Editors' Foreword

EMBRACING CULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH ENGLISH

This issue brings together specialists from different countries and different fields; literature, cultural studies, linguistics and translation studies; united by their intercultural approaches to literary, cultural, or linguistic phenomena. It is dedicated to literature, cultural studies, and translation studies.

Dana Bădulescu's asserted aim for her paper intriguingly entitled *On Emerson's Dream of Eating the World* is to show that literature is not a simple depiction of the world, it is an act of creation and transformation that helps readers escape their daily lives. In order to support her thesis, the author invites us, as readers, to embark on a literary journey where we encounter great writers and thinkers of different ages and cultures, from Harold Bloom, Alberto Manguel, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jorge Luis Borges, to Salman Rushdie, William Butler Yeats, Charles Baudelaire, Wallace Stevens, James Joyce, Gabriel Liiceanu, Mircea Eliade, just to name a few. The author tackles several issues connected to writing and reading. She considers the complex relationship between books and readers: the act of reading produces pleasure, but it also implies intimacy, connection, and freedom. Another aspect examined is writing as a process: creation, imagination, forcing the limits of experience, god-likeness, magical encounters. In fact, for many writers, the universe is a book, faring through ages and languages to reach its readers or a labyrinth, a library, a song. The ability to read becomes a key to understanding the universe. The discussion naturally leads towards the relationship between literature and myth, tradition, language and translation. The author's conclusion is that literature can be seen as a way of "embracing the world" in its "cultural and linguistic diversity" (17) – the creator absorbs it, and then transforms it, in creating another world, the literary one, while the reader becomes a code-breaker, a bridge between worlds.

With this as an introduction, the following articles reflect the complicated relationships between literature and communication, literature and the world, literature and memory, literature and language.

Gothic discourse questions claims of rationality, self-control and sanity, and an unperturbed sense of stability through exposing hidden fears, desires and violence. Ana-Cristina Băniceru's paper *Gothic Discourse in Jeffrey*

Eugenides's 'The Virgin Suicides' – Challenging Suburban Uniformity and (Re)imagining 'The Other' looks at American suburbia through gothic lenses in an attempt to unmask false assumptions of uniformity, harmony and tolerance and shows that the reality behind closed doors is one of secrets, violence, confinement, persecution, and alienation. This terrible story of abuse and suicide is seen through the perspective of a collective narrator, the other members of the suburban community, at once appalled and fascinated by the Lisbon girls. Making use of recognizable gothic elements, otherness and the fear of contagion and invasion, the haunted house, the adolescent body and sexuality; the novel calls into question and eventually dismantles the utopian desire to contain "the other," to rationalize fears and create a uniform, harmonious world. By concluding that "all selves are to a large degree gothic" (33), the author suggests that the failure to understand "the other" comes, in fact, from the lack of knowledge of one's own self. The novel also exposes the danger of uniformity, of casting people into the marginal and hence dangerous position of the "other" as the result of their firm assertion of individuality against the community's attempted assimilation and erasure.

Storytelling, therefore, has a terrible force of constructing and deconstructing realities, representing the truth, or creating an alternative, fictional reflection. In Eugenides's novel, the members of the suburban community, gazing upon the closed doors of the Lisbon house, re-imagined them, rather than trying to know their realities. Cristina Chevereşan's approach to Ramona Ausubel's novel *No One Is Here Except All of Us* reinforces the importance of storytelling in a narrative about persecution, migration, the Holocaust, and resistance to trauma through recreating the past. The novel is autobiographical only to a certain extent; the protagonist, Lena, is inspired by the author's grandmother, who was born in a small Jewish village in Romania and eventually decided to emigrate under the threat of the Second World War. The realities of those times are filtered not only through the memory and subjectivity of those who experienced them, but also through the storyteller's distance in time. Telling the story is not a simple desire to remember the family's past, but a duty to and a legacy for the next generations as a part of the terrible and yet necessary narrative of the Holocaust – a trauma that affected communities in many other ways than the incarceration-and-termination experience.

Lena's experience in Ramona Ausubel's novel is a story of two continents and an intercultural experience. So is the experience of Isabel in Henry James' novel *The Portrait of the Lady*, though the resulting tragedy is of a very different kind. In her paper *Mutual Misunderstanding: Intercultural Competence and the Unconscious/Conscious Dialectic in Henry James' 'The Portrait of a Lady',* Monica Cure approaches this acclaimed novel from the perspective of cultural differences, self-consciousness, and the development of

intercultural competence in the main character as well as her friend and foil. Isabel Archer and Henrietta Stackpole are two young American women who come to Europe and experience this cultural contact in instructively distinct ways. Isabel appears to be socially and interculturally competent, wonderfully integrated in the European environment, though she remains a mystery both at home and abroad. Her attraction to Mme. Merle and Gilbert Osmond comes as a result of focusing on similarities; Isabel, thus, is easily fooled as to their differences. The paradoxical result of Isabel's ability to adapt to others is what makes her marriage a tragedy. Henrietta, on the other hand, is more cautious, less socially competent, and aware that a similar language might hide serious cultural differences. Henrietta is "culturally unconscious" (50), a term that James theorized in an essay written just prior to the novel that does not mean naïve, but, on the contrary, hypersensitive to cultural differences. Cultural unconsciousness is, in fact, an important stage in the development of intercultural competence. Henrietta refuses to change her behavior to please the others or to be assimilated, as she comes to Europe mainly to observe and write about differences. Eventually, her story is successful, and difference leads to a happy marriage to an Englishman.

The dialogue between cultures, languages, and the visual arts in our journal is enriched by Gabriela Tucan's comparisons between prose and painting in the paper *Exploring Fragmented Worlds: Hemingway and Hopper*. Both artists, using different forms of expression, represent the human disjointedness, despair, and loneliness resulting from a meaningless, alienating and fragmented world. The experience of the Roaring Twenties and the trauma of the period between the two world wars, the rapid economic changes brought about by industrialization, the fast development of cities, the growing impersonality of the urban spaces, in sum, the experience of modernity, are expressed in the paintings and short stories of these two artists. By carefully observing the world around them in detail, both Hopper and Hemingway manage to probe beyond society's veneer and reach the deeper meanings of human experience.

Intercultural competence, communication, language(s) are important steps in the creation of literary works as well as in their reception. Raluca Ștefania Pelin's article, *Emotions and Emotional Intelligence beyond Words in the Poetry of Rose Ausländer, Selma-Meerbaum Eisinger, Paul Celan, and Dan Pagis*, deals with the complex relationship between poets and readers, as the response to poetry is both intellectual and emotional. The aim of the paper is to demonstrate the importance of readers' emotional intelligence in understanding the message of a poem and in decoding its meaning. In order to exemplify the theoretical assumptions, the author calls on a series of poets from Bukovina: Rose Ausländer, Selma-Meerbaum Eisinger, Paul Celan, and Dan Pagis. All these poets were confronted with a common obstacle: language. Living under occupation, they were faced either with writing in their native tongue, knowing

that this might be a dangerous act, or turning to another language to express the trauma of loss, pain, uprootedness, and fear. The paper also deals with the importance of capturing the feelings of the original text in translation and with the necessity for translators, as ideal readers, to possess emotional intelligence competences in order to be successful in their enterprise.

Raluca Pelin's plea for insightful translations via emotional intelligence anticipates the shift of interest in the second part of this volume, which is devoted to translation studies and some of its traditional as well as more recent directions of investigation: translating literature, TV commercials, audiovisual translation and, last but not least, the translation of political discourse. These diverse approaches all underline the importance of translation in intercultural communication. Ulf Norberg's study, *Translating Humorous Elements in Children's Books – Astrid Lindgren's Bill Bergson Books in English and German* analyses the translation of humorous terms in a series of children's books, written by this extremely popular Swedish author. On the one hand, Norberg draws attention to the fact that there are subtler humorous instances in the original books that may, sometimes, get lost for various reasons in translation. On the other hand, he shows that, although all translations into German and English were undertaken by professionals who managed to successfully capture the comic scenes and funny language in their texts, the Bill Bergson Books have always been more popular in Germany than in Britain. Interestingly enough, the reasons for this popularity are found by Norberg in the contexts of reception rather than in the merits of the translated texts themselves. Aspects such as the perspective on childhood these books provide, or the inevitable competition between Astrid Lindgren and other original and translated authors in the target cultures are more likely to account for their different impact on the translation readers. In addition, the different mainstream ideologies immediately after World War II in the two countries, the radical change of attitude with regard to child pedagogy and foreign values in Germany may also justify – at least to some extent – these different levels of popularity.

Diana Oţăt organises her discourse around the key concepts of "localisation" and "glocalisation", which are also key strategies in dealing with intercultural communication and translation nowadays. Her corpus-based investigation of the translation of TV commercials shows how a series of stereotypes are transmitted cross-culturally, but also that cultural variables may affect the manner in which a specific TV commercial is transformed and adapted to fit a certain social and cultural space. Thus, the author duly highlights the importance of analysing the target culture background as well as the target culture constraints in processes of localisation. Conversely, glocalisation requires no preliminary adaptation or adjustment, but is directly designed to meet foreign expectations. The minute quantitative and qualitative analyses applied to the commercials in the corpus provide plenty of empirical evidence to

the research hypothesis that contemporary translators must appeal to a variety of translation strategies in order to adapt to the rapid changes brought about by globalization.

Raluca Sinu also draws on corpus-based methodology in order to explore the presence of (various kinds of) audiovisual translation (AVT) in Romanian TV news programmes. More specifically, her purpose is to relate situations of use to features and functions of audiovisual translation. Starting from the distinction between news translation and AVT, Sinu aptly notices that the latter is a very good illustration of all three types of translation (intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic) in Jakobson's well-known classification. Moreover, the various forms of AVT (media/live interpreting, voice-over, intra- and interlingual subtitling, signed language interpreting) tend to be used, on a more or less regular basis, in particular situations, for particular news programmes and audience profiles. The small-scale survey of several news broadcasts of the Romanian public television service particularises the whole investigation providing interesting insights into the way AVT is used in broadcasting news in Romania. The survey results point to the extensive use of AVT in order to ensure accessibility to international news (interlingual subtitling, media interpreting), accessibility of domestic news (intralingual subtitling), and to a lesser extent for providing services for the hearing impaired through sign interpreting. This detailed presentation leads to the conclusion that AVT is yet another way of embracing not only cultural but also sub-cultural diversity (e.g. Deaf culture).

Titela Vîlceanu, in her article *Does Translation (Ex)change Everything? A Framework for Political Translation,* discusses a timely matter for the adaptation of translation strategies in the contemporary world. The focus is on theorising the translation of political discourse by taking into consideration linguistic and cross-cultural perspectives. From a wide range of disciplines approaching issues of language and power - Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Political Discourse Analysis (PDA), Analysis of Political Discourse (APD), Political Linguistics (PL) - the author favours the last perspective in view of its 'outwardness' and its capacity to accommodate actions and language practices of both politicians and citizens in a process of dynamic contextualisation. Moreover, she adopts Chilton and Schäffner's position with regard to the discourse-based approach to politics which allows for "a specific kind of empirical evidence" frequently disregarded by other approaches. The EU discourse as a distinct type of political discourse investigation is then examined, with due emphasis on the process of Europenisation which, like globalisation, requires communication patterns at transnational level. Within the discipline of Translation Studies, political translation is regarded as a distinct form of institutional translation, which reveals "contemporary issues of widespread concern (financial crisis, shifts of power,etc.)", while in so doing it tends to

become increasingly hybrid both in terms of the disciplines involved and the methods of investigation. Rejecting strict delimitations and compartimentalisation of knowledge, the article pleads for a framework of investigation for political translation that is dynamic, fluid and flexible enough to encompass the plethora of issues which tend to be associated to it. Once again, "the cultural embrace" reaches here supra- and transnational levels of investigation.

From Emerson's dream of "eating the world" to the intricacies of translating (and filtering?) political discourse; from Henry James's theory of unconscious vs conscious cultural identity to the role of the media translation in global communication; from handling emotions in reading, writing, and translating to the humorous effects of Lindgren's children's books across cultural and linguistic barriers. All in all, the amazing variety of topics and approaches in this volume serves a common purpose: to underline the importance of intercultural communication by celebrating diversity and acknowledging difference. We hope that each essay in its own way and as a collection inspires greater cultural and linguistic understanding.

Monica Cure, Iulia Milică, Rodica Dimitriu