

INTRODUCTION

Under the title *Form and Diversity in Representation. Language and Cultural Studies*, we propose an issue that collects the contributions of Romanian and foreign researchers from partner universities, whose common feature is the ability to approach new *forms* supporting the type of cultural content that can relevantly *represent* contemporary European society and society at large.

Thus, the issue celebrates our ten-year cooperation with Aix-Marseille University and with the CAER (Centre aixois d'études romanes) research centre in particular, and illustrates the openness towards languages and cultures that go beyond the Romance linguistic area, specific to this French laboratory and demonstrated by the cooperation with ECHANGES (Équipe sur les cultures et humanités anciennes et nouvelles germaniques et slaves), LESA (Laboratoire d'études en sciences des arts), LIF (Laboratoire d'Informatique Fondamentale) and LPL (Laboratoire Parole et Langage) from the same university.

The section of the volume centred on aspects pertaining to the form, issues and evolution of the graphic novel in the Germanic languages propounds a novel research object whose relevance is confirmed both by the methods and theoretical framework required by its analysis (linguistics, comparativism, the psychomechanics of language, stylistics, terminology, as indicated by the section coordinators) and by the domains that stand to benefit from this kind of research (philosophy of language, language teaching, translation and translation theory, contemporary sociology, the education and development of a European consciousness). The result? A new perspective on a *form* that has caused reservations for a number of reasons, some of the most frequently invoked being its artlessness, its facile reading, its less educated readership, while in fact this form presupposes a degree of fusion between the codifying and reading acts that is rarely demanded from other kinds of literary production. The names and contributions of those who ensure this change of perception are mentioned by the section coordinators, our colleagues Sophie Saffi and Catherine Teissiere.

The section adjacent to the one dedicated to the cooperation with the French centres includes for the most part contributions by researchers established within the department of Scandinavian languages and literature of our university, a department with a tradition that spans more than 25 years, focusing on studies in Norwegian language and literature, accompanied by a number of external contributions. The studies in this section represent as many research directions developed and consolidated within the department of Scandinavian languages and literature and within the doctoral studies programme dedicated to the Scandinavian space, both of these marking singular achievements in the Romanian academic context of the past quarter century. At the core of this section lies the interest for a particular way of perceiving diversity. Thus, Ioana-Andreia MUREȘAN looks at the manner in which Knut Hamsun observes *the American way of life* in the volume *Fra det moderne Amerikas aandsliv (Din viața culturală a Americii moderne – contributor's translation)*. Focusing on the contemporary Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgård and employing concepts such as *autobiography*, *autofiction*, *performative biographism*, Ștefana POPA identifies criteria that ensure the classification of this author's work as a *proximate genre* delineating three possible types corresponding to the concepts used to support the argumentation. For her part, while investigating the thematic universe of the novel *Odinsbarn* by the Scandinavian writer Siri Pettersen, Cristina VIȘOVAN analyses the result of re-writing myth/myths and the expansion of mythical properties to include *the world we live in*.

Moving over into the area of translation studies, Ștefana POPA working with Ioana-Andreia MUREȘAN prove that the translation act *tends to become an effort to understand the manner in which cultural identity, values and attitudes are expressed through language*. Roxana DREVE focuses on a novel whose significance lies in its outlining the role of trauma, Vigdis Hjorth's *Hva er det med mor*, a novel in whose world trauma is approached in relation to the way in which womanhood and motherhood affect intergenerational relationships. In the same direction, but this time within the British imaginary realm, Caterina M. GRASL discovers in the universe of Eliza HAYWOOD's work the limits of verbal communication and the possibilities of compensating for those by resorting to a *language of bodily signs* to express emotional states. Still circumscribed by perception, the study of Begoña A. Regueiro SALGADO discusses women's literature in 19th century Spain, where authors such as Casta Esteban, Carolina Lamas de Letona, Blanca de Gassó and Rosalía de Castro succeed in overcoming the limitations implied by their status of *men's spiritual supporters*, legitimising their own participation in the literary world.

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In this way, the section opens and ends with contributions pertaining to the Romance linguistic area. The interest of Giovanni ROTIROTI in the funeral songs included in Brăiloiu's compendium, his endeavour to identify connections between Celan's metaphors and the mentioned oral sources and, last but not least, the comparative study, within the Romance linguistic area, of a lexico-grammatical class carried out by a CAER team (Sophie SAFFI, Ștefan GENCĂRĂU, Virgine CULOMA SAUVA, Oana Aurelia GENCĂRĂU) are each an expression of the diversity of cultural forms and aspects included in this issue.

(Translation from Romanian: Ioana Nan)

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