

narratives of their past experiences, their present intentions and their future plans.

The editors of the book show different approaches to discourse analysis so that readers can understand the main questions upon which these approaches diverge and what they have in common. The publication is a unique survey of the most recent advances in methodology and approach to discourse analysis.

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East, West – What is Best?

Gáfrik, R. (2012). *Od významu k emóciám. Úvaha o prínose sanskritskej literárnej teórie do diskurzu západnej literárnej vedy* (From Meaning to Emotions. A Reflection on the Contribution of Sanskrit Literary Theory to the Discourse of Western Literary Scholarship). Trnava: Universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 115 p.
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Western literary theory and criticism have never been so heterogeneous and multifaceted. The twentieth century brought intense concentration on the uniqueness of literature as well as its almost total dissolution in non-literary realities, purely formal or utterly ideological engagements, local or global representations. In addition to a long and steady growth of national canons, there were also attempts to see literary works as displaying and representing larger wholes. Robert Gáfrik's work is one of these attempts – exploring literary values in the transcultural or globalising contexts, rather than in narrower national or ethnic settings. Even a passing glance at its contents will show us that what he discusses really lies in the heart of current scholars' hopes and anxieties – globalism, orientalism, comparative poetics, world literature, as well as something which may appear rather different, but, upon closer inspection, also substantially contributes to the attempts mentioned to invent a new outfit for literature – the cognitive literary studies.

In his introductory chapter, "Literary Scholarship in a Global World", he points to the fact that the content of the concepts of "literature" and "world literature", as we know them in the Western world, cannot be taken to have a universal meaning, since they "originated at the end of the 18th century in Western Europe" (p. 9) and therefore they reflect the Western thinking on literature. The existence of other cultures also means the existence of other ways

of thinking on literature. However, multiculturalism is, according to the author, also associated with relevant questions of the end of European hegemony, cultural relativism or loss of aesthetic nature at the expense of cultural contents. On the other hand, though it brings variability, realisation that the theory of literature is not restricted to Plato or Aristotle and, that in our world, there “exist literary-critical traditions which developed independently of the Western literary scholarship” (p. 11-12). The chapter provides examples especially from Indian cultural area (Sanskrit thinking on literature), which are further developed in the following chapters. However, Gáfrik suggests that the study of foreign (Eastern) literary traditions through Western terminology is problematic, and has to be done on a more sophisticated level.

The problematic nature of inter-cultural comparisons is documented on the two approaches to the concept of “orientalism” – which are elaborated by Edward Said and Wilhelm Halbfass. Gáfrik claims that the problem lies in the projection of our own (Western) expectations of a foreign culture, as is the case of Said’s work. Unlike Said, Halbfass discusses the issue on a more complex level, since he tries to avoid one-sided solutions and enters into a dialogue with the analysed culture, not seeing it just as research object. In spite of this, however, Gáfrik does not forget to draw the reader’s attention to Halbfass’s conviction that Western and Eastern cultures are no longer in an equal dialogue, since they meet “in a westernised world, under conditions imposed by a Western way of thinking” (p. 26).

The chapter “Thinking on Literature in India” is a central one, discussing the Sanskrit thinking on literature and its comparison with European literary scholarship. For a non-indologist, the chapter is undoubtedly interesting, but also quite confusing, especially because of a flood of Indian terms and concepts. Gáfrik maintains that Sanskrit literature is not associated with a written word, but rather with speech, and that the Sanskrit concept of literature is not primarily based on aesthetics – as in the West. His presentation of various opinions of Sanskrit scholars on the substance of literature shows basic differences from Western thinking, of which most important is probably the fact that the nature of literature in India lies in its power of suggestion, not being just a function of the text. The author then presents apparently the most influential Indian theory of literature – the so-called *rasa theory* based on the emotional experiencing of a literary work.

In the chapter “Sanskrit Literary Theory and Comparative Poetics”, Gáfrik tries to analyse a possibility of comparative poetics potentially able to characterise several works of literature across cultural and civilizational borders. He particularly analyses the work of Earl Miner, reflecting on his identification of

Aristotle's mimesis and its defining role in the creation, through drama, of basic concepts of Western literature, and on the confrontation with the Sanskrit identification of literature mainly with the lyric.

In the chapter "Sanskrit Literary Theory and the Concept of World Literature", Gáfrík discusses, among other things, the work of the Slovak comparatist Dionýz Ďurišin and his analysis of the concept of world literature, which was, for Ďurišin, the ultimate stage on a line progressing through the concepts of national literature and interliterary communities. It is possible to agree with Gáfrík's drawing attention to a close immersion of Ďurišin's theory in Marxist literary scholarship, as well as with his suggestion of closer affinities of Marxism with the approaches to literary study based on cultural studies. The author also, correctly in my opinion, pointed to the dynamism of the concept of world literature in the David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* In addition to this work, however, there is another influential systemisation of the concept in the book by Pascale Casanova *The World Republic of Letters*, which is not mentioned by Gáfrík. The chapter also deals with genres and an issue of transcultural history of literature based on Anders Pettersson's *Introduction: Concepts of Literature and Transcultural Literary History*.

The chapter "Sanskrit Literary Theory and Cognitive Literary Scholarship" is concerned with an analysis of the relation of some new approaches to literature in the West, especially cognitive studies of literature drawing on defining the nature of literature through emotions, to the Sanskrit ideas of the nature of literature in which emotions also have a significant role.

In general, one can say that the work is written in a sophisticated language, showing that its author is very well informed about the latest problems facing literary studies - both in the West and in the East. In spite of the fact that there have already been attempts at interpretations using Eastern philosophical thinking, e.g. in the work of Lubomír Plesník, Gáfrík's work is unique in his emphasis on a comparative approach, which is, at the same time, aware of a danger of overgeneralisations and overinterpretations.

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