


EDITORIAL

This issue of *Synergy* is dedicated to two conferences organised in November 2016 by the Faculty of International Business and Economics: *Future of Europe* and *Synergies in Communication*. For this issue, we have made a selection of articles presented in the languages and education sections at the two conferences, articles dedicated to interdisciplinary and intercultural education, to the issues of multiculturalism, diasporas, home and hybridity, as well as to professional transferable skills.

The first part of *Synergy - Interdisciplinary and Cultural Synergies* - contains five articles revolving around the inter and transdisciplinary aspects of cultural studies: different types of discourses find expression in formal, non-formal and informal educational environments, in music and film, as well as in politics. In his article *Of Walls & Bridges: Educational Costs Of Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric In Us Public Education* (delivered as the keynote speech at the FoE Conference), Paul Landry discusses the metaphors of walls of exclusion vs. bridges of understanding and how they apply to the contemporary US context of public education. The case study is on policies and practices used in the education system which serve more to obstruct than to facilitate communication and collaboration between Hispanic speaking immigrant minority families and school authorities. In *Reframing the European Union in French Nationalist Discourse by Marine Le Pen*, Ioana Cocuz looks into the discourse of the leader of the French National Front, aimed at instilling and justifying a specific nationalistic ideology depicted positively, so as to become attractive for the public. Animalization as a form of dehumanization – in its turn a distorted perception of otherness – has been used as a particular form of a hate discourse. Adrian Solomon makes an overview of some theoretical contributions and discusses some common elements in its diachronic evolution (*One Face of Dehumanization: Animalization*). Roxana Marinescu proposes a framework for enhancing language learning through dancing, as part of a life-long educational programme, with the aim of transferring skills acquired in formal education in non-formal and informal learning activities. Improving work opportunities while at the same time considering good work-life balance are long-term aims of this framework (*Keep Your Balance: Work, Learn, Socialise*). In *Le Freak, C'est Chic! Disco Culture And Whit Stillman's The Last Days Of Disco*, Ioana Stamatescu analyses the disco movement from a historical and artistic perspective, with an emphasis on the lifestyles and attitudes triggered by this musical style.

The *Literary Studies* Section of this issue of *Synergy* includes five articles that take literature as a pretext for the discussion of a diversity of topical issues: gender,

nationalism, Brexit, terrorism, migration, the *other*. In the article *(E)Merging Borders: Explorations Of Gender And Home In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Before We Visit The Goddess*, Preeti Shirodkar discusses the notions of borders, home and identity and how they are explored in a novel by the Indian-American author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Inclusion and exclusion, multiculturalism and division between London and the rest of the country are the themes explored in Clelia Clini's article "*Where Has Our Country Gone?*" *Reading The Last Word after Brexit*, a post-Brexit reading of the novel *The Last Word* by Hanif Kureishi. The contemporary world with its vision(s) of terrorism and the complex relationship with one's motherland and belonging is also the central theme of Iulia Rășcanu's article *The Fine Border between the Label of 'Terrorist' and Being a Victim of Terror and the Call of the Mother(land)*, in which she discusses Tariq Mehmood's novel *While There Is Light*. Adriana Elena Stoican also focusses on the connections maintained by South-Asian immigrant characters in novels by Anita Desai and Kiran Desai with their home countries with the help of trans-border communication (*Normative Dimensions of Transnationalism in South Asian Fiction of Migration*). The article *Central Europe and the "Perennial Other"* by Dan H. Popescu celebrates the art of travel writing as coming out of the travelogue produced by a British writer and traveller through Hungary and Romania in the 1930s: *Between the Woods and the Water* by Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor.

The *Applied Linguistics* section contains the article *Renegotiating Meaning In Multimodal Media Contexts* by Ildikó Hortobágyi, delivered as a keynote speech at The 4th International Conference on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics *Structure, Use and Meaning: (Re/De)Contextualisation*, Transilvania University of Brasov, in September 2016. In it the author presents the findings of a research she conducted in online and offline communication instances to show how meaning is made and negotiated and how new attitudes are created towards language and text.

As in every issue of *Synergy*, we are proposing a book review. This time Lucia-Mihaela Grosu Rădulescu introduces us to the work of Manav Ratti. In the volume *The Postsecular Imagination—Postcolonialism, Religion, and Literature* he focuses on South-Asian literature, namely writers originating in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, to demonstrate the necessity of a new paradigm, *the postsecular imagination*. The themes analysed include communalism, violence, identity or nationalism in South-Asia and the writers under scrutiny are Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie, Allan Sealy, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Amitav Gosh (in English) and Mahasweta Devi (in translation). As shown in this book review, Ratti presents postsecularism as a solution to "the violence, inequalities, and injustices pursued in the name of religion, nation, and secularism" (31). It is the perfect conclusion to this issue of our journal, which we are inviting you to read and reflect upon.

Roxana Marinescu