

## Editors' Note

# Humanities at the Crossroads

## New Theoretical, Systemic, and Quantitative Approaches

**E**VEN IF any generalization runs a series of risks, we do not feel we are mistaken in claiming that the tradition of the humanities—especially the Romanian one—is marked by a three-pronged reluctance: towards theory, towards systemic approaches, and towards quantitative analysis. Without disregarding certain historical circumstances (first and foremost communism, which imposed its singular interpretation in the field of humanities), we contend that this reluctance can be most plainly explained as a self-defense mechanism when faced with a set of instruments that seemed to challenge or even downright cancel the uniqueness of literary phenomena and, through this, the main *raison d'être* of the disciplines studying them. However, the unstoppable ascent of “Theory” (with a capital “T”), the automated analysis of various sets of Big Data and, generally, the interest awarded to empirical and systemic research have occasioned an accelerated spread of theoretical, systemic, and quantitative approaches in the field of humanities during the past decades.

The present special issue of *Transylvanian Review* sets out to prove the viability of some of the most recent instruments from the field of humanities, but also to critically assess them. Even if it primarily consists of literary studies, the issue has an interdisciplinary character, bringing together contributions and perspectives from fields such as linguistics, philosophy, cultural studies, social history, translation studies, and computer science. In fact, this is illustrated by the issue's very sections, as they do not follow a disciplinary criterion, but rather problems and critical methods. This being said, the opening section (“Genres and Devices”) explores subjects such as the classification of novelistic forms, children's literature, and news, as well as the heuristic relevance of new instruments such as constructivist theory and network theory for the humanities. The second section (“Translation/Transnation”) addresses, at the level of philosophical, literary, and journalistic discourse, the way in which translation can contribute not only to the dissemination of ideas and forms across borders, but also to the creation of transnational communities. The link between national and transnational, however, is not considered as a frictionless interaction and even less so as a matter of consensus. Precisely these points come into focus in the issue's third section (“Peripheries, Centers, Worlds”), wherein the identity crises diagnosed in the previous section are analyzed from different angles: individual, regional, global, etc. Given that a significant part of the processes dis-

cussed within this issue pertains to social and epistemological transformations generated by new communication channels and media, the final section (“From Quantitative to Computational Analyses”) shows how digital humanities can be employed in traditional philology. Not least, the issue also contains a review article and several reviews discussing some of the books that are crucial in explaining the processes illustrated across several contributions.

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