

Editors' Preface

Over the last quarter of century *Interlitteraria* seems to have emerged among those (really very few) international journals of literary scholarship and criticism in which smaller and “peripheral” cultures have had their remarkable presence. We do not mean by it any minor group of countries (such as formed by three Baltic states – Estonian, Latvia, Lithuania), but Eastern Europe in the widest sense. By today we have gradually come to understand this feature not merely as something that we can be proud of, but also our growing responsibility to continue (maybe even more consciously and more steadily than before) in the afore mentioned current. If ever we wish to expand a genuine intellectual-spiritual and moral dialogue between “centers” and “peripheries” of the world, hardly any other option could be envisaged.

At the last International Conference of the Estonian Association for Comparative Literature, under the title “Current State of Literary Theory, Research and Criticism in (Non-“Centric”) National Cultures” (University of Tartu, September/October 2019) we surely did not only welcome cultural scholars from the Baltic countries, Poland, Albania, Slovakia, Russia, etc., but we felt equally delighted by the presence of literary and cultural researchers from “centers”. Thus, from Paris a group of young scholars representing Lebanon, Hong Kong and India arrived. Among the participants there were also a number of our long-time colleagues representing these scholars from the Western “centers” who are interested in smaller cultures as well as in intellectual currents not so well fitted in the mainstream, demonstrating once again that the “centers” themselves are seldom homogeneous.

A new feature of our 13th conference was the inclusion, for the first time ever, of a section of papers presented in Estonian. We will attempt to turn it into a tradition. It would be in harmony with our belief that literary scholarship in non-centric countries has to cope with the ever harder challenge of manifesting its fruits not only in some dominating international language (such as English, French, German) but simultaneously contributing to their own national languages and cultures. Besides, it is likely that conferences including in parallel both sections, “international” and “national”, would favor contacts inside the world community of cultural scholars, developing mutual curiosity beyond the borders of both.

The monothematic section of *Interlitteraria*'s present issue comprises a part of the articles resulting from the conference. The rest will appear, *in spe*, in *Interlitteraria* No 25/2, 2020. The conference section is followed by a series of free-topic papers, both sections moving from general theoretical questions

about how the literature, literary studies and canon can be conceptualized towards more specific studies of individual authors and works. Both sections also offer readings of other than literary works of art, applying the comparatist perspective and concepts to audiovisual arts and (post)modern media. While the structure of this volume follows the origin of articles, preserving the context of the initial live discussions of the conference, reading back and forth across sections will undoubtedly broaden the dialogues, as the papers mirror and complete each other's points of view.

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