

GUEST EDITORIAL

OUR SPRING ISSUE features a special section devoted to what we are calling “Hidden Europe,” as it emphasizes aspects of European culture that are often forgotten or ignored. The section begins with an essay by Maxime Philippe that seeks to explain contemporary European culture via the Martiniquais thinker Édouard Glissant; his sense that “Europe is becoming an archipelago” perfectly captures the sense of the culture that we are trying to present here.

Having gotten off on that decentring note, the section moves more or less from west to east, including creative work from the continent’s geographical fringes as well as its “smaller” languages, such as Irish poetry from Doireann Ní Ghríofa and Celia de Fréine, Faroese poetry from Jóanes Nielsen, Friulian poetry from Alessio Screm, Croatian fiction from Neva Lukić and Tea Tulić, Serbian fiction from Miloš K. Ilić and Judita Šalgo, Hungarian fiction from Péter Moesko, and Romanian poetry from Cerasela Sprîncenatu. The section also includes several pieces from or about vanished European countries, such as East Germany and Yugoslavia, and other works that provoke connections that we hope readers will find new or surprising, such as between Ireland and Central/Eastern Europe and between European culture and trash collection.

The section concludes with a series of essays that were written as the culmination of an online seminar on European studies that I conducted in the fall of 2020. The syllabus included literature, cinema, history, and politics, along with a dash of sociolinguistics and a *soupeçon* of art history. I had taught an in-person version of this course many times before as the capstone to the European Studies degree at Dalhousie University. Dalhousie’s program is somewhat unusual because degrees from other institutions that bear the name “European Studies” usually focus on politics, law, and economics, and they are generally designed to create new Eurocrats or functionaries in NGOs that serve the European Union. Indeed, most of them should really be called “EU Studies,” and the degree to which “European”

and “EU” are casually taken to be synonymous gives a sense of the pro-EU bias that is baked into most of them. As someone who has written about early television experiments in the Faroe Islands, whose current research profile includes Swiss Studies as well as the history of Georgian cinema, and who (as my contribution to the section shows) is also interested in Andorra, that kind of conflation bristles. Dalhousie’s European Studies program emphasizes humanities approaches, forcing students to learn two languages beyond English and requiring everyone to choose three different departments from which to take courses. The law and politics types are welcome, but during my time running it the overwhelming majority of majors took courses in languages, literature, history, and theatre. By the standards of European Studies, Dalhousie’s program is weird and proud of it.

I approached four former students who I knew would be up for something strange, and they embraced the material with gusto. I figured they would want to cut a bit out of the syllabus, but they insisted on working through it all and even added a few texts. We met twice a week for three hours, and we often went over time. We also had two guest speakers: the polymath historian John K. Cox from North Dakota State University, who translated Bilana Jovanović’s Serbian novel *Psi i ostali* (Dogs and Others, 1980) and who contributed translations to this special section from German, Croatian, and Serbian writers, and the Montreal painter and filmmaker Alexandre Chartrand, who made the film *Avec un sourire, la révolution!* (And with a Smile, the Revolution!, 2018) about the referendum on Catalan independence. When the seminar was over, it had all gone so well that we wanted to have some memento of an ephemeral experience that would never be repeated in quite the same way, so we set out to write something that would give a sense of what we had read and how we had talked about it by way of a non-fiction anchor to this special section, since this, like dropping anchor, is the last thing you will read as your voyage across Europe comes to a close.

We hope this section shows Europe in a new light and offers readers new ways of thinking about that most European motto, *in varietate concordia* (united in diversity).