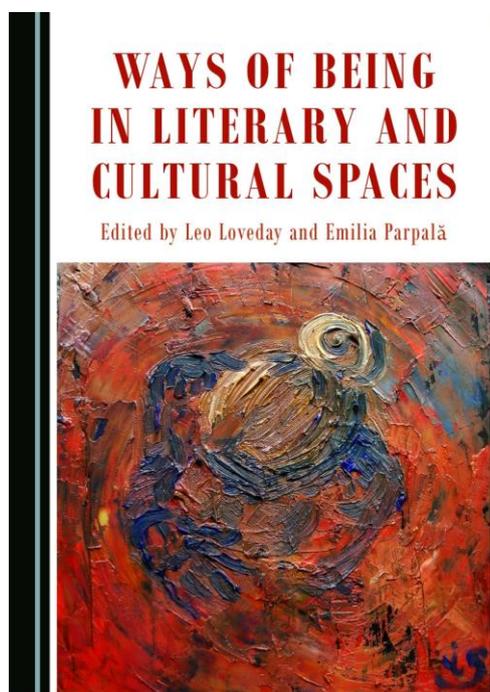


Leo Loveday and Emilia Parpală (editors), *Ways of Being in Literary and Cultural Spaces*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016, 234 pages

Leo Loveday and Emilia Parpală (editori), *Moduri de a fi în spațiile literare și culturale*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016, 234 pagini

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The volume edited by Leo Loveday and Emilia Parpală mainly consists in a selection of articles presented at the 8th edition of the international conference *Comparatism, Identity, Communication* (CIC2015), Craiova, 16th-17th of October, 2015 to which there are added other contributions by researchers from Ukraine, Spain, Bulgaria, Japan. The title reflects the interest for the identity issue which turns into the key-concept of the book revolving around two other syntagms: “ways of being” and “performance”.

The theoretical approaches are exemplified by three means of expression: fiction, linguistic discourse and culture. Whereas fiction becomes a privileged space where the relationships between self and otherness are examined, the question of linguistic identity proves “fundamental for narratology and poetics” as it “frequently emerges as significant in the fields of stylistics and pragmatics” (Loveday & Parpală 2016: 3).

The identity topic in literature unveils the changes and transformations that “take place [...] when characters face dilemmas, crises and internal conflicts” (*ibidem*) which disclose a wide array of “hybrid, divided, antagonistic” ways of being. The question of cultural identity is tackled from the perspective of variability of experiences lived by individuals from diverse cultures and is translated into different practices and cultural codes, as well as into steps of the process of identity construction where identity is considered as a “cultural product of constant negotiation processes” (Jung & Lee 2010: 146). Following the influence of migration and marginalization, modern-day intercultural mingling and cultural development are affected by the emergence of new hybrid, Métis, transcultural ways of being and ways of seeing that render the question of identity essential. The topic of identity thus becomes appropriate for analyzing and interpreting linguistic, cultural and literary texts which, directly or indirectly, focus on certain aspects of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of identity in the context of cultural interbreeding, transition or in the context of relevant tensions between self and the Other.

Ways of Being in Literary and Cultural Spaces provides readers with interdisciplinary tools able to help them explore the way in which literature and types of discourse conceive and represent the ever changing issue of identity. The contributions by researchers from England, Spain, Japan, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Iraq supply the interdisciplinary and intercultural frames and

frameworks with which diverse identities which have emerged in linguistic, literary and cultural spaces can be approached.

The volume published with Cambridge Scholars Publishing (234 p.) includes 15 chapters comprised in two sections: Part I focuses on *Discourses of Identity: Collective and Personal* (8 chapters) whereas Part II emphasizes the *Performance of Identity in Literary Space* (7 chapters). In order to establish a distinction and a clear division between the terms *discourse* and *performance* used in the titles of the two sections of the book, the editors assert that “discourse” must be tackled and analyzed in relationship to its specific historical, personal, psychological, social, political, national contexts, while by “performance” they refer exclusively to the actional, performative dimension of speech acts.

What is notable is the editors’ choice not to introduce each chapter based on the division of the volume into two sections but their effort to thematically group the chapters into seven semantic axes:

1. *Diversity: Racial, ethnic and group/collective identity*. This theme is illustrated in Olga Gradinaru’s study on *The Discourse of Russo-Ukrainian Identity in the Lugansk Region* (with a focus on the traits of a new type of nationalism manifested in the form of ethnic separatist movements), in Hikaru Fujii’s study on *21st American Identity and the Road Narrative* which analyzes the ways of reconstruction by contemporary immigrant writers of literary space so as to create new personal discourses as Americans, and in Jamila Farajova’s philosophical study on the *Paradox of Linguistic Signs* (which consists of a linguistic and semiotic analysis of the novel *Losing Isaiah* by Seth J. Margoli).
2. *Linguistic identity* is illustrated by Zlatina Dimova’s investigation on the *Sentence and Collective Identity* by comparing Bulgarian to English language system. The topic is also reflected in Ahmad Salem’s research focused on the analysis of a collective style of communication and the application of a pragmatic perspective to a peculiar speech in *Elusiveness in Political Discourse – How to Apologize the American Way*. In Leo Loveday’s study, *The Making of a Sarcastic Villain: The Pragmatics of Captain Hook’s Impoliteness*, the pragmatic framework of negative politeness is used in order to emphasize how malice and spite can be attributed to Hook’s sarcastic performance, perceived as breaching social and moral limits.
3. *Role and gender identity* is tackled by Andreea Raluca Constantin in *Female Identity in the Literary Discourse of Margaret Lawrence and Alice Munro* (two Canadian women writers).
4. *Child and childhood* includes a synthesis of *Representations of Childhood in British and North American Literature* by Adela Livia Catană.
5. *The villainous outsider*, illustrated in Raluca Faraon’s *Splitting Mirrors in Fowles’ “The Collector”* analyzes the level of anxiety generated by modern individual’s sense of solitude and isolation and in Leo Loveday’s above mentioned study.
6. *Spatial identity* is depicted in Part I, Chapter VIII by Alina Țenescu’s study on the *Discourse of City Identities in Postmodern Fiction* which comprises a cognitive exploration of surrealistic literary representations of city images in Postmodern American and Francophone literary communication.
7. *Writers, poets, readers and critics*. This topic is illustrated by a study on the means of reconstruction of the literary landscape of Romania and former East Germany after the fall of communism by Andreea Ghiță, by Paula Pasaru’s chapter on *Exhibitionism and Voyeurism in Colloquial Chinese Poetry* (a parodic genre disseminated via Internet in China), and by Anastasia Kistanova’s comparative research on the *Horatian Tradition in “Odes on Spring” by English and Russian Poets*. The volume ends with Alena Rettova’s study on *Comparative Literature and the Position of the Critic in Postmodernity*.

Besides the fact that contributors from seven different cultural spaces use the comparative approach, they also offer philosophical, anthropological, interdisciplinary perspectives that

encompass domains which range from linguistics, semiotics and literary criticism to political and cultural studies.

In spite of wide cultural spectrum, spanning from American, Bulgarian, Canadian, British, African, Canadian, German, Chinese to French, Russian and Romanian, the volume succeeds in revealing the contributors' innovative visions in the study of cultural discourse. It turns to be an important source of inspiration in other researchers' quest to better seize the means of representation and the vast array of mediums and techniques of expression that linguists, philosophers and novelists use in order to explore identity.

