CURE, CARE & DUTY

AN INTERVIEW WITH
DR. CHRISTIAN MORARU

SEPARATION IS AN ILLUSION

“We specialize early in my home country, so from high school through college, I studied Romanian and other literatures, including English, intensively. Then I went to Indiana and did a double Ph.D. in comparative and American literature.

“My generation was drawn to the American writers of the 1960s and 1970s because we saw them as models of political resistance. Those authors provided models of how to speak back to and against existing arrangements of culture and power.”

“I take pride in my UNCG title of distinguished professor in the humanities. My work unfolded at the crossroads of the history of ideas, modern literature, ethics, and politics. As an English professor, I have tremendous appreciation for the neighboring fields that make my work possible. We tend to think of literature as separate from the real world, but that separation is an illusion.”

LITERATURE PROVIDES FUNDAMENTAL INSIGHTS

“Literary studies are crucial for the welfare of a democratic society. We’re surrounded by stories. You turn on the radio, and there it is, a narrative someone is trying to project. It’s important people understand what a narrative is, how it works on them.

“Obviously, a poem cannot cure cancer. But what happens or should happen in literature and humanities classes is the exploration, direct or not, of the very notion of cure. Why is it important to cure something, to care for something or somebody? How indebted are we to others?”

“Before biologists or physicists get into their labs, they need to value notions like curing and curing, opening up one’s mind toward others, critical thinking, and innovation. This is what the humanities teach, and this is foundational in terms of both further learning and citizenship, of what it means to be a good citizen.”

COSMODERNISM AND GEOMETHODOLOGY

“I’m flattered that ‘cosmodernism,’ a term I introduced in a 2011 book, is widely used. That monograph focuses on a transitional moment in American culture—the 1990s and 2000s—when we’re moving past postmodernism. On a transitional moment in American culture—the 1990s and 2000s—when we’re moving past postmodernism.

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“I’m aware of the so-called ‘instruments’ surrounding me. Everything happens or should happen in literature and humanities classes is the exploration, direct or not, of the very notion of cure. Why is it important to cure something, to care for something or somebody? How indebted are we to others?”

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“The more we recognize in things attributes traditionally set aside for humans, the more we have to rethink the way we behave toward non-human others.”

“I try to do away with the distinction—and hierarchy—between subjects and objects. We’re all objects, or ‘subjects’ which means, among other things, that we all have some kind of capacity to affect others. A rock, a tree, the coffee mug on my desk—we’re all capable of causing events together as part of our entanglements.

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