that von Born perceived no single Romanian identity, as he did not differentiate Romanians in Transylvania from those in the Banat. It is worth noting, too, that he did not use the notions of *eastern* and *western Europe*; the main tension in his "account" is between *empire* and *province*. Another probe of travel impressions takes up the imaginative tack of showing how Romanian writers in the nineteenth century either rejected overtly unflattering foreign descriptions of Romanians or else used them to point out shortcomings at home and urge reforms. A survey of how Romanians were portrayed in British newspapers and literature between 1945 and 2000 leaves a general impression of neglect and ordinariness, with the exception of Olivia Manning's Balkan trilogy.

The matter of Romanians observing foreigners is handled in a thoughtful evaluation of Dinicu Golescu's "Account" of his travels in the west, published in 1826. These travels, Drace-Francis reminds us, were, first of all, a record of Golescu's discovery of Europe, but he notes that Golescu also used what he saw to press for changes at home and thereby bring Wallachia closer to Europe. Drace-Francis rightly wonders how much influence, if any, his book had in Wallachia, since he finds no mention of it in nineteenth-century literature. A final chapter traces the increase in volume and change of tone in travel writing about the west in communist Romania after the mid-1960s. The point could be made that despite the Ceauşescu regime's growing political and economic isolation in the 1980s, the ties of Romanian writers, scholars, and travelers to Europe were by no means cut.

These well-researched essays, taken together, make useful additions to aspects of Romanian cultural historiography and invite further inquiry. The author's analyses of literary texts suggest productive avenues for more deeply understanding the intellectual climate of the times, and he has made a strong case for the value of travel literature as a historical source.

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Birth Certificate: The Story of Danilo Kiš. By Mark Thompson. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013. xiii, 355 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $40.00, paper.

This book begins with a translation of Danilo Kiš's brief autobiography, "Birth Certificate." In keeping with the style of much of his literary work, Kiš's autobiographical notes are a concisely expressed piece that covers some two pages of typescript. Mark Thompson makes use of his subject's own words by taking each sentence, or a part thereof, as chapter headings and spinning out the story of Kiš's life and family with a wealth of kaleidoscopic, if not encyclopedic, details. His father's Magyar Jewish origins mingle with his mother's Montenegrin background and his own Yugoslav affiliation. The account of Kiš's childhood is filled out with remarks given by people from the village in which he grew up, their memories of him adding local color, even if one may be justified in questioning their accuracy after so many years. His student years in Belgrade at the Department of World Literature and Literary Theory, where he was introduced to a broad range of foreign authors and literary styles, are described. This was clearly a significant period in his life, and Thompson has interviewed many people from the author's early days, their recollections providing some interesting biographical material. His conversations with those who knew Kiš in his later years, including internationally well-known writers, offer further insights into his private world. As the story of the author's life unfolds, Thompson turns to discussion of Kiš's major literary works. These are sensitive readings of his novels and stories, but much

of what is said about them is not new; there are many more analytical examinations of his literary work. It is a shame that on occasion the book contains striking errors: for example, a photograph, claimed to be of Kiš with his friend, the Serbian artist Leonid Šejka, and the back of Bulat Okudzhava's head, actually shows Okudzhava's face and the back of Šejka's head.

Readers of this book will find that Thompson adds little to the existing scholarship on Kiš's literary works and contributions to international letters. When he does comment on Kiš as a writer, Thompson usually points to the international influences on his work or to coincidences in style and theme which his subject shares with authors from abroad, but he has little interest in the domestic context of his work and is dismissive of what he unjustly describes as "the realist inertia of his Yugoslav milieu" (117). While he rightly emphasizes Kiš's talent, it is unfortunate that Thompson ignores the changes in the Yugoslav literary scene arising from the polemical debates between modernists and realists in the 1950s which prepared the ground for the upsurge in literary experiments that would be characteristic of Kiš's output, of the work of other writers of his generation, and of those of the younger writers who came after them. Thompson mentions some of Kiš's contemporaries (such as Filip David, Mirko Kovač, and Borislav Pekić) as the author's friends, but he leaves aside their collective impact. The lack of serious reference to the Serbian and Yugoslav contexts from which Kiš emerged as a writer, and where there remains the clearest engagement with the legacy of his literary career, means that this biography often seems to serve as a contribution to the construction of Danilo Kiš's mythic persona.

The most significant weakness in Thompson's approach to his material is the book's structure, which is based on Kiš's own words. It is known, and Thompson acknowledges, that Kiš assiduously and deliberately managed the creation of his authorial image. His interviews and essays, in which he expounds his literary credos and primes his critics on points about his forthcoming books, are clear testimony to that management style. A biographer faced with this fact must adopt a critical stance to what Kiš says about himself and to the impressions he has left on others—a stance that is largely absent here. Thompson's biography also contains some glaring omissions in the life of his subject: for example, there is no mention of Kiš's membership in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, an odd oversight considering Thompson's remarks about the role of this organization in Serbia's cultural life.

This is a lively, if superficial, exposition of the life of one of Yugoslavia's greatest writers. Its errors, simplified approach, and omissions will probably not be of great concern to a general audience, among whose number it might attract new readers of Kiš's work. In that case, it will have served some useful purpose.

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Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. Ed. Catherine Portuges and Peter Hames. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013. viii, 288 pp. Index. $94.50, hard bound.

This is a highly successful and welcome volume that brings together much information and insight about "cinemas in transition" in a region that has itself been transitioning for some twenty-five years now. The book assembles some of the most prominent names in central and eastern European cinema scholarship and includes contributions on Bulgarian, Czech and Slovak, East German (querying "Is There Still an East German Cinema?"), Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Ukrainian, and post-Yugoslav

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