

Introduction

The title of the present number, “*Across Cultures and Borders*” reflects the main characteristic feature of the following papers, a complex and multifaceted aspect of the interplay of cultures.

In our globalised world cultural exchange is at the heart of interactions across borders. The spread of music, film, and literature from different parts of the world promotes cultural diversity and creativity. Navigating the complexities of crossing cultural and national boundaries offers both opportunities and challenges. Understanding the dynamics of cross-cultural interaction is essential for promoting mutual respect. The movement of people and ideas across cultures and borders has become a defining feature of the 21st century. However, cultural exchange is not a new phenomenon at all. Crossing cultural and national boundaries has always offered immense opportunities for growth, innovation, and mutual understanding.

The articles in this volume are good examples for the dynamic interplay of diverse traditions, languages, and ideologies that converge, clash, and coexist in our global society. These six research papers were written in five different languages: English, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish. Exploring the nuances of interactions they reveal not only the richness of human experience but also the importance of empathy, adaptability, and shared values.

Challenges and Opportunities in Cross-Cultural Collaboration

In the first article **Andrea Poros** provides a historical overview of Ellen Key's work and at the same time she affords an analysis of Key's visit to Budapest and the subsequent reception in Hungary. The author emphasises that although Ellen Key has an outstanding literary work, she is predominantly referred to as only a reform pedagogue. As Poros concludes, Ellen Key received the same criticism and reception in Budapest as in Sweden and was mainly despised by men and glamorized by women.

Cross-border movements can enrich lives but also presents unique challenges, as the blending of cultures can bring about misunderstandings or conflicts. Learning about other cultures is not merely about appreciating differences, but also about recognizing similarities and shared values. Empathy, cultivated through genuine curiosity and open-mindedness, enables people to respect and appreciate customs different from their own. It can challenge stereotypes, reduce biases, and allow for a more nuanced view of global issues.

Anita Soós for example presents a satirical analysis of Scandinavian crime narratives in her paper and discusses the Hungarian reception of the genre itself as well as the image of the Northern countries depicted in Scandinavian crime fiction. According to the author's view Scandinavian crime fiction provided a more sophisticated perspective of the existing image of Scandinavian cultures and societies and it has contributed to a better understanding of Scandinavia.

Literature, art and fashion are increasingly influenced by diverse cultural aesthetics, resulting in works that transcend geographical boundaries and speak to universal human experiences. The next paper of this volume is on *The ironic and the tragic in the representation of the androgyny in Sara Stridsberg's The Faculty of Dreams and C. J. L. Almqvist's The Queen's Jewelpiece*. The author, **Ágnes Teplán** makes an effort to reveal the connection between the motif of androgyny and the concept of tragedy and irony. The paper compares romanticism with postmodernism through the concept of irony and the problem of identity.

Language as a Bridge Across Cultures

Language is one of the most powerful tools for bridging cultural divides, acting as both a marker of identity and a means of connection. In multilingual spaces, language can become a source of pride and a way to maintain cultural heritage.

Mastering a foreign language with expected pragmatic competence has always been a great challenge. The article of **Orsolya Szilágyi** shed light on expressing negation in Norwegian. The author supplies additional information on using negative structures in Norwegian as a second language based on Mental Space Theory, which provides an explanation for why it is difficult to acquire negative structures and expressions, and why it is a challenge on a semantic level to understand negative expressions.

Studying cultural practices offers insight into the universal human need for connection. Recognizing these similarities provides common ground upon which people can build meaningful connections, even when other aspects of their cultures diverge. Cross-cultural communication also challenges individuals to consider how their words, gestures, and expectations may be perceived differently by people from other backgrounds. Business negotiations, for example, can vary dramatically between cultures; a negotiation style considered polite and assertive in one culture might be seen as overly aggressive or evasive in another. Cultivating cultural sensitivity and understanding these subtle distinctions are critical for building trust and fostering cooperation. Pragmatic markers play an unquestionably significant role in this sense in everyday communication. **Dóra Tóth** investigates Dutch interpersonal pragmatic markers in her paper focusing on the differences in two standard varieties of Dutch: Dutch in the Netherlands and Dutch in Belgium.

But communication across borders and languages can happen in several ways. One example of cultural exchange can be seen in the popularity of memes. Memes play an important role in social media, has become part of the communication that challenges active engagement and feedback. The paper of **Ildikó Vaskó** investigates some Norwegian cultural memes and their role in communication, the connection between text and images using various examples from the internet.

Conclusion

"*Across cultures and borders*" is more than just an expression — it's an invitation to broaden our perspectives and learn more about the different cultural issues let it be special expressions in communication or literary considerations. The papers of this volume have attempted to highlight unique research questions representing cultural diversity.