

## Foreword

In the era of the Internet, reading as a linear, systemic practice is being increasingly replaced by the selective consumption of texts. As a result, the editors of *Colloquia* no longer focus on presenting thematic issues, which remains the prerogative of conference proceedings. It is notable, however, that despite our promotion of these principles of spontaneity and free association, the articles, reviews, and other material that reached us for this issue arranged itself naturally into a tight and meaningful map of twentieth century literary phenomena, and called for a neat, chronological presentation – from canonical, classical texts to the most recent literature of (e)migration.

Ramutė Dragenytė leads the “Articles” section of this issue with an examination of the relationship between positivistic and hermeneutic methodologies in Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas’ history of Lithuanian literature, and of how that author responded to the social and intellectual needs of his time by grounding his analysis in the grand narrative of the nation. Interestingly, the entire analytical section of the journal consists of investigations by young academics with ambitious methodological aspirations (deconstruction, literary anthropology, imagology).

Three articles are devoted to discrepancies between Soviet life and literature. They approach this question from innovative methodological perspectives and by exploring material that has hitherto received little critical attention – women’s autobiographical narratives, the quality of Russian translations of Lithuanian poetry, and a novel that received little recognition when originally published. Solveiga Daugirdaitė’s critical reading of women authors’ autobiographies from the Soviet period is especially intriguing for its analysis of what is said, and perhaps silenced, in these texts. In her article “Ideologizing Intimacy: Early Russian Translations of Judita Vaičiūnaitė’s Poetry”, Gintarė Bernotienė presents a careful comparative analysis of the Lithuanian originals and their translations, revealing the politics of literary translation during the Soviet period, and the perverse practice of distorting poetic texts. Jūratė Čerškutė analyzes a novel that was not acknowledged by critics in its time – Ričardas Gavelis’ *Vilniaus džiazas* (Vilnius Jazz, 1993), the “twin brother” of that author’s most famous novel, *Vilniaus pokeris* (Vilnius Poker, 1989), and gives that secondary work new contemporary resonance. Drawing on J. Hillis Miller’s deconstructive concept

of narration as well as Gavelis' own theory of "internal inhabitants", Čerškutė focuses on the most important structural element of the novel – the figure of the narrator – and demonstrates how its multi-layeredness threatened the hegemony of socialist ideology. Although written since Lithuania regained independence, the poet Marcelijus Martinaitis' collection *KB įtariamas* (KB is Suspect, 2004) also offers a deconstructive picture of the Soviet system: in her article about this work Akvilė Rėklaitytė uses British anthropologist Victor Turner's methodological tools to uncover the veiled identity of the work's lyric subject.

Laura Laurušaitė considers to what degree imagology can be productive in contemporary literary analysis: she offers a thorough overview of this critical direction (in particular the French and Aachen schools) and examines how certain groups of imagery in Lithuanian and Latvian émigré fiction reveal the emigrant's low self-worth. A completely different standard of self-worth is reflected in post-war émigré narratives, as the Germanist and literary scholar Audronė Barūnaitė-Willeke (a representative of the diaspora herself, who this year celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday), makes clear in the "Discussion" section of the issue.

Solveiga Daugirdaitė's highlighting of the question of autobiographical discourse is echoed by an article presented under "Publications" by Tartu school semiotician Yuri Lotman (1922–1993), "Литературная биография в историко-культурном контексте" (Literary Biography in the Context of Cultural History), the translation of which from Russian required joint efforts (the young translator Virginija Cibaruskė received significant support from experienced Lotman translator Donata Mitaitė and editor Gintarė Bernotienė). We are grateful to Lotman's son, Mihhail Lotman for his timely mediation in making the publication of this article in our journal possible.

We have heard complaints from other editors of academic publications about the rapid decline in numbers of people engaged in critical discourse – the weakening of review sections, the decreasing exchange of ideas. *Colloquia* certainly does not feel this lack of reviewers, and this issue offers assessments of four important new monographs: Skirmantas Valentas' *Kalbos stigmatos poezijoje* (Language Stigmas in Poetry), Aušra Jurgutienė's *Literatūros suvokimo menas: Hermeneutikos tradicija* (The Art of Understanding Literature: The Hermeneutic Tradition), Vigmantas Butkus' *Stebuklo horizontai: Šiluva ir jos legenda lietuvių literatūroje* (Miraculous Horizons: Šiluva and its Legend in Lithuanian Literature), and Taisija Laukkonėn's *Dainiai be tautos: Lietuvos rusų rašytojų strategijos (po)*

*sovietmečiu* (Bards Without Nations: Strategies of Lithuanian Russian Writers in the (Post)Soviet Period). The art of the review fulfills its function when minimal description of a text is complemented by analytical investigation, well-argued polemics, and the raising of hypotheses.

The section “Domino of Opinions”, which has recently been quiet due to a shortage of discussion topics, is revived when Aušra Jurgutienė asks – not rhetorically – why academic experts dismiss serious international conferences as regional events. The section is further replenished by the publication of prose master Romualdas Granauskas’ speech on accepting the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore award for most creative book of 2013, for his work *Šventųjų gyvenimai* (Lives of the Saints). In that author’s view, the presence of even one person standing guard at the stations of culture and public spirit can give us hope.

JŪRATĖ SPRINDYTĖ