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George Eliot (1819-1880) is one of those very important but elusive personalities whose life and work remains a matter of critical concern. Though literary criticism concentrates mostly on her novels and philosophy, some of her essays deserve special attention, focusing as they do on her work without losing sight of her life. In 1997, John Rignall edited the collection *George Eliot and Europe*, in which contributors assessed Eliot's career in the light of her many connections with the literature, culture, language and philosophy of the Continent, attending not only to her obvious links with countries like France, Germany and Italy but also to other neglected territories like Spain and Greece. As Rignall contended, it could be easily argued that Eliot was probably the most European of English writers of her generation (1997, xi). Along those lines, more recent articles by Helen Small (2012) and Bruce Robbins (2013) have suggested that Eliot's illustration of provincialism was the result of a detailed exploration of the values of cosmopolitanism, and that her criticism of the provincial ended in a pro-national stance (Robbins 2013, 400-401). Similarly, Hina Nazar's essay, "The Continental Eliot," concentrates on the ties between Eliot and Europe, focusing on her role as translator of some of the influential philosophical works of the German Enlightenment (2013, 413). Elinor Shaffer and Catherine Brown take this same cue in *The Reception of George Eliot in Europe*, which is part of a larger series, *The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe*, meant to throw light on the cultural significance of top echelon men and women of letters in European literature. In this new volume, the editors chose Eliot as an outstanding example of a writer whose work and literary connections proved to be truly international, in spite of her making a name for herself based on the "provincial" nature of her settings, characters, and descriptions (viii). The purpose of the collection is both to situate Eliot's production in the European context of her time, and to examine her reception and legacy in terms of translations, editions and reviews of her works. In so doing, the editors aim to shed light on "the processes involved in the dissemination of ideas and texts" (ix), and this constitutes the most important contribution of the collection.

A comprehensive timeline presents the reception of Eliot's work, and includes biographical information and all her translations into European languages as well as relevant criticism by country. A detailed look at this useful aid immediately reveals the steady influence of Eliot's production in an impressive number of national literatures. Part one focuses on Eliot's influence on Northern European countries, and two chapters are devoted to the analysis of her impact in Germany. Gerlinde Röder-Bolton's essay—"The Reception of George Eliot in Germany during her Lifetime"—sets in context the history of Eliot's translations done as part of a programme of editing the English classics, among which Eliot occupied a privileged position from the outset. The chapter delineates how Eliot's novels were first introduced in the country through the cheap Tauchnitz editions. Critics received them unevenly, though, mainly due to their alleged provincialism. Unfavourable reviews were written at the time about the outdated morality of her novels or their fake realism, while she was avidly read in English by the educated middle class, and her works discussed in fashionable literary salons. The second chapter charts the comparative growth of publications both by and about George Eliot in East and West Germany, during her lifetime, and before and after reunification until 2013. Anika Bautz aptly describes how gender, class and politics explain why Eliot was a favourite with the German audience. Epilogues to the German editions are given special attention in the chapter, since they contributed to the dissemination of Eliot's novels.

Diederick van Werven focuses on the lasting influence of Eliot in the Netherlands, and studies both the translations of her novels, exhaustively enumerated, and the reviews that followed. The references to critical studies by Dutch scholars and the final section on "Spinoza Connections," though interesting and relevant, depart from the initial focus of the essay. Chapter four analyses the reception of Eliot in Sweden. It looks both at her decisive influence in contemporary times, as well as in the 1880s, a period which the authors, Git Claesson Pipping and Catherine Sandbach Dahlström, associate with an ambivalent response from critics and scholars. The most engaging sections of the essay are those dealing with the mutual influences between Eliot and Swedish novelists like Victoria Benedictsson (1850-1888), and with Eliot's twentieth-century presence in university curricula and PhD dissertations. The waves of translation and academic research in Denmark are next explored by Ebbe Klitgård in chronological fashion. Eliot was keenly received in her lifetime, but attention receded dramatically in academia after 1950. Finally, Marie Nedregotten Sørbø's excellent analysis of Eliot's reception in Norway offers an insightful study of two periods of translation of her works, the first culminating and ending in 1919 on the occasion of the centenary of her birth, and the second from the mid-twentieth century to now. The author skilfully detects deletions and changes in the translations that help to illuminate the drift of Eliot's reception in the country.

Part two is dedicated to the significance of Eliot's works in Southern Europe. Alain Jumeau's "The Reception of George Eliot in France" pays tribute to John Philip Couch's

classical study (1967) which analyses Eliot's influence until 1939. For his part, Jumeau mentions Simone de Beauvoir's admiration for the Victorian author, whose reputation she advanced among feminist scholars. However, Jumeau laments the neglect of Eliot's novels in France, especially when compared to other Victorian classic writers like Dickens, and considers the poor quality of the first translations as one possible cause for this situation. Three chapters on the Italian reception of Eliot follow, two of them focusing on the impact of *Romola*. The first—"The Reception of George Eliot in Italy: 1868 to the Present," by Maria-Luisa Bignani—explores the role of translations and scholarly studies, the most relevant of which are Mario Praz's essays of the 1950s. Next, in "*Romola* on Home Ground: Then and Now," Franco Marucci reflects on the critical attention paid to this novel based on Italian sources, often colliding with Bignami's previous chapter. Finally, Francesca Bugliani expands on the fortunes of *Romola* in England and Italy, by tracing its impact as regards translations and film versions. She speculates on the reasons for *Romola*'s popularity, and concludes that it created a favourable picture of the nation that was appealing to the new democratic currents that were sweeping the country (195).

María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia's detailed approach to Eliot's travels into Spain and the influence of her novels through translation and critical work comes next. Her conscientious study first traces Eliot and Lewes's immersion into Spanish culture and their later travel to Spain. Lorenzo-Modia aptly demonstrates the echo of Spanish literature and culture on Eliot's production, as well as her influence on contemporary Spanish writers like Leopoldo Alas "Clarín," Benito Pérez Galdós, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Rosalía de Castro. The critic moves further to assess the merits of the Spanish translations of Eliot's novels, explaining how her reception was mediated by censorship under the Franco regime. A final section of the chapter is devoted to assessing Eliot's moderate impact on Spanish culture in recent years. This is followed by Jacqueline Hurtley and Marta Ortega Sáez's analysis of Eliot's reception in Catalonia. The authors first situate the early translations of Eliot's work in the late nineteenth century in the context of Barcelona's openness to European culture, giving it the flavour of a truly cosmopolitan city, and of its flourishing book trade, in which remarkable figures like Josep Carner i Puig-Oriol (1884-1970) found inspiration in Eliot's characters (241). A couple of Eliot's shorter pieces have been translated more recently into Catalan and Valencian, *The Lifted Veil* (1859) and *Brother Jacob* (1864) respectively, with differing fates. The former story was the first work by Eliot published after the Franco regime, and the latter was, according to the authors, "the riskier publication of the two," since it was meant for a minority, translated into Valencian for a younger audience (255).

Part three is concerned with the impact of Eliot's production in a large number of Eastern European countries. Two chapters analyse her preeminence in Russian publishing and academic circles. In the first of them, Boris M. Proskurnin distinguishes three periods of influence: the first being from her lifetime to the Bolshevik Revolution, the second coinciding with the Soviet period, and the third spanning from 1991 to

the present. The essay explores, in the first case, the popularity of Eliot's works as well as the connections to influential Russian novelists like Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883). Aspects like "the nature of her realism" (270) receive special attention in this first period, suggesting Eliot's decisive contribution to the development of the Russian realist tradition. Natalia V. Gubernova's chapter assesses Eliot's impact in the two later periods, characterized by censorship, especially during the years of the Soviet Union. Interest in Eliot's work, however, revived in the second half of the twentieth century, though attention once again declined at the century's end.

The relationship between literature and politics is also under inspection in some of the chapters that follow, particularly those about Bulgaria and Poland which explore the reasons why her influence paled when compared to other famous Victorian writers. Some of the causes put forward include the length of her novels and her convoluted style, which complicated the translator's task. However, Vesela Katsarova's essay on the Bulgarian reception of Eliot indulges perhaps too much in the descriptions of the translations. The assessment of Eliot's reception in the Czech lands differs a little from the situation described in the earlier chapters. Zdenek Beran argues that in comparison with contemporaries like Dickens or Thackeray, Eliot's shorter production as much as the complexity of her novels may be two reasons that explain the place she occupied among Czech and Slovak readers. In spite of it, Beran demonstrates that strong links did exist between Czech intellectuals and the Victorian writer (303). Hungarian readers, as Mihály Szegedy-Maszák notices, had early access to Eliot's works through the cheap Tauchnitz editions, though later efforts were made to render Eliot in the vernacular in the early 1860s. However, Adina Ciugureanu highlights that her work was not translated into Romanian before 1940, with the exception of the 1893 translation of *The Mill on the Floss* (357). The early currents of Eliot's popularity in Romania were grounded on her provincialism (353), though later on, the writer was appreciated by Romanian feminists, for whom "Eliot became the symbol of freedom of mind, intelligence, creativity and a successful career" (355). The final chapter, by Georgia Farinou-Malamatari, is related to Eliot's reception in Greece, a short history that only begins in the 1980s, the main reasons for this being the popularity of the traditional historical novel, and also the fact that only the classics of the European canon and the French novels were translated into Greek, excluding other major writers.

All in all, Shaffer and Brown's new volume is a major aid for research on Eliot's work, as it brings to the fore an invaluable amount of scholarly material. The multi-faceted analysis of Eliot's resonance in more than fifteen European nations reveals interesting comparisons and contrasts, and offers a complex social and political picture of Europe in the last one hundred and fifty years. It also follows the recent trends in literary history as it tries to understand the import of a writer's contribution in the light of her life and literary relations. *The Reception of George Eliot in Europe* is in its erudition a major achievement, especially since it concerns a writer who can be rightly called universal.

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