars of a Solitude Persona**

15:00-15:30 Concluding remarks

17:00-19:00 Concert at the Romanian Atheneum/Visit of Cişmigiu Public Park

Dinner in downtown Bucharest

Saturday, September 21, 2013: 10-13

14:00-16:30 Visit of Romanian Peasant Museum

16:00-17:00 Coffee in a nearby café

17:00-18:30 Walking tour in one of Bucharest's residential districts

19:00-21:30 Theatrical performance at the State Jewish Theatre: *Enemies. A Love Story* after the short story by Isaac Bashevis-Singer

(As the performance will be in Romanian, you may want to read the short story and/or watch Paul Mazursky's 1989 film)

ABSTRACTS:

Oana Alexandra ALEXA

Social Conflicts and Change in Edith Wharton's New York

As a novelist of manners, Edith Wharton had a long literary career, which enabled her to depict in her works both the New York of her youth and the subsequent changes America faced through the first part of the 20th century. The aim of this paper is to analyze the social conflicts which characterized New York's upper class as they are presented in one of Wharton's most appreciated novels and the respective film adaptation, while emphasizing their evolution in time and the changes they brought in the world of the elite.

I base my analysis on the Pulitzer-winning *The Age of Innocence*, which was written about 40 years after the story was set, but which still represents Wharton's most magnificent depiction of the "old" New York of her youth. Edith Wharton's New York is mostly upper class. And old leisure class New York is essentially characterized by the social conflict between the elite and the newly-risen bourgeoisie. "Old New York" is also about keeping up the upper-class standards, as they are represented by the Astors or the van der Luydens and by rejecting everything that "new money" stands for.

The last chapter of *The Age of Innocence*, however, offers us a glimpse of the "newer" New York, where people do not care much about ancestry and social differences. The leisure class comes to need the new money and mixes with the bourgeoisie in order to survive. Some of Wharton's later novels give us a picture of the profound social, moral and cultural changes which shaped the 20th century.

In order to illustrate the contrast between the new and the old New York, I will also refer to the film adaptation by Martin Scorsese (*The Age Of Innocence*, 1993).

In conclusion, the paper will offer an insight on Wharton's New York by focusing on the social interactions of the upper class and their dynamics in time together with the essential changes they produce, as they appear in her novel and on screen.

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Raluca ANDREESCU

"Traditions that have lost their meaning are the hardest of all to destroy: "Divorce in Edith Wharton's New York

My paper discusses the manner in which Edith Wharton's short story "Autres Temps..." (1916) addresses the issue of divorce and its consequences on the lives of women in the New York society at the turn of the century and during the first decades of the 20th century. I will explore the clash between the old New York society, which tended to ostracize and marginalize divorced women, and the New York society of the new century, which fostered a more modern and pragmatic view on the subject. In my analysis of Wharton's story about the constraints rather than the liberations of divorce, imprisonment rather than freedom, and the power of the haunting past rather than the promise of the future, I will argue that despite the changing times, for certain generations and certain sins there is no exemption from punishment.

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Camelia ANGHEL

The City as a Narrative Device: Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* – Ian McEwan's *The Innocent*

A comparative study, the paper deals with the narratological relevance of “the city” in two novels whose publication order separates them by almost a century: Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and Ian McEwan's *The Innocent* (1990). New York and Berlin - together with other significant metropolises mentioned in the two works - come to play a comparable role in the male protagonists' initiation experiences. The urban space displays a meaningful set of societal and historical acquisitions, all of which participate in the process of deriding a wrongly assumed state of moral “innocence”.

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Hristo BOEV

Pale Spaces in *The House of Mirth* – Images of a Disembodied New York

Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* presents closed spaces of forced nonchalance, exaggerated Oscar Wilde-like witticisms as well as spatial and spiritual emptiness. The spaces of the brown houses where the novel is set, if subjected to topoanalysis, reveal a paleness that has a profound effect on the main protagonist, Lily Bart as well as on the representatives of high society with whom she interacts. This pervasive sickly image of the interior, where most of the action takes place, is projected on to the world without, thus producing equally pale images of New York, which is but a reflection of the inside of the houses. Represented in such a manner, the city loses its clear contours and becomes another shade of the pale inhabitants within the houses, a salient presence of a disembodied super entity.

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Daniela DANIELE

Letters from New York_ by Lydia Maria Child: a New England Reformer corresponding with her Bostonian fellows

I intend to focus, in particular, on the way in which these letters represent a major contribution to Child's theoretical development on issues of benevolence, philanthropy, feminism and abolitionism which she shared with Abba Alcott and Charlotte Cushman. The city is represented in its fast growth, in a period in which it started competing with Boston as the cultural capital of America.

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Irina DUBSKY

The Interplay of the Outward and the Inward Enacted against the Canvas of New York's Reality in Edith Wharton's Fiction

The present study is meant as an attempt to explore the mechanisms at work in Edith Wharton's novels and shorter pieces of fiction through which the vacuous and the spurious parade of the outward reality interacts with the meaningful lines of an inner field of force, thus participating in the process of substituting a set of practices and tendencies for a hierarchy of values which dominated New York in the final decades of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. In a world where even the façades are fake – of which the “pseudo-Gregorian façade” of the Benedick building in *The House of Mirth* is evocative – whatever belongs to a genuine order of values is subverted by “noise and banter”. The surface must be honored at all costs, to such an extent that the practice of appearance-worshipping assumes the grim shape of a preposterous game (*Autres Temps, Xingu*). The meaning and measure of life is given by a vision of “an eternity of New York dinners” (*After Holbein*).

The central aspect the paper proposes to bring into relief is the way in which the outward engulfs the inward, the “reality” of the sham devouring the inner codes of honor: the aristocratic tradition of old New York, with its exclusive circles guided by a set of sound principles of conduct and norms of refined taste, is assailed by the shallow mentality of the nouveau riche or the social climber. The frugal elegance of “the Aborigines” of the Washington Square (“The Reservation”), holding on to the inward values of a gentleman's code is brutalized by the grotesque opulence of the “Invaders”. The enchanted cave of the hero's inner life is ravaged by the emissaries of a reality bordered by Wall Street and Fifth Avenue, a world which is nothing more than “a muddle of misapplied ornament over a thin steel shell of utility” (*The Custom of the Country*).

This study also analyzes the reversal of the terms of the outward/inward antithetic dyad, when the fictional locale is other than New York. In such prose pieces as *Summer* or *The Angel at the Grave*, in which New York is only sketched as a distant and potentially-menacing presence, the inner world comes to the fore with its emotions, preoccupations, and loyalties, however misplaced they may be.

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Verena LASCHINGER

Communicating Urban Change: Berenice Abbott's New York City Photographs

I will engage in the discussion of Edith Wharton's New York by way of a formal analysis of some select New York City photographs by Berenice Abbott taken between 1935-39. While Wharton (1862-1937) is considered the foremost chronicler of Old New York's changing social organization, Abbott's (1898-1991) photographic documentation of the city's changing architecture visually complements Wharton's literary oeuvre. Finalizing in a way the artistic project, which Wharton had initiated, Abbott's city photographs capture the ultimate stage in the transformation of the modernizing metropolis – the moment, in which Old New York was literally shedding its skin. Set apart by age and artistic modes, Wharton and Abbott shared what Karl Mannheim calls the “conjunctive space of lived experience” nonetheless, the experience of New York City's transformation, which they both set against the backdrop of their expatriate lives in Paris. Employing Erwin Panofsky's method of iconological analysis, which takes its cue from Mannheim's documentary method, I am going to analyze compositional features such as

perspective, scenic choreography, and planimetric structure of some select photographs by Berenice Abbott. My aim is, to interrogate more closely the faculties by which Abbott's photographs capture the specificities of urban change in New York City during the 1930s, and thus successfully communicate New York's transformation as historical knowledge to later generations.

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Mariana NET

Edith Wharton's New York: A Narcissist City

The paper will analyze about a dozen postcards representing New York City around 1900, viz. at an important moment both for the NYC Edith Wharton lived in. and for the NYC she staged a few of her novels and short stories in. The visual representations of the city landmarks and cityscapes will be compared to some of their fictional avatars in Wharton's works dedicated to turn-of-the-century NYC.

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Anca PEIU

A Rose for Edith: Avatars of a Solitude Persona

When Miss Edith Wharton (1862-1937) died, Mr William Faulkner (1897-1962) was at the peak of his writer's career.

Apparently, nothing much can bring about any association between the two American novelists. And yet, back in the spring of 1924, when *Old New York* – Wharton's volume of four novellas – got first published, Faulkner had just been there, in New York City, working in some bookstore that was to prove of particular good omen for him.

Between Edith Wharton's novella "The Old Maid" – the best achievement of her book *Old New York* – and William Faulkner's story "A Rose for Emily" (1930), itself a celebrated masterpiece of shorter fiction, there is a link: the grotesque tale of "Miss Zilphia Gant" (1928; 1932). In this, Faulkner seems to let his (very possible) source for inspiration show better: Wharton's cruel (silenced) case of failed motherhood in Charlotte Lovells's spinster mask.

Not even barrenness is what it seems: for such writers as these two, there is always room for a double deeper plot in any story. The vibration between "The Old Maid" and "A Rose for Emily" – via "Miss Zilphia Gant" – may be called *intertextuality*. Or rather, the *influence* a major writer, like Edith Wharton, had upon the eager mind of a young artist, like William Faulkner, making his brief apprenticeship in New York City.

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Marie-Claude PERRIN-CHENOUR

Nature vs. Architecture in *The Age of Innocence* and *The House of Mirth*

The point of this paper will be to examine the symbolical meaning of nature outside or within an urban setting. In *The House of Mirth*, nature is encapsulated in representations of a pastoral landscape in the countryside where romantic ideals seem to prevail. This utopian setting is

strongly contrasted to the harshness and deceit of the city of New York. The demise of the heroine always takes place within the walls of stifling buildings which seem to reflect and enhance her predicament. In *The Age of Innocence* the architecture of sprawling New York keeps encroaching upon nature, but the diversity of its neighbourhoods and its still chaotic town planning make it possible for the protagonists to find an architectural equivalent to their personality and even an expression of their originality. Natural landscape on the other hand is often the stage of the most treacherous and ambiguous scenes.

In this paper we shall try to fathom the historical context of the two novels and provide literary explanations for their contrasting representations of nature and of the city of New York.

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Nicoleta PETUHOV

Dinner and Society in Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence*

The Age of Innocence is a mirror of a society and of a city living in the present, but equally, in the past. The novel is built around the outer life and inner feelings of young and refined Newland Archer, and achieves a magnificent picture of New York City from its origins (all the "important" families in the novel are among the city founders) to 1870. The true life, manners and values of old New York society are an outcome of the interplay between appearance (a gracious, polite and moral society) and reality (cruel, hypocritical, and manipulative).

This paper aims to present a particular technique of Edith Wharton's aiming to introduce the reader in the atmosphere of New York society: i.e. dinner. There are three moments: *dinner time*, *before dinner* and *after dinner*. All these definite periods of time represent ingenious and generous subterfuges to describe people, family bonds, interiors, pieces of furniture, clothes. Even more relevant for the unwritten codes governing social life is the presentation of dishes, table companions and conversations.

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Ralph J. POOLE

Having Sex like a Man: The Postfeminist Single Girl in the Age of Un-Innocence

The HBO signature series *Sex and the City* starts out by claiming that New York has entered the "Age of Un-Innocence". This obvious reference to Edith Wharton's novel calls for a comparison, and yet it marks a difference. The paper will explore whether Carrie Bradshaw & Co., on their search for available Mr. Bigs, are so very different from Wharton's Mary Welland, Ellen Olenska, and Lily Bart. While unattached women are prone of making a freakish public spectacle by their sheer single appearance in Wharton's "age of innocence" that revolves around the institution of marriage and its possible pitfalls, the postfeminist, testosteronized single girl-cosmos of Carrie and her friends seemingly offers an urban haven that allows women to sexually conquer the city every which way they desire. And yet, just as Wharton has shown for her 'girls,' even today very much depends on the market value of these New York women who are looking for men while pretending not to. The dilemma of simultaneously fitting in and standing out, essential for drawing the attention of a lucrative bachelor while not frightening him away, may for example have shifted fetishized dress-codes from Ellen's black fur trim to Carrie's Manolo

Blahniks, but the question addressed in this paper will be whether HBO's comedy of manner ultimately departs as radically from Wharton's formula as it proclaims.

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Nadina VIȘAN, Ruxandra VIȘAN

Translation issues in the representation of Edith Wharton's New York

The paper attempts to look at the representations of New York in the Romanian translations of Edith Wharton's works. Taking as a point of reference texts such as *The Age of Innocence* or *Old New York*, the paper will investigate, from a translation theory perspective, the way in which the representation of the city gets "trans-posed" into Romanian. To this effect, the paper will concentrate on the lexical and grammatical choices, as well as on the rendering of the figures of speech which contribute to the Romanian "re-construction" of the city.

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Brigitte ZAUGG

From Fifth Avenue residence to boarding-house: setting in *The House of Mirth*

Although the action of *The House of Mirth* begins in the upper-middle-class world and the heart of Manhattan, around Washington Square, that Edith Wharton knew so well, the reader is soon taken into successive parallel worlds that always go one notch down. All along the book, and particularly in the last pages, Wharton regularly draws on her intimate knowledge of the lay-out of the city, giving such specific geographical references that one might locate the characters on a map. These street scenes are pitted against indoor scenes which provide her with an opportunity to display what an eye she had for interior decoration. I shall therefore look at what specific places Wharton mentions and depicts and try to establish their function. However, since quite a number of scenes and episodes do not take place in New York (Book 1, for instance, depicts the Trenors' country residence, while Book 2 opens in Monte Carlo), one may perhaps question the actual usefulness of such a precise setting. Indeed, Wharton seems to indicate that the location does not matter much as long as it is a place favoured by the very rich, into which they displace the way of life they are used to pursuing in New York; in other words, New York is not just a city, it is a society. What is also interesting, in this novel, is that Wharton is not content with describing the world of the very rich and the replica that the nouveaux riches and upstarts strive to create (cheap, vulgar, garish, uncouth). She is also quite incisive in her depiction of the living conditions of the lower and working classes (and one may wonder whether she had first-hand knowledge of them): Nettie Struthers' place, the milliner's, Lily's room at the boarding-house, for example. A close look at the depictions of these places will lead me to try and assert their realism.

PARTICIPANTS' BIO-STATEMENTS

Oana Alexandra ALEXA

I graduated from the Faculty of Letters at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași in 2008, with a major in English language and literature. This was followed by a Master’s degree in Applied Linguistics – English Teaching Methodology, which I completed in 2010. Between 2008 and 2010, I was a teacher of English at primary and secondary school, while also teaching English for special purposes to company employees.

Since 2011, I have been teaching the Business English seminar to first and second year students at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration from “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași. Also, I am currently a second year student at the Doctoral School of the Faculty of Letters from the same university.

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Raluca ANDREESCU

Raluca Andreescu is assistant professor at the University of Bucharest. She holds an M.A. in American Studies and a Ph.D. in Philology from the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies, both with the University of Bucharest. Her main research interests are in the area of American Cultural Studies, Gothic literature and culture, comparative literature, contemporary women’s studies and gender studies. She published a book and articles in journals and collective volumes about the Female Gothic in the American Century, the American authors Edith Wharton, Shirley Jackson and Joyce Carol Oates, but also on the work of Doina Ruști.

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Camelia ANGHEL

Camelia Anghel is a Teaching Assistant with The Romanian-American University (Romania). She completed her philological studies (a French-English degree) with an M. A. in “Literatures of English Expression” at The University of Bucharest. At the same university she successfully defended her Ph. D. thesis on “Modernist Discourses of Travel: D. H. Lawrence’s Transatlantic Quest” (September 2012). Here are the titles of some articles that she has published in recent years:

- **“Intertextuality in D. H. Lawrence's Travel Books: *Sea and Sardinia* and *Mornings in Mexico*”. CD proceedings of the conference „Creativity and Innovation in a Culturally Diverse, Knowledge-Based Society”. Bucharest: Academy of Economic Studies, 2009. 509 - 519.**
- **“Exilic Dimensions of Modernism: D. H. Lawrence’s ‘Island’-Characters”. *Ovid, Myth and (Literary) Exile*. Ed. Adina Ciugureanu, Ludmila Martanovschi. Constantza: Ovidius University Press, 2010. 75-82.**

- "Exploring Sacredness/Secretness in Evocative Prose: David Malouf - Marcel Proust". *Limbă, cultură și civilizație. Idei în dialog*. Bucharest: Politehnica Press, 2010. 61-67.
- "Cinematic Representations of Descent/Dissent in James Cameron's *Avatar*". *The American Tradition of Descent/Dissent: The Underground, the Countercultural, the (Anti)Utopian*. Ed. Adina Ciugureanu, Ludmila Martanovschi, Nicoleta Stanca. Iassy: Institutul European, 2012.483-495.

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Hristo BOEV

Hristo Boev was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria in 1973. He graduated from Plovdiv University, Bulgaria in 1997 obtaining an MA in English Philology. He defended successfully his Ph.D. thesis at Ovidius University, Constanta, Romania in April, 2013. His interests are in the field of Modern British and American Literature, Romanian Literature between the Wars, Translation and Cultural Studies. He is a teacher of English Language and Literature, translator and editor in Bulgarian, English and Romanian. Apart from his academic interests, he is also an avid reader and short story writer in English. He actively participates in conferences on Literature and Cultural Studies. His main publications are on Dickens and Dos Passos in a number of scientific journals category B and BDI.

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Daniela DANIELE

Daniela Daniele holds a doctoral degree in Anglistics from the University of Genoa and a PhD in Comparative Literature at the City University of New York. She currently teaches Anglo-American Literature at the University of Udine.

Her research on Victorian America mostly focused on Louisa May Alcott's writings, and led to the Italian editions of *Moods* (Bollati Boringhieri, 1995) and of the four-volume *Marches'* saga (Einaudi, 2006). She has written several essays on this writer and on her contemporaries, and recently translated a selection of her suffragist articles and poems appeared in the *Woman's Journal*.

She is also a specialist in contemporary American literature and published *Città senza mappa: paesaggi urbani e racconto postmoderno in America* (Dell'Orso, 1994); *The Woman of the Crowd: Urban Displacement and Failed Encounters in Surrealist and Postmodern Writing* (Rodopi, 2000); the collection of interviews with American writers *Scrittori e finzioni d'America: Incontri e cronache (1989-1999)* (Bollati Boringhieri, 2000). She also edited a literary anthology in the aftermath of September 11th, *Undici settembre. Contro-narrazioni americane* (Einaudi, 2003); a special issue of *Nuova Corrente* (Tilgher, 2005) on Don DeLillo and the American section of the *Garzantina della letteratura* (Garzanti, 2007). She also translated into Italian a selection of poems by Grace Paley (Empiria, 1993) and by Jerome Rothenberg (Porto dei santi, 2001), and the collection of short stories by Mary Caponegro *Materia prima* (Leconte, 2004).

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Irina DUBSKÝ

Irina Dubský is a Senior Lecturer in English and American Literature, the Faculty of Letters, *Spiru Haret* University, Bucharest. She holds a Ph.D. in Philology, an MA degree in American Cultural Studies and a BA in Foreign Languages and Literatures from the University of Bucharest. Her doctoral dissertation entitled “*Shadowings-Forth of the Invisible*”: *Esotericism in Herman Melville’s Fiction - Moby Dick and the Tales* (distinction: *Magna cum Laude*) encapsulates the focal points of her field of research, represented by the exploration of the alchemical tropes and esoteric significance encoded in Herman Melville’s work alongside the study of the initiatory patterns and symbolic imagery in the literature of the American Renaissance. She has been involved in this intellectual enterprise throughout her academic studies and onwards. A more recent facet of her research is represented by the role Protestantism has played in the foundation and development of the American mental history. This activity has been materialized in her participating in conferences and similar scientific events as well as in the publication of several professional papers and a forthcoming book on Herman Melville’s esoteric thought. She has also worked as a translator for *Humanitas* Publishing House.

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Verena LASCHINGER

Verena Laschinger holds a Ph.D. in American literature and culture from Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany. From 2005-2010 she was Assistant Professor of American Literature at Fatih University Istanbul, Turkey, and presently teaches at Erfurt University, Germany. Her research interests include urban studies and popular culture with a strong focus on the overlaps of photography and literature.

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Mariana NEȚ

Mariana Neț is a Professor and Senior Researcher at the “Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics in Bucharest, Romania. Recently she was a Visiting Scholar at New York University. She has been guest Professor at the University of Perpignan (France), and guest lecturer at many other prestigious Universities in Europe and the US. She has published 100-odd articles in Romanian and international scholarly journals. Her fields of interest are English and French languages and literatures, cultural studies, semiotics, mentalities, lifestyles and social history. She is currently working on a book on Bucharest and New York City around 1900.

Among her recent books: *Alexandre Dumas, écrivain du 21e siècle*. Paris : L’Harmattan, 2008; *Our Daily Shocks* (in Romanian). București, Ideea Europeană, 2007 ; *Philosophy of Language, Semiotics, Mentalities*. Iași: Institutul European, 2005; *Literature, Strategies, and Metalanguage. A Semiotic Approach*. Wien: Verlag des Instituts für Sozio-Semiotische Studien, 2002; *Literature, Atmosphere, and Society. A Semiotic Approach*. Wien: Verlag des Instituts für Sozio-Semiotische Studien, 2000; *Up to the Star. The Life and Work of the Romanian Poet M. Eminescu*. Cluj: Clusium, 2000; *Eminescu, Differently* (In Romanian). București: Minerva, 2000; *A. Dumas: le pays où il fait mort*. Wien: Verlag des Instituts für Sozio-Semiotische Studien, 1997.

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Anca PEIU

In January 1991, Anca Peiu won the professional contest for a position in the Department of English, of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, of the University of Bucharest – her Alma Mater. Ever since that time she has taught lectures and seminars of American Literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, early American Civilization, British Literature of the 20th century, electives on Wallace Stevens (1879-1955), and William Faulkner (1897-1962), practical English language. She has instructed an impressive number of students, helping them as the advisor to their graduation papers.

In December 1999, Anca Peiu earned her doctoral degree in Comparative Literature, due to a study in narratology with a special approach of Thomas Mann (1875-1955) and William Faulkner. Her dissertation was published by the University Press of Bucharest.

As an acknowledged scholar in her field of research, Dr. Anca Peiu has published in a critical edition three volumes of literary translations into Romanian from William Faulkner's works, provided with updated introductory studies and well-documented chronologies. More volumes of this critical edition are still to follow. Anca Peiu is the author of numerous academic essays on literary topics, published by many prestigious anthologies, in various university volumes and reviews. She is currently preparing an ampler volume of essays on Classic American Literature.

Associate Professor Anca Peiu has traveled as an IREX scholar to Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA, and later, as a Fulbright scholar to Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA. As a Soros grantee, she has been to Warwick University, England, UK, and likewise, to Edinburgh University, Scotland, UK.

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Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour is a Professor of American Literature at the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense. She has published many articles and several books on Women Writers (more particularly on Willa Cather, Kate Chopin and Flannery O'Connor). She is also the editor of a volume on *Minority Literatures in the United States* in which she has contributed the chapter on Chinese American literature. She is currently writing a study of *The House of Mirth* for a French publishing house.

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Dr. Nicoleta Petuhov is researcher at the Institute of Linguistics of Bucharest. Her areas of specialisation are lexicology and lexicography, terminology, semantics and sociolinguistics. She has written a number of articles and essays on terminology and phraseology in Romanian and also on the effect of language contact in African French. She is additionally affiliated with the Department for Foreign Students of the Faculty of Letters of the Bucharest University.

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Ralph J. Poole is Professor of American Studies at Salzburg University. He taught at the University of Munich, Germany, and at Fatih University in Istanbul, Turkey. He was also visiting scholar at the Center for Advanced Studies in Theater Arts at the CUNY. His publications include a study on the Avant-Garde tradition in American theater focussing among others on Gertrude Stein and Robert Wilson, a book on satirical and autoethnographical ‘cannibal’ texts from Herman Melville to Marianne Wiggins, and most recently a collection of essays on “dangerous masculinities” as well as several essays on Caribbean writers (e.g. Aimé Césaire, Shani Mootoo) and transatlantic cross-currents (e.g. French surrealism and the Caribbean). Together with Ilka Saal, he co-edited *Passionate Politics: The Cultural Work of American Melodrama from the Early Republic to the Present* (2008), and with Annette Keck a double issue of *Gender Forum* on “Gender and Humour: Re-Inventing the Genres of Laughter” (2011). His research interests include film, television, drama, gender/queer/masculinity studies, popular culture, and transatlantic negotiations.

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Nadina Vișan is Associate Professor PhD in the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Bucharest, Romania. Her main interests lie in the direction of historical linguistics and translation studies. She is the author of the books *A Discourse Representation Theory Analysis of the Perfect in English and Romanian* (București, Editura Universității București, 2006), *Sentence Processes* (București, Editura Credis, 2006) and is co-author of the textbook *English for Advanced Learners – A Text-Based Approach* (București, Editura Cavallioti, 2006).

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Ruxandra VIȘAN

Ruxandra Vișan is a lecturer in the English Department of the University of Bucharest (Faculty of Foreign Languages). The courses that she teaches focus on the history of the English language. Her PhD thesis, defended in 2009, centred upon Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary 1755 attempting to promote an interdisciplinary approach that emphasises the connection between the dimensions of “language” and “culture” in the shaping of modern discourse. As a linguist, she has received training in theoretical and applied linguistics and was part of the research groups in generative linguistics at the University of Siena (2002) and the University of Utrecht (2004). Since 2004, she has been a member of the British Cultural Studies research group, University of Bucharest and, since 2008, a member of the Centre of Excellence for the Study of Cultural Identity, University of Bucharest. For the academic year 2007-2008, she was awarded an OSI-Chevening PhD research scholarship at the University of Oxford, Pembroke College. She is an

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Brigitte Zaugg is Associate Professor (*Maître de Conférences*) at the Université de Lorraine (Metz, France), where she teaches American literature and translation. She wrote her doctoral dissertation on Ellen Glasgow and has published several articles on the Virginian writer, as well as on Kate Chopin, Willa Cather, Margaret Mitchell, Bobbie Ann Mason, and Edith Wharton. Her latest article, “The Art of Irresolution in Edith Wharton’s ‘The Lady’s Maid’s Bell’,” was published in *Les Cahiers de la nouvelle / Journal of the Short Story in English* 58 (Spring 2012). Among the most recent books she has co-edited are *L’Espace du Sud au féminin* (2011) and *Dislocation culturelle et construction identitaire* (2012). She is a member of IDEA research group.

The American Literature EAAS Study Group on 19th-century literature was established in 2005 during the biennial EAAS conference in Cyprus. The annual meetings of the group offer an opportunity to develop a supportive and inspiring intellectual community, and a forum for the exchange of information and ideas leading to publications in the area.

Participants from the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Turkey took part in the group's inaugural meeting organized by Prof. [Magdalena Zapadowska](#) and [Kasia Kuczma](#) (Adam Mickiewicz Univ, Poznań, Poland) in October 2006. This seminar focused on Fanny Fern's *Ruth Hall*, a bestselling novel by one of the most successful mid-nineteenth-century writers and journalists. The guest speaker was [Marianne Noble \(American Univ.\)](#) In October 2007 during a second meeting at Adam Mickiewicz University, the group examined Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wall-Paper* as well as on her less known novels, *Benigna Machiavelli* and *The Crux* under the guidance of Prof. [Cynthia Davis](#) (Univ. North Carolina) In 2008, Prof. [Verena Lashinger](#) and Prof. [Ralph Poole](#) organized the following seminar at Fatih University in Istanbul in 2008. Prof. [Paula Bennett](#) (Emerita Southern Illinois University at Carbondale) one of the leading voices on Emily Dickinson, moderated the meeting on "Humor in Poems and Parodies by Phoebe Cary." [Seminar Schedule](#) The group held its fourth seminar at the University of Paris X, Nanterre in October 2009, organized by Prof. [Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour](#). The invited guest, Prof. [Jeffrey Steele](#), (University of Madison, Wisconsin) offered a lecture on *Margaret Fuller's Poetics of Transfiguration* which open the floor for formal and informal presentations on various aspects of Fuller's work [Seminar Schedule](#). Contributions were made by [Yves Carlet](#) (University of Montpellier), [Kimberley Engber](#) (Wichita State University), [Kasia Kuczma](#) (University of Poznań), [Verena Laschinger](#) (Univ. Erfurt), [Asun López-Varela](#) (Complutense University Madrid), [Mariana Net](#) (Institute of Linguistics "Iorgu Iordan – Alexandru Rosetti", Bucharest), [Claude Safir](#) (University of Paris VIII), [Jelena Šesnić](#) (Univ. Zagreb Zagreb, Croatia) and [Antoine Traisnel](#) (University of Lille III). Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain was the site for the fifth seminar organized by Prof. [Asun López-Varela](#) in Nov. 2010. Invited guests were Prof. [Gary Williams](#) (U. Idaho), Prof. [Renée Bergland](#) (Simmons College), Prof. [Marianne Noble \(American Univ.\)](#) who presented work on their anthology on *Julia Ward Howe's The Hermaphrodite*. Other guests included [David Asenjo Conde](#) (Universidad Libre Bruselas & Complutense Madrid), [George Landow](#) (Brown Univ.) [Christopher Larkosh](#) (University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth), [Sirpa Salenius](#) (University of New Haven in Florence, Italy), [Carmen Sandulescu](#) (Radio Romania) and [Steven Tötösy](#) (Purdue Univ. Press) [Seminar Schedule](#) Prof. [Sirpa Salenius](#) is the organizer of the sixth gathering in Oct. 2012 at Florence, Italy. The invited guest is Prof. [Farah Griffin](#) (Columbia University). Other participants include [Renée Bergland](#) (Simmons College), Daniela Daniele, [Kasia Kuczma](#) (Adam Mickiewicz Univ, Poznań, Poland), [Verena Lashinger](#) (Univ. Erfurt, Germany), [Asun López-Varela](#) (Univ. Complutense Madrid, Spain) [Sonia di Loreto](#) (Univ. Torino, Italy), [Mariana Net](#) ("Iorgu Iordan -Al. Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics, Bucharest, Romania) [Stephanie Palmer](#) (Nottingham Trent University, UK), [Ausra Paulauskiene](#) LCC International Univ Klaipeda, Lithuania) [Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour](#). (Paris X / Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense), [Ralph Poole](#) (Univ. Salzburg, Austria), Rina Ramdev (Delhi University-Sri Venkateswara College, India), [Maria Holmgren Troy](#) (Karlstad University, Sweden), Carmen Sandulescu (Radio Romania), [Jelena Šesnić](#) (Univ. Zagreb Zagreb, Croatia), [Brigitte Zaugg](#) (Université de Lorraine, France). The topic is *Negotiating Identity: Womanhood, Race, and Slavery in the 19th-century* The 2013 seminar will be held at Bucharest, Romania, organized by Prof. Mariana Net on *Edith Wharton's New York*.

Publications of the group

E-Motion: Sentiment and Technology, Eds. Verena Laschinger & Ralph Poole. Fatih University Press. 2009.

Les réécritures du canon dans la littérature féminine de langue anglaise. Ed. [Claire Bazin et Marie Claude Perrin Chenour](#) Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense. 2011.

Gender Intersex-ions in American and European Cultures. [European Journal of American Studies, EJAS](#) Eds. Marie Claude Perrin-Chenou and Asun López-Varela. Forthcoming 2013.

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