

**DICȚIONAR DE ANGLIȘTI ȘI AMERICANIȘTI ROMÂNI /  
DICTIONARY OF ROMANIAN ANGLICISTS AND AMERICANISTS  
(DAAR)**

Virgil Stanciu 2015 (Second Edition, revised and expanded)  
Cluj: LIMES. ISBN 978-973-726-905-8 (180 pages)

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Virgil Stanciu's *Dicționar de angliști și americaniști români/ Dictionary of Romanian Anglicists and Americanists* is a welcome and valuable effort to gather, catalogue, and systematize the ever-growing number of Anglicists and Americanists in Romania, influential figures in their respective fields, be they past or present, at the beginning or end of their respective careers, who have shaped in one way or another the public's perception of Anglophone literatures, linguistics, and other various cultural/ field-specific subdivisions.

The cornerstone of such a complex and demanding endeavor is of course thoroughness and accuracy, yet the subjective input according to which the author established the criteria for inclusion should also be taken into account. The validity of any dictionary is chiefly given by its precise and exhaustive nature, which almost always entails some measure or form of institutional support. In the absence of a team of researchers and/ or the financial means to help with the investigative effort, the end product unfortunately appears to not have been able to cover all the existing ground. Although it is unclear whether the absence of certain names from the list is a symptom of insufficient logistic resources or a direct result of the author's assessment, the dictionary does not feature a number of renowned Bucharest-based academia, both rising stars or retired professionals, who for some reason or another did not make the final cut. Understandably, such omissions might chip away at the dictionary's appearance of objectivity and exactness, giving way to possible frustration in an already highly competitive and reputation-dominated field, but they cannot be contested in the least, since any such research endeavor mirrors the preferences and personal opinions of its own author.

As Virgil Stanciu himself states in the 'Edifying Word' (as he chooses to call the foreword to the dictionary), the book is clearly meant as a Romanian Who's Who (dictionary of biography) in the field of British and American Studies, a compendium of relevant names meant to ease the access into a world otherwise closed-off to anyone interested, be they professionally invested members of the research/ academic community or just curious laypeople. The dictionary is a

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comprehensive reference book and biographical record of all the figures who were deemed noteworthy by the author, either having had a significant contribution to the development of the field in Romania or simply been visible enough, circumstantially, to become worthy of attention.

Possible objections by an uninitiated reader might include the lack of a clearly stated system of name sorting and organization. The absence of subject-based sections or at least a broader categorization (such as the already traditional ‘British Studies – American Studies’ distinction made across English departments in just about any Romanian faculty of Foreign Languages) is something of a minus as far as research ease-of-access and efficiency are concerned. However, the book is a decidedly useful tool to turn to when in need of guidance as to who might be the leading expert on a certain topic or niche in an otherwise increasingly larger and more complex field, which strives to include newer and more obscure yet sought-after subbranches every day.

The dictionary is in fact a long list of minibiographies arranged alphabetically, meant to be useful to researchers in need of highly specific details on the life and work of noteworthy Romanian academia members, as well as the evolution of their careers and interests in the diverse environment of the all-encompassing, exceedingly wide-ranging, and ever-increasing field of English Studies. The latter traditionally includes the study of any and all literatures written in the English language, as well as English (socio)linguistics and everything that lies in between – such as the newer and trending field of Area/ Ethnic Studies or all the other versatile, up-and-coming, and highly transdisciplinary research niches that have taken over present-day academia.

The book is certainly a praiseworthy effort to research, gather, and systematize information that would otherwise be too difficult to find, scattered or insufficiently promoted in the online world. The mere existence of this dictionary is highly beneficial to the field of Anglo-American/English Studies in Romania in that it legitimizes the multiple-decade-long efforts of this well-respected—albeit rather marginal – scholarly community to find a voice and achieve a firmer status and the well-merited recognition it had desired for so long.

Concise as they may be, the short bios provided are highly informational, useful for both dedicated students and accidental aficionados. Anyone who fosters an unquenchable passion for all things English (in the broad sense explained earlier) and also exhibits genuine interest in the way the Romanian academe has evolved in this particular area of the Humanities will surely be satisfied with Virgil Stanciu’s dictionary.

As far as possible suggestions are concerned, the existence of an index would have been extremely useful for impatient readers or for those pressed-for-time

researchers only interested in the biographical details of a specific academic and unwilling to browse the entire book in search of an overall view of Romania's Anglo-American scholarly landscape. However, for those chiefly concerned with getting the full picture of a promising field of research unexplored in such a manner thus far, Virgil Stanciu's dictionary is sure to offer a pleasant surprise. Most importantly, the publication of this book comes as a form of much-needed validation and much-deserved acknowledgement for a community of scholars who have dedicated their lives and careers to the English language in all its shapes, forms, manifestations, and ramifications, and whose work and valuable contributions was in dire need of cataloguing and promoting to the outside world.

As a second edition, the 2015 revised and expanded version of the initial 2008 dictionary has been noticeably upgraded. According to the author's assurances in the foreword, the book's most recent edition has benefited from a series of useful additions, which have ensured that all the information is now up-to-date. As such, the dictionary makes for an accurate and reliable resource, with biographic data checked by the entrants themselves. Accessible, detailed, and comprehensive, the dictionary manages to clearly state the personal contribution that each entrant has had to the field of English Studies. Since, contrary to its immediate description, the book is neither tedious nor a heavy read, it could unreservedly be recommended to all public and considered a valuable addition to any academic collection.

Apart from being a compilation of biographical information, the dictionary is also a source of essential data, indispensable for a better understanding of this field's evolution in Romania. To this end, however, it would be preferable that the dictionary's third edition include a few chronological references, which would shed some light on the manner in which the scholarly landscape has been altered over the past several decades by the various historical and ideological changes that Romania has undergone since its first English Department was established.<sup>2</sup> When its first edition came out, the dictionary enjoyed a well-deserved positive critical reception, with renowned British literature professor and translator Lidia Vianu, from the University of Bucharest, writing a laudatory review:

*Virgil Stanciu's dictionary marks the moment when Romanian Anglicists and Americanists were recognized as being part of Romanian culture. It is a homecoming that translators and literary critics who write in English must celebrate. ... Virgil Stanciu puts an end to the marginalization of the Romanian Anglicist. ... I must admit, I read the entire book breathlessly, with the feeling that I*

<sup>2</sup> The Academy of High Commercial and Industrial Studies (today's the Bucharest University of Economic Studies) was among the first institutions of higher education in Romania to have a dedicated English Department. It established its ambitious English Studies program in 1927, before the University of Bucharest. See Dumitru Chițoran, "80 de ani de la înființarea Catedrei de limba engleză la Universitatea din București," *Observator Cultural*, No. 851, December 9, 2016, Year 17/New Series (593)

*had been issued a passport to culture. Up until that moment, I had felt tolerated, lacking a creator's visa.*<sup>3</sup>

In the foreword, the author is disarmingly frank and direct about his intentions and expectations regarding the dictionary, admitting to the fact that such an endeavor is never as comprehensive as one might wish and remains a work in progress even after its publication, in expectation of further additions from benevolent prospective entrants themselves. Moreover, he deplores the scarcity of information and inaccessibility of data altogether that often deterred him in his own research while compiling the dictionary. He therefore admits to obvious yet understandable shortcomings, in the form of notable figures being absent from the compendium of biographies.

It is important to bear in mind that, although straightforward and functional, this dictionary should not be judged solely as a research tool, but above all as a statement from a prominent figure in the field of English Studies – the author, Virgil Stanciu, is a celebrated professor and literary translator—, who simply wishes to put Romania's Anglicists and Americanists on the map by offering them a place in a national Who's Who for today's academic elites:

*Dicționar de angliști și americaniști români/ Dictionary of Romanian Anglicists and Americanists (DAAR) is, to a certain degree, a niche dictionary, but it may very well become interesting to the general public, insofar as the latter does not remain indifferent as to who compiled a dictionary, developed a language learning method, a literary history of Albion or the United States or, in most cases, translated a book or specialized in the works of a certain author. This is an indirect way of saying that DAAR ultimately addresses any cultivated reader, eager to find out to what extent they can rely on the author (translator) of such books and to gather information on the latter's professional record.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Lidia Vianu, "Cenușăreasa culturii," *România literară*, No. 4, January 30, 2009, Year 41 (own translation).

<sup>4</sup> See Virgil Stanciu, *op. cit.*, p. 5 (own translation).