Call for contributions for themed edition

Werkwinkel: Journal for Dutch and South African Studies

Literary historiography / literary biography

The passing of John Kannemeyer, the South African literary historian and biographer, also an expert on Dutch literature, marks an important boundary between what was and what will come in the Afrikaans literary historiography. His contribution to literary history and literary biographies were enormous and this oeuvre ends with a resounding final note: the biography of the Nobel laureate JM Coetzee is currently at the printers in Afrikaans and English versions. The impact of Kannemeyer’s death extends beyond Afrikaans literary historiography into other fields, where it represents in all instances a watershed.

This urged the editorial staff of *Werkwinkel* to reflect on the relevance of general trends and the importance of individual contributions within the discipline. The result is that we would like to take the initiative to compile a themed edition dedicated to literary historiography and biography studies.

Our intention is to diagnose the current state of the discipline. We would like to take account of what is internationally available and therefore has a theoretical manifestation, and what is undertaken locally and specifically. In South Africa and in several Central European countries (eg. the Czech Republic or Poland), various projects related to literary historiography are developed, for instance a major Dutch literary history project which is in the final stages of publishing. Also, in other countries, linguistic and cultural areas, for instance France and Germany, relevant efforts in the area of literary historiography are appearing. Besides the recently published Cambridge History of South African literature, there are countless other examples. For many years literary biography has enjoyed great popularity amongst authors and publishers as well as readers. Every year, at least one important bibliography is published in the Low Countries (this year the biography of Willem Kloos will make its appearance), not to mention other European countries where the biography of a famous author leads to intense discussions (as in the case of Poland with a book about Ryszard Kapuscinski). But are the differing biographical methods adequately discussed? Does the genre of literary biography contribute to literary history, or is it irrelevant? Is the theory in the field of biography studies satisfactory?

There is thus more than enough reason to attempt a diagnosis in the field of literary historiography and literary biography. We want to feature both theoretical texts and descriptions of new projects and / or empirical experience of writing a literary history.

The three-part structure of *Werkwinkel* – with 'Papers', 'Views' and 'Reviews' – offers ample opportunity for diverse approaches to this theme. In ‘Papers’ there is room for traditional research papers based on scientific methodology. In the section ‘Views’, texts in the form of pre-papers, essays or those of a polemical way can be accommodated. As always, in 'Reviews' we feature reviews of publications, in this case preferably literary history.

Proposals for contributions can be sent to werkwinkel@ifa.amu.edu.pl
Deadline for submission of contributions is January 1, 2013

http://www.ifa.amu.edu.pl/werkwinkel