

Introductory Note

Translation is an integral part of Comparative Literature. Even in studies that don't specifically focus on translation it is always present in the background. Comparatists rely on translated texts, and, more importantly, are always searching for connections and parallels between different texts and systems of meaning, which is the core of all translation. Belletristic translation, transfer of literary texts from one language into another, from their original cultural environment to a different one, is one of the many forms of translation. Its history and poetic specificity have claimed increasing scholarly attention since the mid-20th century, which has led to continuous discovery of new aspects and of the complexity of the issues related to translation of literary works.

As a contribution to the studies in this field, the Estonian Association of Comparative Literature held the conference *Belletristic Translation: a Means of Cultural-Spiritual Dialogue or a Tool of Acculturation?* in September 2015 in Tartu. The proceedings of the conference constitute the thematic section of this issue of *Interlitteraria*, and will continue to the winter issue. The summer issue's selection gives an insight into the diversity of the problematics of belletristic translation as well as some of its universal characteristics. The volume opens with a look into historical translation practices (Dorothy Figueira) and into the methodology of translation historiography (Maria-Kristiina Lotman and Elin Sütiste, Klaarika Kaldjärv and Katiliina Gielen). Two articles (Miriam McIlpatrick-Ksenofontov, Gintarė Bernotienė) focus on the translation of poetry, while two others (Natalia Nikitina and Natalia Tuliakova, Anneli Kõvamees) concentrate on prose. Regardless of the time of their creation and their poetic form, translations are always rooted in the mentality of their era, reflect the translator's and the receiving culture's relations with otherness and their perception of themselves.

The same problematics is central to the *Miscellanea* section of this volume. The author-reader relationship (Ieva Steponavičiūtė), fictional characters' names (Samuel Bidaud), the elusive differences between the archetypes of trickster and hero (Paul Rüsse and Karita Nuut), and various aspects of science fiction (Dominika Oramus, Katelis Viglas) cover a wide range of issues of poetics and reception, but converge on the question of how one world – individual or collective, real or imaginary – connects to another that operates with a different set of values and meanings. While not at the forefront, the matter of belletristic translation is also present in all these papers, reminding us that Comparative Literature may not always be about translation, but it always is a fruit of existing translations and a reflection about the possibility of future ones.

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