

INTRODUCTION

This volume is centrally focused on critical discourse analysis and how language defines our world and the social relations between individuals. The authors that contributed to this volume were interested in exploring the relation between language and identity because language contributes to the shaping of one's identity, as it can also be shaped by a particular individual. By examining the social contexts, the contributors studied relevant issues in language and communication, such as gender stereotypes, racism, and other social inequalities in society, hence their insight into sociopolitical context, power structures and abuse/misuse of language in society. Within the broader context, the title of this volume reflects three main approaches to discourse (socio-cultural, religious, cinematic) through which one can define one's identity, highlighting the interdisciplinary analysis.

First, "bridging discourses" refers to the process of how discourses interact and how their analysis scrutinizes the role of language in the construction of identity. People position themselves and are placed in a certain position by others through discourse; furthermore, people's positioning can lead to the claiming, accepting or resisting certain identities. About claiming and resisting identities from the perspective of gender is the paper written by Cătălina Bălinișteanu-Furdu and Daniela Anisie ("When masculinity meets fashion in *Vanity Fair* – a possible subversion of the masculine by the feminine?") which deals with the definitions of masculinity within gender studies, masculinity studies and the male sex role identity paradigm, and then with an analysis of the male and female protagonists in William Thackeray's novel. Both authors aimed at showing how the man's identity alters its boundaries in the 19th century with the rise in popularity of dandies and with the men's increasing interest in fashion and decor. Practically, the Victorian masculinity, known for its brutal and oppressive nature (at least shown to women) heads towards a more 'effeminate' form perceived by critics as the subversion of the masculine by the feminine as women were attributed the interest in fashion, in well-manners, in decorous behaviour and speech, whereas men were ascribed more active roles. Masculinity is further subverted by a female protagonist who challenges social boundaries and norms by defying the male gaze, by appropriating 'masculine' traits and by using intelligence, beauty and power of seduction as tools to climb the social ladder.

The pre-eminence that medieval court society gives to masks, without really worrying about the reality that lies behind them, is highlighted in Veronica Grecu Balan's article ("*The best knight vnder shild. Fierté féminine et exemplarité masculine dans Ipomadon*"). By studying the astonishing recurrence of the phrase "the best knyght vnder shild" in the Middle-English translation of a XIIth century anglo-norman romance, *Ipomédon*, the author manages to highlight its capital importance within the narrative. In a desperate attempt to solve misunderstandings about the true nature of his characters, whose inconceivable behavior puzzles the reader, the translator uses this phrase to draw our attention on the rigid rules that

govern medieval court, separating men from women and nurturing their blindness and inability to distinguish truth from false appearances.

The subversion of one's role in society appears also in Cătălin Bărbunță's survey (« La littérature plaisante face a la censure: le *Chasse-Ennuy* de Louis Garon et la reserve de tout de dire ») on jesting literature and the *facétie*, in particular, where the monks' roles in the medieval society is criticized by depicting them in most scandalous episodes. C. Bărbunță starts by presenting a few important details about farces and jests, how they were victims of censorship for many centuries because they were sometimes obscene and too intrusive, hence the creation of *indexes* which were meant to indicate which works from the jesting literature were allowed by the Church to be performed in front of an audience or to be read. The author sees censorship as a symptom of the contemporary civilization that wanted to impose a degree of respectability on the public. No matter how restrictive those *indexes* were, the writers of jests and farces succeeded in inserting their critique in their works – a subtle critique, yet a more subversive one. The survey ends with a short comparison between Louis Garon's work and Boccaccio's *Decameron* because both writers wanted to expose the corruption of the Church people in the medieval times.

An interest in the voyages to the Holy Land seems to be also shown by Luminița Diaconu in her paper about the identification of the emotions experienced during a pilgrimage (« Nompar de Caumont et les émotions du pèlerinage »). First, the author explains Nompar de Caumont's motivation on setting off for such a long journey, then she analyses the rhetorical means through which feelings are either expressed or suppressed before he undergoes the voyage and during the experience of a pilgrimage in the 14th century to avoid possible conflicts generated by his absence from home or by his encounter with various categories of people along the way. The analysis reveals de Caumont's suffering and determination when facing all kinds of challenges: from storms at sea to missing his wife to doubting his survival and despair. All these emotions present the medieval mentality regarding pilgrimages to the Holy Land and de Caumont's book serves as a valuable map of Christianity in the medieval times.

Crina-Oana Gociu continues in her paper (“Bridging Buddhist - Christian language. An exploration of the religious register”) the discussion on religion and reiterates the main idea of this journal: of “bridging” discourses and approaches to discourse. The author chose two texts belonging to the religious register (*The Holy Bible* and *The Buddha Replies to the Diva-The Teacher*) to study the vocabulary features, word classes, derived words, verb features, pronoun features, main clauses and subordinate clauses, as well as the non-linguistic features of these texts (such as the use of numbers for verse and chapters or the use of capital letters). C.-O. Gociu's analysis is meant to demonstrate that language is not a static entity, it evolves over time. In the case of religious texts, especially if these are transmitted to future generations and other nations, the translators play an important role because they bring their own contribution to the final version of the texts, consequently, the identity of the original text is altered, but not ruined, since the participants understand the ideas of this religious discourse.

The next paper (“Humorous effects of speech acts in *Murdoch Mysteries* cinematic discourse”) is a survey written by Zamfira Petrescu, Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu and Raluca Galița which demonstrates how illocutionary speech acts produce humour and how perlocutionary acts make people laugh. The authors also show that the series produce symmetrical and asymmetrical verbal interactions, and that language can be an expression of power, as well as of one’s social identity. Because the characters of the series are supposed to live in Victorian times in Canada, the difference in social status between the characters lead to the identification of many asymmetrical verbal interactions. Despite using John Searle’s taxonomy in analysing various fragments from episode 1 of the season 12 of the famous series, the authors agree upon the huge variety of approaches which can constitute an impediment in identifying the most common speech act with a sure humorous result.

Finally, language once again proves to play an important role in shaping, claiming or resisting identity (gender roles in particular) as shown by Georgiana Văsâi (Ruff), Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu and Cătălina Bălinișteanu-Furdu in their work (“The role of language in challenging gender norms”). This time, language presents and even perpetuates gender stereotypes; however, the analysis of Juno Dawson’s *Her Majesty’s Royal Coven* – which can be included in the “Witch Lit” or “Chick Lit” category – demonstrates that one’s gender identity can be respected through linguistic innovations (like gender-neutral pronouns) and this encourages the usage of a more inclusive language. The paper emphasizes how advocating for more inclusive linguistic practices encourages readers to embrace diversity and leads to the acceptance of gender identities.

We included Maricela Strungariu’s paper in this volume because it deals with an important type of the literary discourse: the expressive discourse. The literary work focuses on an autobiographical (a non-fictional) text to express the writer’s emotions without presenting any facts, but incoherence, oscillation, lack of arguments. The paper aims at emphasizing how truth and fiction can show the same reality, but different facets of this reality.

This INTERSTUDIA volume aimed at creating ‘bridges’ between various types of discourse and approaches to discourse analysis, allowing its authors to come up with diverse surveys and analyses which all advocated for the important role of language in shaping one’s identity, in reflecting one’s intentions, plans, in expressing one’s emotions. By promoting awareness that language is a tool to express power and knowledge, all authors dissected language, literature and communication to show how different individuals not only question identity, but also accept it.

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