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*In Memoriam and
in Loving Memory of Karina (1975-2024)*

*Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.*

*Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.*

*Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance, fall away.*

*We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance of
dark, cold
caves.*

(Maya Angelou, "When Great Trees Fall")

With the passing of Ana-Karina Schneider, a world has broken into pieces. Not only my world, but the world of all those who have known her, be they in Sibiu, or thousands of miles away. Rarely does it happen that an individual should touch so many lives, influence such a large number of people, and mean so much to so many human beings. Yet, in an astonishing way, our dearly-beloved Ana-Karina has meant the world to so many of us – she has been the embodiment of kindness, patience, understanding, but most importantly, of competence in everything she said or did. One is hard-put to pinpoint what one valued most in her: the amazing human being she has been, the capable scholar whose solid research has been a feast to our minds, the resourceful editor-in-chief of American, British and Canadian Studies, the journal that she has elevated to an unprecedented degree of excellence, or the memorable teacher and mentor she has been for over twenty-five years.

However, since Ana-Karina considered herself to be, first and foremost, a teacher, it is here that I will begin my humble tribute. A very

gifted teacher who found great joy in sharing her knowledge with the students she valued so much, Karina delighted in teaching and educating others. She shared with Yeats the conviction that “education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.” And what fires she has ignited... Sober and distinguished in front of her students, tactful and encouraging, she excelled in teaching an impressive number of English subjects – from courses on Early English Literature, 17th and 18th century English Literature, 20th century American Literature, Modernism / Postmodernism, Theories of the Novel, at BA level, to Trends in 20th Century Anglo-American Criticism, 21st Century Comparative Literature, and special seminars on W. B. Yeats and D. H. Lawrence at MA level. She supervised innumerable BA and MA papers in all these fields, though her favorite writer remained, until the end, Jane Austen, whom she resembled in so many ways.

Her passion for literature, which was a vital part of her life, prompted her to open a reading club almost twenty years ago, welcoming not only students but all lovers of literature. “The Chocolate House,” as she suggestively called it, was the haven where she could retreat to cultivate reading habits, to rejoice in the beauty of fiction, to converse with anybody who delighted in reading, as well as to encourage students to write, to draw out the best in them. “Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man,” Francis Bacon used to say, and Karina fully agreed with him in this respect.

For the sake of the students she treasured so much, Karina took the pains to earn her habilitation which would entitle her to supervise doctoral students en route to their doctorships. This is a field in which she could have done so much, could have helped so many students achieve their full potential, given her erudition, her high standards, her dedication and her inspiring mentorship to young researchers. “What a teacher is, is more important than what s/he teaches.” She knew instinctively that being is more important than doing, though she has worked as much as most of us would achieve in three lives.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, her role as a mentor was the one Karina prized most. She has influenced countless students who saw in her a model not only as a researcher, but, most importantly, as a moral paragon. Despite being very demanding, she acted like a magnet,

attracting students who were fascinated by her impeccable English, by her brilliant and penetrating mind, which was as beautiful as a garden of roses in full bloom, by the patience with which she knew how to incite young minds. She was a beacon, whom you could not but notice, a light that shone steadily. A pure soul, clean and transparent, Karina was always eager and happy to share her knowledge, which was remarkable. There was magic in her – she knew instinctively how to draw people towards her, how to shed light on the positive aspects in everything she encountered, how to celebrate life and people. She loved to communicate, she knew how to listen, she laughed heartily and was an adorable conversationalist. Her sense of humour was inexhaustible, and she would be amused by life's queer things. She would also make so much fun of herself and would always belittle herself, she who was "large, who contain[ed] multitudes."

Part of the rich legacy she has bestowed on us is also the American, British and Canadian Studies journal whose editor-in-chief she has been for so many years. She has proved, in this capacity, unmatched professionalism, remarkable vision, unabated rigour and excellence, transforming the journal into a first-rate publication recognized as such both in Romania and in the wider world. It is here, in this journal, that she has invested herself, her energy, her time and her resources. The journal offered her the platform from which she could mentor young researchers, not only from Romania, but from all over the world. She derived great joy from being introduced as the editor-in-chief of American, British and Canadian Studies journal, which has truly been her baby.

But Karina has also been a scholar in a class of her own, who will be remembered for her sharp mind and her valuable contribution to Faulknerian scholarship and to American Literature in general, as well as British Literature, and, more recently, Irish Literature. She carried out vast projects in which she undertook large-scale periodizations of literary trends as in "9/11 and the Dystopian Imagination: Towards a Periodization of Contemporary American Fiction" (2017). However, she alternated such vast-reaching surveys with studies on individual writers whom she would contextualize and analyze with surgeon-like precision: Critical Perspectives in the Late Twentieth Century. William Faulkner: A Case Study (2006), The Literature of Identity in the USA: Women

Novelists of the 20th Century (2014), Understanding Anne Enright (2020), as well as very well-documented lecture notes for students. In this plethora of valuable studies, the monograph on Anne Enright holds a special place, as it testifies to an abiding interest in Irish literature, culture and traditions, but also a knack for analysing female writers, whose merits she knew how to illuminate. She has also published an impressive number of articles, among which worth mentioning are over eight entries on Jane Austen alone, and various others on Byronism, Thomas Hardy, Kazuo Ishiguro or Anne Enright in the reputable Literary Encyclopedia (online).

While Dr. Schneider will always be celebrated as an accomplished scholar, her pleasure in conversing with her peers also needs to be remembered. She took great delight in attending conferences, and in recent years, in recognition of her merits, she has been constantly invited as keynote speaker to various academic events. Furthermore, she was herself the engine that would set in motion the department team at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, with whom she organized so many memorable conferences, among which Infinite Londons (2007), American Studies Reconsidered (2010), Contact Zones in the Global World (2011), Literature and Music (2012), The International Faulkner (2013), Reading Matters. Text – Cultures – The World, (2016), Craving Planet Earth – Literature and Food (2019), which were not only exquisite academic events, but also opportunities to meet new people, to converse with them, to show them her beloved Sibiu and its surroundings. Karina also turned these conferences into opportunities to introduce students to the world of research, to whet their appetite for sharing knowledge, to show them the value of cross-cultural dialogue. Once a teacher, always a teacher. We never realized how fortunate we were to have somebody like Karina who thought big in everything she did.

Karina rejoiced in travelling, in meeting new people, in seeing new places. From the USA, to China, Brazil and all over Europe, she felt at home everywhere among people, learning from them, sharing with them, discovering and finding herself in and through them.

But more than anything else we celebrate Ana-Karina as a rare friend. It is, again, baffling to realize that she has been a dear friend to so many of us. It is her rare friendship that we have all craved. Her

magnetism was remarkable, and we would orbit around her, knowing that we would be enriched by simply being with her. She loved people, she trusted them even when they disappointed her, hoping against hope and moving on no matter what. She had a heart as big as the world, and a world as beautiful as her heart. She had room for all of us in her heart, and we all became part of her world. And when the end came abruptly, striking such a heavy blow to us, and raising so many questions, she left as graciously as she had always lived.

As a colleague, she has been as reliable as the Northern Star, so strikingly empathetic, so generous and so kind. She lived in this vainglorious world breathing into it the scent of heaven, showing us that there is beauty everywhere, if only one had eyes to see it. She seemed to have all the time in the world for each of us, as if time were infinite. Never in a hurry, she seemed to be above time, living in a dimension in which time expanded. Until there was no more time...

To me, Karina has been the epitome of serenity and warmth, the pillar supporting my world. Unassuming in everything she said or did, she had all the reasons in the world to be conceited. Yet, she preferred to keep a low profile and give everybody a space to be. She has always been at peace with herself, with her mission in life, which she has carried out exquisitely. She has shown us how to live, how to love our neighbour, how to follow the right measure in everything and never give in. She has shared her immense soul with everybody around her and has enhanced all of us. It is in so many ways that she is irreplaceable.

Dearest Karina, your soft voice, your special charm, your gentle ways, your inspiring presence will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered by all of us, your admirers! Our world will never be the same without you! We have been so blessed to have you as our companion, though we never took the time to think of what a treasure we had been given! Until there was no more time...

ALEXANDRA MITREA

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