

Afscheid van de (Nederlandse) literatuur? Inleidende opmerkingen over literatuurgeschiedenis als cultureel project en wetenschappelijke onderneming

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Farewell to the (Dutch) Literature? Introductory Remarks About the History of Literature as Cultural Project and Scientific Enterprise

Abstract. In this introductory article a view on literary-history research is presented on the basis of topics addressed by the other contributions to this issue of *Werkwinkel*. Central to a new paradigm in cultural studies is a new, dynamic conception of culture, informed by current insights of cultural sociology, cognitive sciences and a functionalist approach: culture is fragmented, situation dependent, led by mediation and framing effects and inheres not in the objects or artefacts, perceptions or symbolizations but in the interactions among them. Consequently, the object of research on literary-history should be reconceptualised as a complex form of communicative behaviour. Besides, it is argued that traditionally and even in recent times, literary historiography still is determined by cultural agenda's or by a mix of academic and cultural aims. Current policy of science requires that academic research contributes to societal issues; hence, traditional literary historiography can function as a form of knowledge dissemination. However, scientific criteria should always be prominent. Reviewing the subsequent contributions, this article identifies some new themes of literary-history like media context, transnational literature and the interaction with other, non-literary discourses. Such a broad and dynamic concept of literary history runs a risk that the literary-historical research programme succumbs to its ambitions. Yet, this might be overcome by formulating precise and well-defined research questions within a sound theoretical framework.

Keywords: literary historiography; knowledge dissemination; Dutch literature