EDITORS' MESSAGE

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**Let your dreams reach new heights
as we step into the New Year!**

As we close out 2024, we want to extend our warmest holiday greetings and best wishes for the year ahead. This year marks a special milestone as *English Studies at NBU* celebrates its 10th anniversary! We are immensely grateful to all our authors, reviewers, and readers for their unwavering support over the past decade. Your dedication and contributions have made our journal a thriving platform for insightful research.

One of the important news is that our Diamond Open Access journal is moving from a CC BY-NC (Attribution-NonCommercial) license to a CC BY (Attribution) license. For the past ten years, we used the NC clause to prevent commercial use of our content, thinking it would protect the work of our authors. However, this restriction ended up creating confusion about what "non-commercial" really means. As a result, some databases, especially those run by for-profit companies, chose not to include our journal, limiting its reach and visibility. After reviewing our experience and considering trends in open access publishing, we realized that the NC clause was actually holding us back. Switching to a CC BY license will make it easier for educators, researchers, and platforms to share and use our content freely, helping us reach a broader audience and increase citations. This change reflects our commitment to open science, removing barriers to access and encouraging more people to engage with the research we publish. Going forward, we'll be tracking how this shift affects our visibility, citations, and overall impact in the academic community.

Wishing you a bright and joyful New Year!

Cheers to 2025 and to many more successful years ahead!

Boris and Stan

In this issue:

Yana Rowland examines Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point*, focusing on themes of infanticide, identity, and the self-Other dynamic. It situates the poem in the 19th-century literary and philosophical discourse, addressing the moral and existential crises of the enslaved Black mother who kills her mixed-race child to reject oppression. Drawing on Levinas' philosophy, it explores the poem's portrayal of the face as a site of moral responsibility and how infanticide reflects self-defacement and identity loss. The text contextualizes the poem within Barrett Browning's abolitionist convictions,

personal struggles, and the broader Victorian concerns about motherhood, racial injustice, and autobiographical storytelling. Linking the poem to works by Brontë, Blake, and others, the study highlights the recurring motifs of child suffering, social inequality, and the adult's moral accountability. Ultimately, it frames the poem as a critique of systemic oppression and a meditation on guilt, agency, and redemption.

Barbara Miceli offers an analysis of Joyce Carol Oates' *My Sister, My Love*, a fictionalized account inspired by the JonBenét Ramsey murder case. It explores how Oates critiques suburban culture and child exploitation by adapting the real-life tragedy into a satirical memoir narrated by the victim's brother, Skyler. Themes include parental ambition, commodification of children, and the psychological damage caused by excessive control and neglect. Oates' narrative highlights societal obsessions with appearance and success, portraying the victim, Bliss, as a symbol of lost innocence. The text also connects the story to broader discussions of abuse, neglect, and suburban dysfunction.

Nazım Çapkın analyzes Charles Lamb's *The Essays of Elia* particularly his use of the persona "Elia" as a method of exploring identity and challenging traditional autobiographical writing. Lamb distances himself from conventional self-narratives, blending fact and fiction while reflecting on personal and universal themes like memory, guilt, and everyday life. The essay examines Lamb's detachment from Elia as a literary device, allowing him to critique and reinterpret his life without claiming coherence or finality. Drawing on Derrida's and other theorists' ideas, the article explores how Elia becomes both an alter ego and a lens through which Lamb examines his existence and society.

Ayşegül Turan analyses Nuruddin Farah's novel *Links*, focusing on fragmented nationhood, identity, and belonging in the context of Somalia's civil war. Through the exilic protagonist Jeebleh's return to Mogadishu, it explores tensions between national and transnational identities, emphasizing the impact of clan politics and historical violence. Farah portrays alternative spaces like the Refuge that promote unity beyond clan loyalties, and critiques media and international interventions. The use of Dante's *Inferno* underscores Mogadishu's portrayal as a modern hell. Ultimately, the novel interrogates Somalia's transformation, highlighting the interplay between personal and national identity within a broader global framework.

Mohammadreza Shayanpoor and Farzad Kolahjooei examine Julian Barnes' *England, England* through Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality, exploring how simulation replaces reality in postmodern society. It focuses on a fictional theme park replicating England's culture and heritage, which ultimately overtakes the "real" England. Barnes critiques how authenticity dissolves as simulations become self-referential, drawing parallels with Baudrillard's ideas about Disneyland and hypermarkets as symbols of artificiality. Themes include the commodification of culture, cloning of national identity, and the actors embodying their roles so deeply they blur reality. The novel highlights the loss of genuine national identity and the dominance of simulation in contemporary life.

Georgi Niagolov analyses William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* as a "problem play" due to its genre ambiguity and exploration of "unpleasant" issues like antisemitism, xenophobia, racism, homoeroticism, and patriarchalism. It highlights Shylock's complex portrayal as both villain and victim, contrasting with stereotypes of the era. The play juxtaposes patriarchal Venice and romantic Belmont, where women struggle against male dominance.

215

Gardev's 2024 Bulgarian production intensifies the play's "unpleasantness," depicting toxic masculinity and inequality while suppressing its feminist themes. Reflecting on historical and contemporary contexts, the article emphasizes the relevance of Shakespeare's call for shared humanity to confront enduring inequalities.

Diana Yankova provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution and impact of online education, tracing its roots from correspondence courses in the late 19th century to modern digital platforms. It highlights technological advancements, such as the internet, MOOCs, and AI, which have expanded access and flexibility in learning. The article discusses the benefits, including accessibility and personalized education, alongside challenges like the digital divide, lack of social interaction, and increased workload for educators. It emphasizes the growing role of online education in reshaping traditional learning models and its potential for future innovation with technologies like VR and AR.

Marcela Fărcașiu examines the challenges and strategies involved in subtitling culture-bound items (CBIs) in Romanian translations of the crime drama *Southland*. It highlights the role of subtitling as a cost-effective alternative to dubbing, emphasizing its significance for accessibility, foreign language education, and cultural adaptation. Using Jan Pedersen's model, the study analyses translation strategies such as retention, cultural substitution, and paraphrasing. It underscores the complexities of adapting American police jargon and cultural references for Romanian audiences while maintaining cultural authenticity. The findings contribute to audiovisual translation research and propose refinements to existing subtitling frameworks to address emerging translation practices.

Fatma Yuvayapan and Hayriye Bilginer explore acknowledgments in Ph.D. theses as a distinct academic genre, analysing their linguistic and cultural features in English, German, and Turkish. They investigate reasons for thanking (academic, moral, and resources-related), linguistic patterns (e.g., performative verbs, nominalizations), and pronoun usage across the three languages. The study highlights how acknowledgments reflect cultural norms and academic conventions, balancing personal gratitude with professional identity. Findings show significant cross-cultural variations, such as German preferences for nominalizations and implicit gratitude, and Turkish emphasis on family support. The research emphasizes acknowledgments' deeper role in expressing academic identity and fostering scholarly communication.

Mariia Shutova, Yaroslava Gnezdilova, Halyna Minchak, Svitlana Talko explore the semantic and conceptual features of anthroposemic substantival bahuvrihi with zoonym components (ASBZC) in English. They employ methods such as semantic and componential analysis, descriptive classification, and linguistic modelling to investigate how these compounds, like "lion-heart" or "birdbrain," convey characteristics of humans through zoonyms. The study reveals ASBZCs reflect biological, mental, and social aspects of humans, often utilizing metonymy and metaphor for meaning making. The results of the study show that negative connotations dominate mental traits, while biological and social dimensions are more neutral or positive, highlighting ASBZCs' cognitive and linguistic complexity.

Stay tuned for more exciting updates and insightful articles in the forthcoming issues.

As always, your feedback and suggestions are invaluable to us.

Happy reading!