

CFP

Literary Taste Map: From Taste Culture to Taste Industry

Date: September 24-25, 2020

Venue: Vilnius, Lithuania

Closing date for submissions: **June 15, 2020**

The Lithuanian Comparative Literature Association and Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore invite you to the international conference dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Lithuanian Comparative Literature Association.

Noting the recent changes in the “taste culture” that are present in literary texts, discourses, and practices, the organizers invite you to discuss contemporary issues of taste in literature. How has taste evolved from the canonical concept of beauty, the norm of good taste, and taste as aesthetic experience to a wide range of cultural industries gaining a foothold in consumer society? By employing comparative analysis, the conference proposes to draw an innovative map of gustatory and gastronomic experiences, moving away from sensory poetics or phenomenology towards the “experience economy” that affects literary themes, genres, and reader’s preferences.

The organizers look forward to comparative papers discussing the theoretical and practical aspects of the meaning of taste and its changes in literature, highlighting an intercultural perspective on taste that would reveal different (or similar) taste representations. Taste covers the entire spectrum from local / regional to global, from extreme subjectivity to social roles as it is primarily related to person’s self-identification and thus highlights the motives of individual decision and choice. On the other hand, taste is also driven by folk traditions, heritage, taboos, and stereotypes.

The cultural implications of taste are particularly suitable for interdisciplinary analysis because they combine aesthetic range which includes literary production and its evaluation, a variety of cultural practices, cultural memory, social links, and research on national identity. Philosophers, historians, ethnologists, linguists, psychologists, cultural and social anthropologists have long been interested in various implications of taste. Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in this field of research and new theoretical approaches. A term *gastrosophy* coined by Michel Onfray has entered philosophy and aesthetics. Literary scholars discuss the *gastropoetics* (Parama Roy) and *culinary* (Alois Wierlacher).

Taste culture is an important ingredient of national identity as it is linked to place and tradition. Since a similar taste generated by a group covers all individuals of one country as a collective decision, a nation can be perceived as a community of taste. Latin expression *de gustibus non disputandum est* (in matters of taste, there can be no disputes) forestalls the essentialist view which argues that one nation’s taste is better than others and asserts the principle of equality and ideologically politically correct tolerance to various, even specific, tastes.

As identities mix, the essentialism of taste has been replaced by the pluralism of taste, thus making room for a *supranational*, standardized taste of the “world,” disconnected from country-specific

heritage and influenced by cultural industries. Therefore, in the literary debate, we invite to discuss not only taste cultures, but also taste subcultures that emphasize taste differentiation and individualization. Through taste experience and perception, we invite you to analyze the national self-concept and *alimentaria* relationships with other nations as reflected in various literatures.

We propose to discuss taste and related literary images not only as aesthetic categories, narrative of pleasure and gourmet savor, but also using other analytical and problematic viewpoints that highlight their symbolic functions:

- As a system of signs and communication (the semiotic aspect);
- As a ritual of preserving, fragmenting, or rejecting identity, and as a meaningful input to the national character of a nation (the imagological aspect);
- As a reference to literary characters' social origins, status, and cultural attribution (the sociological aspect of literature);
- As an expression of cultural body, subjective experience, and consciousness (the phenomenological aspect);
- As a marker of the superiority of one culture over another (the postcolonial aspect) and so on.

We invite proposals for papers on the following specific subtopics:

Section I: History of Taste in Different Cultures and the (Changing) Canon of Taste

- Taste of the epoch, the links between taste and style;
- Beauty as aesthetics of taste;
- Evaluation as taste expression; taste disputes in literature (literary criticism);
- Taste parallels and differences in literature: mission (im)possible?;
- Bad taste and kitsch in literature as phenomena of popular culture;
- Taste leveling as a consequence of mixing cultures.

Section II: Social Aspects of Taste in Literature; Taste as a Representation of Social Identity

- The phenomenon of mass (crowd) taste;
- Elitism: gourmet taste and tastefulness;
- Taste as a life style and philosophy;
- Taste subcultures: Informal and alternative taste communities;
- The aesthetics of ugliness in literature;

- Eating as a collective act of identification; holiday communication, and fast food as a factor of fractured socialization.

Section III: Taste and Identity

- The influence of taste on identity and vice versa;
- Taste as a measure of ethnicity; subjectivity of taste, and the importance of national cuisine
- Similar / different taste traditions as a prerequisite for cultural (mis)understanding;
- Hospitality as a feature of national character;
- Gastronomic taste in literature as the most sustainable marker of national and personal identity;
- The problem of (un)translatability of culinary terms.

Section IV: The Semantic Potential of Food in Literature; Food as Text

- Edible-inedible and useful-poisonous;
- Taste receptor variability and their symbolism (*dolce vita*, bitter experience, sweet revenge, and sour face);
- Taste standards; topics of hunger and overeating in literature (diet, bulimia, and anorexia);
- Food as ideology (veganism and freeganism) and taste deviations (cannibalism and vampirism);
- Gastronomy as intertextual phenomenon: recipes in literary works;
- The reader as the subject of taste;
- Taste standardization: Euronovel, fast food fiction.

Section V: Taste in Different Contexts and the Interdisciplinary of Taste

- The dynamics of flavor and visual (art, cinema, theater, and photography);
- Predominance of everyday aesthetics in art; anti-poetic tendencies in literature;
- Taste industry: consumption; fashion as a device of shaping taste;
- Taste eroticism (aphrodisiacs, naked body, and vulgarity);
- The blend of art and modern technology and its influence on aesthetic taste changes.

Conference languages: Lithuanian and English.

Please provide an abstract in English of maximum 300 words along with a short bio. Please indicate the section your proposed paper addresses at the top of the page. Email your abstracts to acta.comparativa@gmail.com by **June 15, 2020**. The proposals will be blind peer-reviewed by a scientific committee. The authors will be informed by **July 1, 2020**.

Conference fee:

Regular fee of 40 EUR paid by **July 31, 2020**; late fee of 55 EUR paid by **August 31, 2020**.

LCLA members: 10 EUR.

Organizers: Dalia Cidzikaitė, Ieva Kalniņa, Nijolė Vaičiulėnaitė-Kašelionienė, Jurgita Katkuvienė, Žydronė Kolevinskienė, Dalia Kuizinienė, Ojārs Lāms, Laura Laurušaitė, Dainius Vaitiekūnas, and Manfredas Žvirgždas.

Articles based on conference papers and selected by the scientific committee will be published in the peer-reviewed journal *Acta litteraria comparativa*.

If you have any questions, please write acta.comparativa@gmail.com.