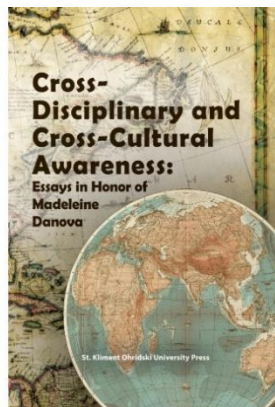


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#### Book Review:

**Vesselin Budakov, Galina Avramova, Gueorgui Jetchev, and Traci Speed (Editors). *Cross-Disciplinary and Cross-Cultural Awareness: Essays in Honor of Madeleine Danova*. Academic Editor: Prof. Valery Stefanov, D. Litt. Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2023, 720 p. ISBN: 978-954-07-5861-9 (Print)** [Веселин Будаков, Галина Аврамова, Георги Жечев и Трейси Спийд (Съставители). Междудисциплинарни и межкултурни изследвания в чест на проф. д-р Мадлен Данова. Науч. ред. проф. д.ф.н. Валери Стефанов. София: Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2023]

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This volume serves as a tribute to Professor Madeleine Danova, who has had a remarkable academic career while performing both scholarly and administrative roles. The Introduction clarifies the concepts of *cross-disciplinary*, *cross-cultural*, and *awareness*, defining the framework for the essays (Vesselin M. Budakov 11-26). Additionally, it provides a brief overview of the volume’s structure and the topics addressed by the contributing authors. *Part I: Literary and Cultural Studies* is divided into sections that represent linked domains of scholarly exploration, including literary theory, semiotics, cultural translatability, etc. *Part II: Teaching, Education, and Language* has two sections, *Teaching and Education* and *Linguistics*, the latter inviting cognitive and cultural transfer studies. The

final part, *Fiction in Translation*, includes an excerpt from Boyan Biolchev's novel *The Migration* (2019), which perfectly complements the collection.

The research topics highlight key areas of Professor Danova's contributions to teaching and pedagogy, reflecting the breadth of her professional experience through papers authored by "scholars and friends she has closely collaborated with throughout her academic career" (V. M. Budakov 17).

A kaleidoscopic description of the volume will enhance readers' understanding of its thematic depth and comprehensive investigations. Part I consists of seven sections organized by geographic focus, academic discipline, and topic of inquiry. The "American Studies" section explores a diverse array of themes. It begins with the origins of the term "multicultural" in Edward F. Haskell's novel *Lance: A Novel About Multicultural Men*, which examines the subsequent decline of uniculturalism (Werner Sollors 31-37). This is followed by an analysis of the relationship between political rhetoric, media, and electoral attitudes (Davies 38-49). The section also addresses the role of cinematic rhetoric in Bulgarian and American film reviews used for propaganda purposes (Svetlana Stoycheva 50-61). Additionally, one author approaches the creation of monstrosity in J. O. Field's late 19th-century Gothic novella *A Kiss of Judas* from the innovative perspective of literary food studies (Ludmila Kostova 62-83). The following papers focus on the diasporic consciousness and complexities of cultural identity (Milena Bratoeva 84-94), the portrayal of death row within the racially hostile environment of E. J. Gaines's *Of Love and Dust* (Mendy 95-104), and the depiction of war in both US and Ukrainian literary settings (Galina Avramova 105-13). This section, drawing on cultural studies, critical race theory, and other disciplines, boasts its breadth and innovative research on food-mediated identities (L. Kostova), as well as its relevance to current debates on multiculturalism (Werner Sollors), identity politics, and media effects on voter opinions (Philip Davies).

The "Canadian Studies" section discusses various aspects of selfhood, including the advantages and disadvantages of fostering an inclusive multicultural environment in Canada (Diana Yankova 117-24), challenges to native sensibility when crossing borders as depicted in immigrant prose (János Kenyeres 125-39), life experiences captured in Métis and Indigenous literature that shape native self-awareness (Katalin Kürtösi 140-47), and the struggles that contribute to fluctuating self-perception in Alistair MacLeod's "The Tuning of Perfection" (Alexander Kostov 148-57). These scholarly minds, addressing societal problems in Canada through various lenses (postcolonial theory, critical multiculturalism, and Indigenous studies), employ interdisciplinary approaches to explore widely debated problems of selfhood.

The papers in the "African Studies" section examine implications crucial for understanding the intricacies of identity and self-esteem. They focus on the historical interactions between Arab communities in Asia and West Africa (Simeon Evstatiev 161-92), the reception of negritude in Africa

as articulated in the works of L. S. Senghor (Rennie Yotova 193-202), the depiction of alienated female characters in South African drama (Kornelia Tancheva 203-16), and the struggles of marginalized youth in the post-apartheid South African *Bildungsroman* (V. M. Budakov 217-38). These works, which engage with postcolonial theory and feminist thought, add value and depth to academic discourse due to their interdisciplinary focus and new perspectives on Blackness, gender representation, and the issues in the post-apartheid era.

The contributions in the “Cultural Studies, Literary Theory, and Textuality” section cover a wide spectrum of topics. They investigate urban space in fiction through the dual lenses of literary criticism and geography (Adina Ciugureanu 241-52) and reevaluate literary canons from the perspective of political correctness (Amelia Licheva 253-60). Furthermore, they assess the integration of traditional humanities with digital technologies (Reneta Bozhankova 261-68), juxtapose literary works from diverse cultures through insightful network comparisons (Roumiana L. Stantcheva 269-83), and elucidate the systematic nature of Julia Kristeva’s method, highlighting *foreignness*, *signifiante*, and *semanalysis* (Miglena Nikolchina 284-92). They also study the breakdown of literary works into meaningful components using semantic thresholds (Angel Igov 293-99) and address the challenges of translating prose within an ideologically competitive landscape as reflected in Professor Zhana Molhova’s Afterword to a 1969 collection of *Contemporary American Short Stories* (Milena Katsarska 300-13). Employing diverse methodologies, the contributing authors integrate their critical perspectives into current scholarship, adding depth through geocriticism (A. Ciugureanu), balanced analyses of genre norms (A. Licheva), complex grids of cross-cultural parallels (Stantcheva), and other innovative techniques.

The “Literature and Semiotics” section delves into the complexities of consciousness and the interplay of signs. A key topic is Stephen Dedalus’ tension with literature and history as he confronts existential questions regarding time, identity, and other mind-related issues (Kiril Hadzhikosev 317-28). Another research query is the interaction between sign systems, emphasizing the ontological and epistemological facets of semiosis, as well as connotative signs and relevance theory (Milena Popova 329-39). The authors’ perspectives are rooted in interdisciplinary frameworks that incorporate semiotics, literary theory, and modernist studies. By employing cutting-edge methods to investigate the role of signs and identity in contemporary narratives, these essays exhibit significant potential for advancement.

The section titled “Cultural Translatability and Comparative Literary Studies” comprises two groups of works. The first group highlights various aspects of identity, focusing on the transcultural dynamics between an English original and its subsequent Bulgarian translation (Alexandra Glavanakova 343-56), examining the language-setting dichotomy in Greenwell’s novel *What Belongs*

*to You* in relation to audience reception (Traci Speed 357-67), and exploring the self-other dynamic in Amin Maalouf's *Les Échelles du Levant* (Magdalena Kostova-Panayotova 410-18). The second group centers on dialogue and meaning. It delves into the intricate author-hero relationship through alternative readings of Aleko Konstantinov's *Bay Ganyo* (Dimitar Kambourov 379-95) and analyzes Ferreira's diary *Conta-Corrente* as a cross-genre work that fosters intertextual dialogue with similar texts on a metatextual level (Yana Andreeva 396-409). Additionally, it discusses the influence of ancient sources on Pascal Quignard's *Little Treatises*, particularly the signifier-referent disconnect that shapes the unstable perception of his work (Kristeva 419-28). Moreover, one essay examines Rakovski's fascination with India and his role in establishing Indological studies in Bulgaria (Nikolay Yankov 368-78). By exploring translation theory and comparative literary studies, these contributions provide valuable insights into the interactions between text and culture, demonstrating significant potential to advance fields such as translation studies, literary theory, and the history of scholarship.

The "EU, Media, and Cultural Studies" section addresses key issues such as the socio-economic foundations of the European Union and the development of effective integration policies (Boian Koulov and Bilyana Borisova 431-40), the credibility gap in selecting public media executives and proposed remedies (Alexander Velez 441-48), the political relations of medieval Bulgaria with the Italian Maritime Republics (Simeon Hinkovski 449-60), and the roles of women ethnographers in academia during the formation of the modern Bulgarian state (Mira Markova 461-69). Emerging from studies in media, culture, and society within the European Union, these works provide fresh perspectives on integration, media management, historical contexts, and the contributions of women scholars, shedding light on significant topics in these fields.

Part II of this volume features two thematic sections organized by academic discipline and topic of inquiry. The first section, titled "Teaching and Education," comprises several groups of essays. One group focuses on classroom settings, discussing the internationalization of comparative education and the benefits for students and teachers in exploring unfamiliar educational systems (Michael Byram 475-84). These writings also emphasize the enhancement of multicultural environments through teacher-led interactions (Danail Danov 485-92) and the status of English as a global language, highlighting the necessity of adopting a perspective relevant to cross-cultural diversity (Dimova 506-16). A second group, which provides a methodological and disciplinary focus, examines the promotion of cross-cultural awareness through contemporary Japanese prose (Gergana Petkova and Vyara Nikolova 527-540) and the advantages of a course on Linguistic Hybridization and Creolization within the African Studies curriculum at Sofia University (Gueorgui Jetchev 541-52). A third group of essays covers aspects of the Bulgarian National Revival, including Paisius of Hilendar's views on the origins of languages, particularly concerning Bulgarians and their language (Dimitar Vesselinov 553-58), as

well as the vocabulary themes found in bilingual English-Bulgarian dictionaries intended for educational use (Milena Yordanova 559-64). The remaining works broaden horizons by offering perspectives on the use of art as a medium for social dialogue, particularly in group and intergroup relations (Lucia Malinova 493-97), the essential knowledge that children and adolescents need to navigate technology in the digital age (Bozhidar Angelov 498-505), and legal French courses at Sofia University that balance language skills with legal terminology (Jeanna Kristeva and Margarita Rouski-Vandova 517-26). Collectively, these essays span a wide thematic range and reflect diverse educational practices in our increasingly interconnected world.

The second section of Part II, titled “Linguistics, Cognitive, and Cultural Transfer Studies,” consists of two groups of texts. The first group addresses various linguistic topics, including *-gasm* words related to conceptual, cognitive, and lexical patterns (Alexandra Bagasheva 567-82), the loss of original motivations for loanwords – particularly Anglicisms – and the emergence of new motivations (Nevena Alexieva 583-93). It also examines attitudes toward English pronunciation among Bulgarian and other non-native learners (Snezhina Dimitrova 594-603), the intersections between conceptual metaphor theory and text world theory (Nelly Tincheva 604-15), the use of negative phrases in advertising as attention-grabbing cues (Rumyana Todorova 616-29), and the influence of topic-comment structures on meaning in technical writing (Galina Pavlova 655-71). The second group of works focuses on legal translation, diplomatic style, and language teaching, tackling a Spanish translation of the Bulgarian Code of Criminal Procedure through the lens of *Juristraductology*, an emerging field at the intersection of legal studies and translation (Ludmila Ilieva 630-41), the content and form of diplomatic letters in interstate correspondence (Bisserka Veleva 642-54), and the acquisition of discourse coherence in German-speaking children compared to adolescent learners of German (Eva Meier and Plamen Tsvetkov 672-87). These essays explore contemporary issues from linguistic, cognitive, and cultural perspectives through interdisciplinary approaches.

The present volume features an excerpt from Boyan Biolchev’s novel *The Migration* (2019), translated into English by Traci Speed. This collaboration between the author and the translator effectively bridges linguistic and theoretical frameworks, showcasing the originality of the preceding papers through the nuances of cultural exchange in contemporary narrative styles.

The contributed writings provide fresh insights that promote innovation across multiple disciplines. Their thematic breadth, arising from Professor Danova’s diverse interests, sets this collection apart from more narrowly focused publications. For instance, some individual works or compilations related to Part I center on the theorization of culture, the critical discourse surrounding

the liberal humanities (Surber, ed., 2018),<sup>1</sup> and the significance of literary studies during the transition to the postmodern era (McDonald, ed., 2015).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the compilations associated with Part II explore the role of technology-supported environments in Content and Language Integrated Learning (Graziano et al., eds., 2021)<sup>3</sup> and emphasize the importance of empathy, practical theorizing, and critical reflection in the classroom (Day, ed., 2021).<sup>4</sup> However, what distinguishes this volume is its cross-disciplinary reach and methodologically congruent styles of inquiry.

Due to the efforts of the compilers, the contributions are well organized. In Part I, the authors address a wide range of questions spanning literary and cultural studies, textuality, semiotics, and media. Part II broadens the investigation by integrating linguistics, cognitive studies, and cultural transfer in teaching and education. As a result, each section comprises compatible essays that create a multifaceted yet coherent narrative.

Given its in-depth exploration, interdisciplinary synthesis, and challenge to existing paradigms, this volume aligns seamlessly with the landscape of contemporary research. Despite their fractal complexity, the humanities have responded to technological advances by attempting to identify the potential “grandchildren” of modernism. Terms such as “post-postmodernism”, “metamodernism” (Vermeulen and Akker), “hypermodernity” (Lipovetsky), and “digimodernism” (Kirby) have achieved only limited acceptance. This lack of consensus more accurately reflects the spirit of the age than any attempts to establish a widely recognized label. As research keeps shifting further away from well-trodden paths, its growing pluralism fosters priority disciplines, including philosophical posthumanism (Schatzki), new materialism (DeLanda and Braidotti), the colonality of power (Quijano), geocriticism (Tally), digital humanities (e.g. Moretti), and numerous others. What this volume shares with such avenues of investigation is a firm commitment to cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural thinking. This commitment is evident in Professor Danova’s intellectual pursuits and the essays in her honor. To highlight some of the key contributions once again, they demonstrate the foundations of multiculturalism in prose fiction (Sollors), the socio-psychological dimensions of *otherness* through food-related practices (L. Kostova), and the postcolonial discourse of the South African *Bildungsroman* (V. Budakov). They also discuss the boundary-transcending scope of geocritical analysis in literature (A. Ciugureanu) and the controversial role of political correctness in defining literary canons (A. Licheva). Additionally, this collection expands its cross-disciplinary reach by

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<sup>1</sup> Surber, Jere Paul. *Culture and Critique: An Introduction to the Critical Discourses of Cultural Studies*. Taylor and Francis, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> McDonald, Rónán, ed. *The Values of Literary Studies: Critical Institutions, Scholarly Agendas*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Graziano, Alba, et al., eds. *Pedagogical and Technological Innovations in (and through) Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Day, Christopher, ed., *Policy, Teacher Education and the Quality of Teachers and Teaching*. Taylor and Francis, 2021.



making a typological comparison of intercontinental poets (R. L. Stantcheva) and examining technology-oriented areas of inquiry, including teaching practices and learning environments.

Through its multidimensional framework, this volume will benefit academics, researchers, and (post)graduate students in the humanities – particularly those in literary studies and comparative literature – by enhancing their coursework, teaching, research, and professional development.

Ultimately, in light of the diverse perspectives presented in this *Festschrift*, I highly recommend it to anyone seeking to broaden their expertise and improve their adaptability in today's dynamic academic landscape. It highlights key fields of study, fosters communication among Bulgarian and international authors, and honors the distinguished career of a scholar from Sofia University.