Romania and the Quest for European Identity: Philo-Germanism without Germans, by Cristian Cercel, London, Routledge, 2019, $160.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9781472465054, $39.16 (eBook), ISBN 9781315606873

In this book, which could have had the same title as the doctoral thesis it relies on, *Philo-Germanism without Germans: Memory, Identity and Otherness in Post-1989 Romania*, defended at the University of Durham in 2012, Cristan Cercel introduces extremely accurate observations about a widespread and widely known phenomenon in Romania, namely, philo-Germanism without Germans. The title chosen by Cercel is both confusing and revealing. It is confusing for any scholar in the field preparing to go through this book, since no previous work has openly and systemically approached the given phenomenon as an expression of the Romanian quest for European identity. The title becomes revealing from the first chapter and continues to remain so until the last one. The author's arguments take us back to the key moments in Romanians' modern and contemporary history that have generated emulation of Western European cultural and civilizational patterns, particularly of the German one. This symbolic embrace flourished during the reign of Carol I (1866–1914)—member of the Sigmaringen branch of the Hohenzollern royal family—with the influence of the Habsburg Empire in the region. It survived during the Cold War, intensified after the fall of the Berlin Wall, with Romania's joining the EU, and continues nowadays, during the presidency of Klaus Iohannis (member of the Saxon community in Romania).

The topic of philo-Germanism without Germans in Romania is not new. An important number of related questions are attentively followed and reported by the academic publications on the matter. Cercel revisits the relevant literature of social and political sciences, written in Romanian, English, and German, distancing himself from the nationalist-essentialist presuppositions and the subjective-Germanophile approaches. He punctiliously analyzes the press articles and statements on the subjects in focus and succeeds in renewing the overall perspective on philo-Germanism. This phenomenon was generally either unexplained (taken as a given) or quasi-explained in relation with the good experience of living together in ethnoculturally mixed communities, the positive image of Germans in Romania, and their significant contribution to Romanian society. Trying to build its entire demarche on the argument that the "post-89 Romanian philo-Germanism without Germans is strongly connected with Romanian aspirations toward Europeanization" (5), the author mainly examines the intimate and causal connection between, on the one hand, the discursive self-colonization, self-orientalization, and generalized self-disparaging views of Romanianness and, on the other hand, the narrative transformation of Germans into "a resource for Europeanness" (167) or into "agents of Europeanization" (149). According to Cercel, the liminality (Maria Todorova's notion) and the in-betweenness that characterize both Germany (*Mitteleuropa*) and Romania (as a part of Eastern Europe) largely explain the naturalness of the given narrative transformation based on projective identification. In a permanent quest for affirming their European belonging, Romanians have found or wanted to find the evidence for their distinctiveness in Eastern Europe in the German presence in Romania. The German historical interest in Southeastern Europe and the continuous process of projective identification with Germans during no less than eight centuries finally led to "connections between representations of Germanness in Romania, Romanian identity and memory discourses, and visions of Europe, of the West and of the Occident" (13).

Cercel's book includes nine chapters, all with suggestive titles, a solid structure, and thematic intersections. The first chapter, "Only Another German Can Jolt Us out of Our Eternal Boycotting of History," predominantly about enthusiasm among public intellectuals regarding Iohannis's nomination for the presidential elections in 2014, sets up the main challenge of the book. The second chapter, "Between the West and the East in Europe," explores the historical and contemporary evolutions of philo-Germanism without Germans. The third chapter, "Germans in Romania: A Brief Historical Background," starts from the first German settlement in Transylvania, in the

12th century, and finishes with Ceaușescu's socialist Era (when the Romanian Germans became objects of assimilationist politics, ethnic homogenization, and folklorization). The fourth chapter, "The Self and the Other," is mainly about the construction of the Romanian-German reciprocal representations, particularly of the Saxon superiority in Transylvania, as this process was reflected by the most influential Romanian cultural movements in the 18th and 19th centuries (*Școala Ardeleană*, *Junimea*, etc.). The fifth chapter, "A Valuable and Unmistakable Contribution to the Life of Romanian Society," summarizes the general Romanian perception about the Romanian Germans, disseminated by mass media and among politicians after 1989. The sixth chapter, "They Who Have No Germans, Should Buy Some," points out, on the one hand, the ambiguous official acknowledgements of German suffering during deportation in the Soviet Union and, on the other hand, the interpretation by Romanian Germans of their history after the Second World War as a history of victimhood. The seventh chapter, "The Rich Villages around Sibiu and Brașov Have Been Invaded by the Gypsy Migration," pictures the conservative traditional atmosphere in which philo-German journals like *Formula As*, *România liberă*, and *Dilema* situate Europe, Romania, and Romanian Germans today. Dichotomic representations of Germans and Hungarians, as well as Germans and Roma, are also approached by the author in the text, demonstrating once more that West-East relationships are key for explaining representations of the Self and the Other in Eastern European countries. This assumption is strongly supported by other examples from Central and Eastern Europe introduced by Cercel in the final chapter, "Conclusions." The particular historical contexts and the related "symbolic geographies" seem to be strongly responsible for anti-German prejudices (in Czech Republic, Poland) and also for the positive representation of Germans (in Estonia, Romania).

While the book offers highly original insights into ethnic representations, chapters could have been structured differently in order to enable an easier understanding of the chronological aspects analyzed. Along similar lines, the author may have ended his endeavor by suggesting more new avenues of research. The book definitely represents an extremely valuable contribution to the literature on philo-Germanism and, moreover, on the discursive and identity construction of the Self and Other in post-communist countries. Further research on these topics from a sociopsychological perspective may enrich the range of existing interpretations in this area of study.

Andreea Zamfira [ID]
Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
andreea.zamfira@ulbsibiu.ro
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Decentralisation and the Management of Ethnic Conflict: Lessons from the Republic of Macedonia, by Aisling Lyon, London, Routledge, 2016, xxii + 248 pp., £92.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9781138944114

For decades, "decentralization" has been a buzzword in academic and policy-making debates on ethnic conflict management, ranging from seminal social science texts on how to achieve sustainable peace and durable democracy in divided societies (Reynolds 2002; Lijphart 2004; Roeder and Rothchild 2005) to recent reports by key players in international development practice (World Bank 2011; United Nations and World Bank 2018). Yet despite the ongoing interest in the arguable strengths and weaknesses of decentralization among academic and nonacademic communities, it remains inconclusive whether—and more specifically, under which circumstances—the distribution of certain powers and resources from the central to noncentral levels of government may help to prevent, mitigate, or end large-scale ethnic violence (Bakke 2015; Keil and Anderson 2018).