"Handbook of Research on Translating Myth and Reality in Women Imagery across Disciplines"
by Roxana Ciolaneanu and Roxana-Elisabeta Marinescu (ed.), ICI Global, USA, 2021, 403 p.

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Abstract

This article presents the book "Handbook of Research on Translating Myth and Reality in Women Imagery Across Disciplines" by Roxana Ciolaneanu and Roxana-Elisabeta Marinescu.(ed.)

T his is a book everybody interested in gender discrimination should read. It is a book everybody who wants to find out why women consider themselves discriminated should read.

Does this book solve the problem of discrimination? Yes and no. No, because discrimination is a very old attitude ingrained in people minds and fighting it needs complex and time consuming processes. Namely, educating the discriminators to see that they have more in common with the discriminated than they want to accept. Educating the discriminated to change their self concept and stop seeing themselves as somehow inferior or incomplete. Raising awareness about all forms of discrimination. Helping discriminators to genuinely know and understand the discriminated so as to stop fearing them as something different and strange. Raising discriminators' awareness about the feelings of the discriminated. And finally, making everybody understand that a world without discrimination would be a better place for all.

No book can do that, not even in 403 pages. However, this book does a very important thing: it raises awareness several forms of

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discrimination; from stereotypes to language, from proverbs to myths, from films to advertising and literature.

With such a large scope, the book is obviously multidisciplinary, comprising gender studies, cultural studies, literature, linguistics, discourse analysis, semiotics, cognitive studies so as to show the complexity of the phenomenon and of the research made in this field. The examples examined are taken from several countries, Romania, Italy, Portugal, India, Britain Ireland and Brittany, France, and from various moments in time, thus proving that women discrimination is a universal phenomenon.

The book consists of 17 articles, all written by women, organized into six sections. The first sections deals with the symbolic value of women's narratives, the second dwells upon the language describing women in dictionaries and in use, the third focuses on the mother stereotype and on women's experiences of motherhood, the fourth examines women representations in films and advertisements and their impact on society, the fifth presents various stereotypes attached to women in different epochs and literary genres, and, finally, the sixth shows how women writers transpose their experience in their writings.

The first article, by Laura-Roxana Grünberg, explores ways in which the feminine discourse, which the author calls feminist story telling, could become more efficient. The examples presented are from Romania.

In the next article, Roxana Magdalena Barlea, presents seven figures of Romanian women, taken both from fiction and reality, who are representative for the collective representation of women in the Romanian culture, thus helping foreign readers to better understand Romanian collective mentality.

The last article of the first section, signed by Alina Isac Alak, discusses the hijab, a very controversial practice of the Arab world, decoding two different points of view, the Muslim one, with its own contradictions and the reasons that caused them, and the Western one, also complex and far from innocent.

The second section of the book deals with the way language describes women. It contains three articles, working on threes different corpuses, but arriving all at the same conclusion: the language describing women reinforces the traditional stereotype of woman inferiority. The first article, by Roxana Ciolăneanu, deals with Romanian proverbs and the way the Romanian language depicts women, the second, signed by Esperança

Cardeira, examines Portuguese proverbs, while the third, written by Alina Villava, analyses grammar gender in the Portuguese language.

The third section focuses on the concept of motherhood, examining the way in which society and mothers themselves see it. The first two articles, signed by Roxana-Elisabeta Marinescu and, respectively, Preeti Sharatchandra Shirodkar, show how the symbol of motherhood can be used by a tyrannical society, communist Romania, and by a non democratic one, India, to deprive women of the freedom of choice and to reduce them to their biological role. Roxana-Elisabeta Marinescu also tackles the way in which the postcommunist neoliberal regime of present Romania continues to oppress women. The last article of this section, by Işil Şahin Gülter, examines motherhood in literature, namely in a play by Ann Jellicoe. More specifically, the article deals of the concept of Terrible Mother archetype developed, as defined by Jung, proving how it be a way by which women reclaim their strength.

The fourth section demonstrates how the media contributes to dispersing and strengthening women stereotypes in society. The first article in this section, written by Lucia-Mihaela Grosu-Rădulescu, presents three female film characters, the magician, the savior and the cyborg, and shows how they influence young viewers' understanding of feminity, gender roles and gender stereotypes. The second article, by Andrea Carta, Elena Carraro, Simona Adfelaide Martini and Giulia Perasso, examines female stereotypes in advertising and media and proves how they can affect women's both psychological and social wellbeing. The last article in this section, written by Debora Ricci, also focuses on advertising and demonstrates how its visual language strengthens gender stereotypes.

The next section is dedicated to literature and the way in which women are described in various literary genres. It also includes three articles which decode literary works from different epochs and geographical areas. Madalina Armie presents the new Irish woman as she is depicted in female written short stories from the beginning of the 21st century. Emilia Ivancu takes us back to the Middle Ages to show us how women were represented in traditional Britton ballads, while Irina David reveals how the woman body and the practices it was subjected to are presented in 19th century Emile Zola's novels.

The last section is also about literature, but it presents the creations of two female writers. First, Maria Helena Marques Antunes considers two texts by Christine de Pizan, "Cité des dames" and "Epistre Othea", the

former dealing with misogynist accusations, the latter proposing a goddess, Othea, as a symbol of female rehabilitation. Second, Anca-Teodora Şerban-Oprescu examines the work of a Romanian female writer from the diaspora, Dominica Rădulescu, "Black Sea Twilight", in which the author compares the images of West and East as seen by a woman who chose to flee communism.

The book "Handbook of Research on Translating Myth and Reality in Women Imagery Across Disciplines" is very well written and edited. Every article is well documented and logical. It proves its point and brings solid arguments to support it. The research conducted is thorough and reveals new unexplored angles of the women discrimination phenomenon. Each article is followed by an extensive bibliography, additional reading, key terms and definitions and endnotes.

After reading this book, I, as a woman, am both enlightened and overwhelmed. Enlightened because I learned about new types of discrimination which I didn't suspect before, overwhelmed by how many subtle ways of belittling women there are.

Another intriguing fact about the book is that all the authors are female. This is supposed to be our fight, but aren't men concerned by it? Don't they realize how unfair this world led by them is to their fellow human beings? Don't they feel that they should also do something about it? Are they so concerned about losing their privileges? Don't they see that a more equalitarian world would benefit everybody, them included?

There is only one question that remains unanswered: why so many women accept these kinds of discrimination and consider them normal behaviour? The simple answer would be that collective mentality is so strong that if affects the thinking of those it deprives of their rights. But I suspect that is a much complex phenomenon that should be more thoroughly researched and I hope the editors of this book will consider pursuing their research in this direction.