

EDITORS' FOREWORD

This issue fully illustrates the spirit of the journal. It includes twelve studies that are crosscultural, intercultural and interlingual in various ways. Seven of them focus on literary and non-fictional texts including novels, dramatic texts, autobiographies and one biography, as well as anthropological explorations of death, using a variety of “lenses”, as the reader will easily notice, whereas five of them are illustrative of various other interests – from language to psychology, sociology, and ethnology, as well as to translation studies and diachronic studies approached in a syntactic and semantic perspective.

Cristina Stanciu's study focuses on the Americanization process illustrated in one of the most popular immigration novels, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), whose author, Abraham Cahan, a Lithuanian-born Jewish American socialist, managed to render “both the immigrant character's desire to Americanize and his simultaneous reluctance to Americanization through an emphasis on David's trans-cultural identity.” The study balances literary history and a more in-depth approach to how racial and ethnic identity were defined and negotiated in the first decades of the twentieth century in the United States, particularly interesting in the case of an autobiographical novel through which the author himself performed his process of Americanization. Race, ethnicity and social and cultural exclusion are also discussed by **Ludmila Martanovschi** in her study, a text that originated in her involvement in the postdoctoral program *The Diversifying Greek Tragedy on the Contemporary Stage* created by Professor Melinda Powers. The study uses two rewritings of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Rita Dove's *The Darker Face of the Earth* (1994) and Luis Alfaro's *Oedipus El Rey* (2010) to address not only the contemporary relevance of the ancient Greek story, but also the possibilities these recontextualizations offer in terms of exploring the complexity of race relations past and present in American society. The two authors' backgrounds, African American and Chicana, respectively, enable them to tell in a dramatic form the stories of the main characters' estrangement from their respective homelands, their biological parents and their communities. If Rita Dove chose to focus on the slave experience in the American

South of the nineteenth century, Luis Affaro's Californian Oedipus has to adapt to a life in prison at present, yet, as the author shows through her analysis of the texts, traumatic experiences of racial and class discrimination make the characters more similar at a deeper level than the settings would suggest.

Autobiography writing in North America is most often investigated as the locus of various intersections – ethnicity, gender, religion, social status. What one seems to find in Letty Cottin-Pogrebin's autobiography, *Deborah, Golda, and Me. Being Female and Jewish in America*, is, as Ștefana Iosif suggests, a successful effort to bring together, in a “both-and” endeavour, all the sides of a multi-faceted personality. Such intersections and hyphenations, once accepted and integrated, become further steps in the healing process, taking the protagonist further and further away from previous deracination.

The article written by **Constantin Ilaș** brings to the foreground the concept of trauma literature as reflected in post 9/11 texts. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the novel of a very young and very gifted writer, Jonathan Safran Foer, investigates the “9/11 effect” at the transgenerational level in a complex and balanced manner. The protagonist is a nine-year-old boy exceptionally endowed, who is desperately trying to make sense out of his father's death, encounters various people and learns about various traumas, including that of his own grandfather. Finally, both Oskar and his grandfather manage to get over their respective tragedies when they reunite. As the author of the article states, “uneven exchanges between people of different ages and mentalities make the reader understand that nobody is beyond trauma and nobody should be judged at face value.”

The following two articles investigate the rituals and the spiritual and medical practices involving the body: vampirized and therefore tainted, or already a corpse threatening to disturb the balance and security of the community in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (**Ioana Baci**u), or trapped between life and disappearance into ashes or into the ground as a corpse undergoing the necessary procedures – more or less spiritualized – as documented by Caitlin Doughty's anthropological investigations of the rituals of the dead in different cultures (**Cristina-Mihaela Botîlcă**). Ioana Baci's text invites the reader to reconsider the ways in which Bram Stoker's novel presents medical procedures, superstitions and male authority embedded in the patriarchal structures of oppression, as the two scientists of the novel, Dutch van Helsing and John Seward, identify and punish apparently aberrant female behaviour, using science and a declared desire to contain a threat to the social order to abuse the female body in rituals of exorcism that are nothing but metaphorical representations of the various forms gender oppression took in late 19th century. Still in the realm of symbolic acts reflective of communal and personal social and spiritual practices, **Cristina-Mihaela Botîlcă**'s analysis of mortician-writer Caitlin Doughty's anthropological work brings to the fore the

dangers of globalization and estrangement from ancient beliefs about dead bodies and how they impact the living and the community to which they still belong, at least before they find their new “home.” Drawing on Doughty’s various non-fictional books on the subject, canvassing a wide range of attitudes to death as well as to the bodies of the dead in cultures across the world, the author discusses the philosophical implications of the entire process of mourning for and disposing of the deceased since the bodies themselves hold a symbolic value that is relevant for the entire community.

Ana Maria Iftimie’s article ends the series of studies from the fields of literary and cultural studies with a text discussing Kenneth Branagh’s biopic *All Is True* (2018), the most recent representation of the English playwright’s life based on various historical sources and Branagh’s own understanding of Shakespeare as a playwright and a real author, creatively rewriting the little information on his subject as the story of Shakespeare the husband and the father, with a personal life complicated by his literary career and his absence from home. The study offers a close reading of key scenes from the film, arguing that Branagh’s undertaking is a necessary one in a popular culture context, and, we might add, in a post-truth era, when the truth has become a very personal (and emotional) affair.

Ligia Cruț tackles the issue of the body and gender in the evangelical tradition in a way that is new in the Romanian academia. Her study starts from identifying and analysing lexical and rhetorical elements and evolves towards psychological, sociological and ethnological interpretations. The corpus selected dates from the last ten years and illustrates present-day tendencies manifested in American evangelical (nonfictional) discourse related to the “purity” movement.. The female authors she selects for the study of the „purity” movement “advocate for necessary acts of rebellion (against the system), bodily and intellectual autonomy, determination in affirming egalitarian ideas, acceptance of the difference, integration, non-dualism, rejection of misogyny and patriarchy, and recovery of true meanings of sexuality, body, and womanhood.” Writing about sexuality in the evangelical culture is not an easy task. Yet the message of the four authors selected is “in stark contrast with the misogynist and patriarchal systems they denounce and ultimately abandon.”

In the study coordinated by **Lars Blöhdorn** the realm of print advertising is tackled in order to analyze how masculinity is constructed in this section of a magazine for men, namely *GQ*. The authors’ declared purpose is to investigate “the phenomenon of 'male language' from a sociolinguistic perspective focused on gender”. Their evaluation methods are both quantitative and qualitative and they reveal that “current advertising campaigns construct 'male lifestyles' around products by using adjectives that convey simplistic and straight-forward

messages, but also go beyond that by taking into account non-linear approaches when targeting a male audience.” More firmly on linguistic ground, a somewhat surprising comparative-contrastive approach is proposed by **Tania Zamfir**, who discusses in a diachronic perspective the syntactic functions of the English preposition *to* and the Romanian *la* “at/to,” and the semantic roles they trigger. They seem to have had similar functions as Dative markers with ditransitive verbs, but have evolved differently in the history of English and Romanian ditransitives, in such a way that *la* “stretches beyond the marking of the Dat and it is used as a Genitive marker in present-day dialectal Romanian”. With the next study, the reader will have to understand the possible correlation between the comparison of two Romanian versions of the same English text and the general considerations related to typological classification of languages and to admit that a researcher in the interdisciplinary field of translation studies is supposed to have a good knowledge of (at least) two languages on their different linguistic and socio-cultural levels, as well as the ability to detect the specific strategies of a translation act. That is what **Ruxandra Drăgan**, the author of the last study in this issue, demonstrates when she approaches two Romanian versions of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by J. K. Rowling, focusing on linguistic aspects that differentiate English and Romanian as representatives of the Germanic and of the Romance family, respectively, i.e., the presence in the former of more manner-of-motion verbs, as well as of dynamic prepositions as distinct from the corresponding static ones. She focuses on Goal of Motion constructions in the two languages and shows that both translators use strategies that confirm Talmy’s typological classification of Germanic and Romance languages into satellite-framed and verb-framed languages, respectively.

Finally, two book reviews complete this issue bringing into discussion two volumes that can be placed within the applied linguistics frame, *An Introduction to Translator Studies* and *Discourse Studies in Practice*, both published in 2020. One review comes from **Titela Vilceanu**, a specialist in Translation Studies from the University of Craiova, who reviews the most recent book of Attila Imre, from Transylvania University of Braşov. This time Attila focuses on *Translator Studies* as a possible (sub)field of Translation Studies and he “overtly states that translators should become more visible (drawing on Venuti, 1994), and should raise the status and prestige of their profession”, as the reviewer points out. The new volume is evaluated as “well-grounded research” which critically, constructively and creatively exploits the mainstream literature and provides examples of good practice and includes “useful guidelines for translation coaching”. The other review, by **Oana-Maria Franţescu**, focuses on Sorina Chiper’s *Discourse Studies in Practice*, “an accomplished effort of demonstrating research methods of discourse analysis and sampling illustrative texts” for the students. Chiper’s option goes towards investigating linguistic behaviour in

present-day “real life” and includes an extensive interest in the branding strategies of several Romanian universities, starting from their obvious efforts to expand their institutional value in the direction of profit-making enterprises, as well as an interest in „the semiotic ballet” performed by public authorities and private entities identified in the discourse of local council meetings, media campaigns, political declarations and even documentaries. Chiper is acutely aware that democracy “entails a higher level of linguistic manipulation than any form of non-democracy”. The reviewer underlines the author’s particular merit of raising “awareness as to the serious ethical issues that come with using language in order to exercise power”.