

Anna Balakian Prize for the period 2019-2022 Report

We, the Chair and members of the Jury for the Anna Balakian Prize for the period, 2019-2022, received seven books published between 1st January, 2019 and 31st December, 2021, as entries. They fulfilled all the conditions of eligibility as laid down by the rules of ICLA. The following are the books received for the Prize:

1. Beauvieux, Marie-Noelle, 2020. *Litteraire, trop litteraire : Des compositions fragmentaires D' Akutagawa Ryunosuke* Hermann Editeurs, Paris, 300 pages.

2. Cermatorie, Joseph. *Baroque Modernity: An Aesthetics of Theater*. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2021. 322 pages.

3. Feuillebois, Victorire, 2021. *Portraits de l'ecrivain romantique en conteur nocturne*. Classiques Garnier, Paris. 440 pages.

4. Hawas, May, 2021. *Politicising World Literature: Egypt, Between Pedagogy and the Public*. Routledge, London. 232 Pages.

5. Pan, Anandita, 2021. *Mapping Dalit Feminism: Towards an Intersectional Standpoint*. Sage Publications, India. 260 pages.

6. Rajkumar, Joanna, 2020. *Lignes Sans Reponses: Trois Experiences Poetiques Des Limites Du Language*. Classiques Garnier, Paris. 730 pages.

7. Rzepa, Joanna, 2021. *Modernism and Theology: Rainer Maria Rilke, T.S.Eliot, Czeslaw Milosz*. Palgrave Macmillan, 440 pages.

The authors of the French books provided detailed summaries of their works in English.

It was agreed that the books would be evaluated on three counts: originality of conception and formulation of the central argument (10 points); clarity/ rigour of language and style (10 points); contribution to the field of comparative literature (10 points). The jury members exchanged views on each book and

there was informed discussion on all the aspects of the books. Regarding the books in French, special care was taken to evaluate them critically on par with the other books. Professor Rosendahl Thomsen, a member of the jury, is a scholar of French.

Based on the points awarded by the jury members, it has been found that the book by May Hawas, *Politicising World Literature: Egypt, Between Pedagogy and the Public* excels the other books in the above list, in terms of the formulation of the central argument, the clarity of language and style, and the contribution to the field of comparative literature. The members of the jury have great pleasure in recommending the book by May Hawas for the award of the Anna Balakian Prize. The jury found that Joseph Cermatori's book, *Baroque Modernity: An Aesthetics of Theater* deserves an Honourable mention, as it came second in the order of merit. It is recommended that Joseph Cermatori's book be awarded an Honourable Mention. Both the decisions are unanimous.

The following citation may be read out at the time of the announcement of the Prize during the ICLA Congress:

May Hawas' *Politicising World Literature: Egypt, Between Pedagogy and the Public* is a critical work of remarkable originality that is consistently analytical and argumentative in its presentation of ideas, with a strong comparative perspective. It examines a corpus of novels and travelogues written in English, Arabic, French, Czech and Italian to historicise Egypt's cultural transactions with different parts of the world in both pre-modern and modern periods. The author demonstrates that against the formulaic and predictable post-colonial critical perspective, a 'reworlding' of Egyptian literary texts, would help unravel their inherent plurality and polyphony by transcending the limitations of post-colonial historicism. She reinterprets the paradigm of the world literature for a globalised world of culture,

where the burden of history and the politics of representation have lost their urgency and centrality. She pleads for a revision of the existing pedagogy and principles of comparatism, to engage with the 'world' in 'world literature' as an open site of possibilities of textual resonances and receptions, and inter-literary dialogues.

The jury has selected the book, *Baroque Modernity: An Aesthetics of Theater* by Joseph Cermatori for Honourable Mention. The book traces the role of Baroque theatre in shaping a new aesthetic of modernism, at the turn of the twentieth century. Backed by sound scholarship, the book evidences theoretical acumen and analytical rigour. Cermatori succeeds in situating the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Stephane Mallarme, Walter Benjamin and Gertrude Stein in the context of the baroque theatre with reference to their engagements with the ideas of space, experience and performance.

The chair and the members of the jury would like to thank the President, ICLA and the colleagues in the EC, ICLA for extending all support for the completion of the evaluation work.

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Member,
Professor of Comparative Literature, Aarhus University,
Denmark.

Lawrence Wang-Chi, Member,
Chair and Professor of Humanities,
Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

E. V. Ramakrishnan, Chair of the Jury,
Professor Emeritus, Central University of Gujarat, India.
Honourable Professor, Central University of Kerala, India.

June, 13, 2022