

By Way of Foreword

Dearly beloved,

We've gathered here together - i.e. *the* birds of a feather who finally managed to flock together – to join in holy matrimony our contrasts and reconcile our disparities – naturally, if any.

For those of you keen to find out how things started rocketing, i.e. how I came up with this fabulous comparative idea, this is how it all began: I was lying one evening (by the way, I must warn you that this is something I do on a regular basis, lying to people, I mean, so you'd be well advised to take what you're about to hear with a grain of salt). So, I resume : I was lying comfortably on my sofa one evening with my two precious cats, Literature and Linguistics – Literature is the pensive type, a grey tabby Maine Coon, and Linguistics the talkative type, a white-and-brown Burmese – purring away at my side and listening – all three of us – to Beethoven's 6th (“The Pastoral”), and as it reached that really magnificent, tranquil part called “After the Storm”, I started humming the tune to myself, and, much to my surprise, Literature and Linguistics immediately joined in – though in perfectly distinct voices : Literature miews soprano, Linguistics mezzo, myself not being able to sing higher than alto. Anyway, the marvelous thing about it was that none of us (Beethoven included) was out of tune.

And it was at that rare unique moment that it struck me: there we were, all four of us – Literature, Linguistics, Beethoven (standing for music, *culture* at large) and myself,

the *translator* of those spirit-lifting sounds into human emotions, communicating in perfect harmony, an unparalleled *concordia discors*. It was indeed a sight for sore eyes/ears/... shoulders/hips/knees and... other such excruciatingly aching limbs!

Till my daughter noisily barged in – as she usually does – in sharp *contrast* to the pious atmosphere, just in time to *compare* the four performances, voice her criticisms, throw everybody present out of tune and into a perfect *discordia concors*, ...and magically help spell the title of this conference out before my very eyes: *CONCORDIA DISCORS* vs. *DISCORDIA CONCORS* – Researches into *Comparative Literature, Contrastive Linguistics, Translation and Cross-Cultural Strategies*.

September 21st, 2007

I deemed it wise to insert here the above excerpt from my, so to say, rather unorthodox Opening Speech delivered at the first edition of **Inter Litteras et Terras**¹ (ILET) - which, for sheer reasons of space, I had to leave out when editing the **ILET**-proceedings – for it perfectly reflects the considerable spirit of this challenging enterprise as well as of the editorial board behind it.

Although, admittedly, promoted in recent years from a backup-strategy position to a “must” of international research, comparative techniques unfortunately are still keeping an embarrassingly low profile both Europe- and worldwide. Moreover, since final panel-debates held at the academic event referred to above made it abundantly clear that the residue of topics left undiscussed in research areas as encompassing as the ones at issue is bound to be infinitely

¹ The International Conference on Comparative Literature, Contrastive Linguistics, Translation and Cross-Cultural Strategies, organized in September 2007 by *Inter Litteras* Research Centre affiliated to “tefan cel Mare” University of Suceava

larger than the number of topics dealt with, the imperious need arose for a forum where ventilation of new concepts, of recently advanced theories and strategies in the field, as well as fruitful exchanges of ideas with fellow comparatists from all over the world could be carried out on a much more regular basis.

Acutely aware of the fact that this first issue is but “the tip of a huge iceberg”, the editors are hereby inviting articles offering interesting suggestions for employment of new research tools and techniques, and revealing “untrodden paths”, i. e. contributing original comparative research conducted on the topics being investigated.

Though the target readership of the periodical in hand make up primarily researchers, academics and BA, MA or doctoral students with a, so to say, “comparative streak”, the series is intended to reach a wider audience including pre-university connoisseurs - teachers and students alike - particularly those teaching or taking intensive courses in modern languages.

It is the firm belief of the editorial board that *CONCORDIA DISCORDS vs. DISCORDIA CONCORS – Researches into Comparative Literature, Contrastive Linguistics, Translation and Cross-Cultural Strategies* will open up new vistas, promote thought-provoking approaches and, above all, provide nimble minds with *the* rare opportunity to apply and assert themselves in the fascinating – if, alas, underpopulated – province of comparative philology and humanities.

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