

Editorial

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At the beginning of this first issue of 2014 let me draw your attention to the upcoming 10th biennial conference of the Association for Low Countries Studies which under the theme of *Discord and Consensus* will be held at University College London and the (new) Dutch Centre in the (old) Dutch Church in the City of London, Austin Friars,¹ in September 2014.

All countries, regions and institutions are ultimately built on a degree of consensus, on a collective commitment to a concept, belief or value system. This consensus is continuously rephrased and reinvented through a narrative of cohesion *and* challenged by expressions of discontent and discord. The history of the Low Countries is characterized by both a striving for consensus and eruptions of discord both internally or through outside challenges. In the centenary year of World War I (1914), which the Netherlands was lucky to be spared but Belgium and Luxembourg had to endure heavily, two centuries (and a bit) after the Battle of Waterloo and the reunification of the Low Countries in the Kingdom and the United Netherlands (1813/14), and three centuries after the Piece of Utrecht (1713), we thought this to be an appropriate theme for an interdisciplinary conference which aims to explore consensus and discord in a Low Countries context along and across broad cultural, linguistic and historical lines, and interpret the conference theme in the broadest possible sense.

Topics may include for example: Contemporary and historical representation of conflict and dissent in visual art and literature; Counter-cultural art practices and dissenting narratives; Social cohesion and the imaginative; Language as a source of social conflict or harmony; Language standardization processes within and across the Low Countries; Competing linguistic norms and conflicts over the status of language varieties; Conflicting approaches to language pedagogy; Discord and/or consensus emerging from studies of lexis, semantics, pragmatics and syntax.

We invite both individual contributions (20-minute presentations which will be followed by 10 minutes of discussion) and proposals for fully constituted panels (90-minute themed panel of three speakers). We specifically invite postgraduate students and a number of travel bursaries will be available. For more information and to submit proposals please visit the conference website and proposal submission system.² The primary criterion for selection will be the quality of the proposal, not its connection to the conference theme. Selected conference papers will be considered for publication in *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies*.

On to the the present issue. Christopher Joby (Seoul) looks at the role of London and other English cities in the development of early modern Dutch language and literature, an aspect often considered being marginal and therefore overlooked in accounts of the emergence of the standard language. He demonstrates how three developments in Dutch language and literature – the publication of religious literature, the writing of the first Dutch grammar and the writing of sonnets in Dutch – each owes something to the presence of Dutch or Flemish speakers in London in the second half of the sixteenth century. For every case, he considers how these developments have been recorded or

neglected in general histories of Dutch language and literature and, following Richard J. Watts, concludes by offering a model for how general histories of languages can avoid adopting a deterministic ‘tunnel view’ of language developments towards a normed standard variety.

Frederica van Dam’s (Ghent) article sheds light on an unpublished and little known manuscript, titled *Tableau Poétique*, by the 16th-century Flemish portrait painter, poet and writer Lucas D’Heere (1534–1584), preserved in the library of Arbury Hall in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England. Her discovery and study of the manuscript reveals important new information on background, life and work of the protestant refugee D’Heere, his professional activities as a painter, and his social network in exile.

Cornelis van der Haven (Ghent) explores the ways in which commercial knowledge is presented in 18th-century theatre texts from Amsterdam and Hamburg. His interpretation reveals the different positions bearing on the exchange of this knowledge in these texts and addresses the ways in which the power structures of dramatic texts were transformed in order to open up the private sphere to discussions on public topics like the stock trade.

From an adaptation studies angle Jeroen Dera (Nijmegen) investigates the creative reception of Gerard Reve’s *De avonden* (‘The evenings’), Gerard Reve’s key novel from 1947 and, according to the readers of the Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad, one of the top 10 Dutch language novels of all times.³ Combining approaches from film studies, comics studies and literary criticism, Dera discusses, literary, cinematic and graphic novel versions of Reve’s *De avonden*, reading the dissimilar adaptations as interpretations of a hypotext, reappearing in a new context and a new medium, rather than as copies of an ‘original’.

Laura Lech and Maarten Klein (Lublin) discuss androgyny in the writings of Louis Couperus (1863–1923) and Hugo Claus (1929–2008). After discussing androgyny and its religious and philosophical background in art around the turn of the century, they show what can be found on the subject in Couperus’ works, especially in the novel *De berg van licht* (‘The mountain of light’, 1905/06) and in Hugo Claus’s novel *Jessica!*, in which the Flemish master introduces a character that is entirely based on his great predecessor from the fin de siècle. Although Couperus and Claus seem to be totally different authors, they conclude that both consider androgyny to be an ideal, if in different ways.

As always best wishes for good reading.

¹ Dutch Centre London, Austin Friars, <http://www.dutchcentre.com> (accessed 19 November 2013).

² 10th ALCS Biennial Conference ‘Discord and Consensus’ (ALCS2014), <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dutch/ALCS2014> (accessed 19 November 2013).

³ Steinsz, Pieter, ‘Het beste boek voor mannen én vrouwen’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 7 Oct 2011 (accessed 19 Nov. 2013).