Institutionalizing National Cultural Memory: the Role of Histories of Literature

PhD-course, spring 2013, 3 hp
Examination: paper 6-8 pages

Professor Frank Baasner
Anmälan görs till Eva Carlestål (eva.carlestal@liu.se)

Wednesday, April 10 17-19, KY 21
Thursday, April 11 10-12, 13-15, Karin’s corner, Key building

European pupils in all member states of the EU get familiar with their national literary histories, even if the pedagogical methods and approaches differ from one country to the other. For more than 150 years, basically since the beginning of the 19th Century and even more since school became democratic and mandatory in the middle of the 19th Century, history of national literature was a key subject for higher education.

In the course I would like to show when, how and where the idea of NATIONAL histories of literature came up and was linked to the concept of national (linguistic) identities. We will study several cases, namely France, Italy, Spain and Germany. The lectures will be related to discussions about cultural memory and theories concerning the history of institutions.

Part 1 (April 10, 17-19)
Seminar: Institutionalizing National Cultural Memory

Part 2 (April 11, 10-12):
- Definitions, overview of previous forms of “history” of literature, 14th to 18th Century
- The philosophical innovations by Herder and romanticism
- Origin of language, origin of national literatures and national characters (“Volk”)
- Overview over national literary histories in Europe

Part 3 (April 11, 13-15):
- Case studies:
  - Germany, from romanticism to racism
  - France: universal values and norms?
  - Italy: the making of a nation
  - Spain: a struggle between centralism and multiculturalism

Literature:
Valdés, M. J. and Hutcheon, L., “Rethinking Literary History–Comparatively”:
http://archives.acls.org/op/27_rethinking_literary_history.htm
"History of National Literature as Problem", *Meninis* Vol. 6 Issue 1, 2008