

Preface

The Baltic and Lithuanian cultures, linkages of various world cultures, dynamics of modern societies and conflicts rising within them are being analysed in this publication by scientists of different fields. Every of the four chapters of the publication disclose a certain aspect of the issue under analysis.

The first chapter that is devoted to the Baltic culture contains two works. The article “Lithuanian Pantheon” by Dainius Razauskas presents a new insight into the origin of the concept and primary content of pantheon and into the Lithuanian equivalent of this concept, thus, into the Lithuanian pantheon in its narrow and most accurate sense. In the article “Pine in Lithuanian Traditional Culture” by Jolanta Zabulyte based on different sources, various aspects of pine role in Lithuanian traditional culture, i.e. pine relationship with places of worship, death (afterlife transformation and ghosts repenting in pine-trees, place of execution, haunting, etc.), with women and their fertility, health, characteristics of mythologems of the Tree of the World and the Tree of Life are discussed on comparative basis.

The second chapter “Oriental Aesthetic Ideas in Lithuania” contain two works. Yumiko Nunokawa presents analysis of dissemination of the Japanese culture in the late 19th and early 20th century Europe and its influence on art, namely the art of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. The article by Jūratė Landsbergytė considers dissemination of orientalist tendencies in Lithuanian music of the latter four decades. Special attention in the article is given to the emphasis of specific orientalist stylistic features of the works by B. Kutavičius, A. Martinaitis, R. Šerkšnytė, J. Janulytė and M. Baranauskas, the authors inspired by the lyrics of Rabindranath Tagore (Bengali – Robyndronath Thakur), and to the discussion of the depth ties with his lyrics.

Three articles are included in the chapter for comparative studies. Daiva Tamošaitytė in the article “Dispersion of the Feminine Principle in a Discourse of Post-feminism, Christianity and Neovedanta: Comparative Analysis” shows that in principal universal and adapted to a modern person concept of Shakti has common features with the insights into the guidelines of functioning of feminine principle by Vydūnas, Vincas Vyčinas, Algis Mickūnas and other allied philosophers and can be useful as an alternative to the Western post-feminist ideology of genderism. The article “The Paradigm of World’s body in M. Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology and Zen’s tradition of thought” by Andrius Tamoševičius seeks to disclose parallels between Western and East Asian tradition of thought. Especially valuable insight of the author is that the concept of aestheticism or in broader sense the concept of sense could be the central newly reflected concept of traditional ontology. The work by the eminent French scholar Henry Corbin “Between Andalusia and Iran: outline of the spiritual topography” organically complements and extends the topic under discussion in this chapter.

Two articles are included in the fourth chapter “Culture and Society”. The article by Aivaras Stepukonis analyses the dynamic variant of world-systems theory as developed by the American thinker Immanuel Wallerstein. Having highlighted the fundamental pitfalls of the global capitalist system a critical view is cast on the post-soviet state of Lithuania, which is all-too-eager to imprudently imitate the mechanisms of capitalist business-making in times when these very mechanisms terminate operations in the world. Konstantinas Andrijauskas discloses historical, social, cultural reasons for conflicts between the Han and Uyghur ethnic groups in Xinjiang, China’s largest administrative division. The author’s insights are important for analysis of abiding and again igniting interethnic clashes both in Asia and other regions of the world.

The publication also includes review by Kęstutis Šapoka of the book by Algis Uždavinyš “Creative Imagination: art criticism and publicistic writing” (compiled by Odeta Žukauskienė and Živilė Gaižutytė-Filipavičienė), thoughts of Edvardas Gudavičius on the second book of “Research of Lithuanian Jews’ Culture”, and conference reviews: “Scientific Research in Protection of Cultural Heritage”, “A Piece of Art – Historical Source” and “Relations of Art Psychology with Aesthetics and Art Philosophy”.

A broad variety of problems of the publication also implies a wide range of readers. These would be ethnologists and historians, fine art experts and philosophers, sociologists and political scientists – all who are not indifferent to the temptations of scientific life and adventure.

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