

AROUND 1918: CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN POLYPHONY/CACOPHONY

The issue titled *Around 1918: Central and Eastern European Polyphony/Cacophony* is devoted to founding myths (in the sense given to the term by Pierre Bourdieu) concerning the year 1918. The myths of our interest were generated by national communities that either gained state independence or unsuccessfully struggled for it, or did not struggle for it but had to define their place in the changed socio-political system in the macro-region after World War I. We understand founding myths as narratives constituting a base of modern identity of national communities that were formed after the collapse of the great empires, especially tsarist Russia and Austria-Hungary. The pivotal issues of our concern are:

- (1) critical reflection on narratives of dominant character, as well as of nation-building and state-building power;
- (2) reconstructing analysis of counter-narratives, i.e. voices of groups which have been marginalized, omitted, excluded, so that the dominant narratives could fulfill the constitutive role for a certain community;
- (3) polyphonic or cacophonous entanglement of dominant narratives and counter-narratives pertaining to 1918 in Central and Eastern Europe.

The authors of articles gathered in the issue focus on narratives built by cultural texts in the semiotic sense: primarily literary, para-, and non-literary texts, as well as manifestations of the iconographic sphere. The field of their interest comprises both functioning of narratives concerning the year 1918 up to World War II and manifestations of their long existence, lasting until today. The current issue presents articles written by historians of Latvian (Benedikts Kalnačs), Lithuanian (Viktoria Šeina), Hungarian (Judit Dobry), Romanian (Olga Bartosiewicz), Jewish (Rachel Feldhay Brenner) and Polish (Jagoda Wierzejska, Sławomir Buryła) literature and culture, as well as the additional article submitted by Włodzimierz Borodziej and Maciej Górny, the experts in history of World War I.

The issue *Around 1918: Central and Eastern European Polyphony/Cacophony* will be followed by the next issue of the quarterly *Przeгляд Humanistyczny* [Humanistic Review] 2019 no. 1, which will develop the topic of founding myths concerning the year 1918 in other areas of East-Central Europe.

Both of the issues constitute an integral part of a larger research project entitled *Is the war over? Writings on and of the year 1918 in Central European Literature*.

They form a contribution of the Institute of Polish Literature (University of Warsaw) into the project. The latter was elaborated by Xavier Galmiche and Paweł Rodak and initiated at the UMR Eur'Orbem (Cultures et sociétés d'Europe orientale, balkanique et médiane) and the Centre de civilisation polonaise (Sorbonne Université). It is based on an international network of researchers (France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Romania) committed to questioning modalities of exits from World War I in the countries of Central Europe, particularly of the states founded or re-founded in the immediate postwar period, and the phenomenon of prolonging conflicts and upheavals long after the official cessation of hostilities. This project aims to extend considerations of pure historiography by an analysis of expressions provoked by difficult exits from the war in Central Europe.

1918: The war is over? has resulted in a series of conferences and seminars taking place in several countries throughout 2018. It is also bringing contributions to the special issues of journals to be published between 2018 and 2020, in particular: *Austriaca* (France), *Slovo a smysl* (Czech Republic) and *Przegląd Humanistyczny* (Poland), as well as an anthology of texts translated into German entitled *The war is over, the murder begins. Literary reflections of postimperial violence in Central-East-Europe in 1918*, edited by Alfrun Kliems, Christine Gölz, and Xavier Galmiche. Moreover, a collective monograph concerning the topic is being prepared for the Central and Eastern Europe series of the Sorbonne University Press.

Alina Molisak
Jagoda Wierzejska
and
Xavier Galmiche
Paweł Rodak