

familiar with Saxon forms of organization, their relationship to the dominant society, and to other minorities. Ethnic “others” and their relation to Saxons, however, are only marginally considered in this study (for example, the few references to mixed marriage), while the limited consideration of the Jews is disproportional to the fundamental position of antisemitism in the self-definition of the Saxon elites.

Nevertheless, the extensive archival research carried out by Tudor Georgescu, especially regarding the welfare institutions founded or directed by Csellner, is helpful for examining bio-political agendas, keeping in mind, however, that not every form of bio-politics and biological determinism is identical with eugenics.

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Performative Contradiction and the Romanian Revolution. By Jolan Bogdan. Critical Perspectives on Theory, Culture, and Politics. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. ix, 218 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £85.00, hard bound, £27.99, e-book. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.235

The Romanian Revolution of 1989 remains a fascinating research topic because of its unexpected inception, violent unfolding, and ambiguous outcome. If violence is the fundamental characteristic of a revolution, then the 1989 regime changes in east central Europe (ECE) were not “authentic” revolutions, inasmuch as violence was almost non-existent, with the conspicuous exception of Romania. Timothy Garton Ash, for instance, wrote at the time: “Nobody hesitated to call what happened in Romania a revolution. After all, it really looked like one: angry crowds on the streets, tanks, government buildings in flames, the dictator put up against a wall and shot” (Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*, 1993, 20). Yet, what happens after a certain event can change one’s perspective on that event, and this is what happened with regard to the Romanian revolution. In his concluding remarks to an international conference celebrating ten years since the 1989 revolutions, the same Garton Ash stated bluntly: “Curiously enough the moment when people in the West finally thought there was a revolution was when they saw television pictures of Romania: crowds, tanks, shooting, blood in the streets. They said: ‘That—we know *that* is a revolution,’ and of course the joke is that it was the only one that wasn’t” (Garton Ash, in Sorin Antohi and Vladimir Tismăneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath*, 2000, 395).

Given the contradictory truths that surround the Romanian Revolution of 1989, which the statements cited above perfectly illustrate, Jolan Bogdan’s book should be welcome as a major contribution to the understanding of the authenticity issue in relation to this particular event. The author convincingly argues that performative contradiction is a useful analytic tool for examining complex, contradictory, and bloody events such as the 1989 regime change in Romania. Most prominently, Bogdan employs performative contradiction to address the discrepancy between performance and proposition with regard to accusations of inauthenticity against the Romanian Revolution of 1989 (8). The author engages with relevant, primarily philosophical texts that criticize or even dismiss the revolutionary nature of the 1989 events in Romania (8–9). At the same time, she makes clear that such an analysis is not meant to defend the Romanian revolution but to examine such accusations, which in many cases “arise from the presence of an internal inconsistency, which is deemed intolerable, or worse, intentionally committed and in bad faith” (18).

One should be aware that certain political discourses and attitudes that accompanied the 1989 regime change in Romania have prompted legitimate criticism. As Bogdan observes: “The presence of performative contradictions integral to the political movements in Romania specifically provokes these accusations” (40). Consequently, the author rightly asserts that performative contradiction is a useful tool for examining both the limits of the Romanian Revolution of 1989 and the internal inconsistencies and specific features of the communist regime in Romania. Performative contradiction can also serve as a tool to explain the perplexing attitude of the many Romanians who continue to believe in communism and in Nicolae Ceaușescu despite the bloody revolution of 1989. As Bogdan states: “What the revolution of 1989 demonstrates is that the overthrow and execution of a dictator operating under the yoke of communist ideology does not amount to the death of communism, nor does it even reflect a break with communist ideology” (101). Equally important, the author contends that gender and class might prove to be performative. Thus, by looking at the “rigid enforcement” of gender and class roles in post-communist Romania one can explain better central issues, such as political instability, economic inequality, or democratic deficit in that country (186).

Within the concluding section of the book, Bogdan demonstrates that performative contradiction, as a conceptual paradigm, proves a “productive and versatile” tool, which can be successfully employed to examine a variety of recent events, ranging from the Arab Spring and the current tensions within the European Union to the ongoing refugee crisis (190). Reading this volume, one becomes more and more aware that performative contradiction is indeed a useful tool, which not only enables new insights into the intricacies of the bloody revolution of 1989 in Romania, but also allows new approaches to worrisome phenomena facing the present day world.

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Vlad der Pfähler–Dracula: Tyrann oder Volkstribun? Ed. Thomas M. Bohn, Rayk Einax, and Stefan Rohdewald. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. 320 pp. Notes. Illustrations. Figures. Maps. €64.00, hard bound.
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This volume originated in an international conference held September 25–27, 2014, at the Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, on the theme “Vlad Dracula—Tyrant or Champion of the People? Controversial Historical Figures in the Danube-Balkan Region.” It yielded, for this publication, fifteen substantive articles on various themes of *Draculiana* from the times of Vlad the Impaler to our contemporary age of global tourism. Edited by three specialists in east European and Russian studies (Thomas M. Bohn, Rayk Einax, Stefan Rohdewald), it is a handsomely produced book, bearing on its front cover the famous Strasbourg pamphlet woodcut image of Vlad dining among the impaled. Let us consider, now, its contents, providing English translations for the original German sectional headings and titles of articles written in German.

Following an overview introduction by the editors, including remarks on the state of the field, the articles are arranged under four sectional headings. The first is “Southeast Europe in a State of Emergency? The Historical-Geographic Backgrounds,” with papers by Paul Srodecki, Hans-Christian Maner, and Castilia Manea-Grgin, the first two being in German and the last in English. Srodecki carefully traces the