

Foreword

This issue is unified by a focus on research into the Soviet period – most of the articles and all four reviews *in corpore* offer reassessments of the models of cultural identification that existed during the period of occupation. The distance of time makes it possible to conceptualise the Soviet era in new ways, with individual studies revealing the controversial nature of Soviet-era literature. Dalia Satkauskytė's theoretical article offers a creative diagnosis of the complexity of Aesopic language, presenting convincing arguments for how it can be studied in terms of communication, semiotics, and literary sociology, and how these approaches can complement one another.

This year the universally talented poet Marcelijus Martinaitis would have turned eighty. With the synergistic title “Marcelijus Martinaitis's Cultural Crafting,” Akvilė Rėklaitytė's article draws on poetic anthropology to integrate the poet's biography, poetry, essays, folkloric knowledge, cultural stance, and aesthetic explorations in daily life (his reconstruction of the home in which he was born, his painting of Easter eggs) into a conceptual whole. An anthropological approach allows her to focus on the scale and consistency of the poet as a cultural figure. In her analysis of how Judita Vaičiūnaitė came to be included in the Soviet literary canon, Gintarė Bernotienė reveals the complex history of translations of this poet's work into Russian as a significant phenomenon. Using extensive quotes from previously unpublished correspondence, the author of the article weaves a suspense story that exposes the wonders of the literary world.

Some of the writers discussed by literary scholars in this issue of *Colloquia* wrote during both the late Soviet period and after the restoration of the country's independence. Dalia Jakaitė's article centers around existentialism as an alternative, counter-cultural mode of being in the work of two poets who met dramatic fates. Vaidotas Daunys's and Valdas Gedgaudas's existential worldviews and eschatological treatments of time in this article are explained and applied with regards to other poets of that generation. This section of the journal wraps up with a rare appearance of theatre criticism: Aušra Gudavičiūtė considers how theoretical and practical dramatic principles are transformed in contemporary stage productions.

Reda Pabarčienė continues a discussion, initiated during Neringa Markevičienė's dissertation defense, about the opportunities offered by contemporary textology.

It is symptomatic that in recent years both literary and historical scholars have been directing their research at analogous phenomena of the same historical period – state-sponsored writers – with historians paying more attention to the state’s political project and creative workers’ attitude toward it, rather than the works themselves. Elena Baliutytė’s review is notable for its incisive literary reading of the historian Vilius Ivanauskas’s monograph *Įrėmintą tapatybę: Lietuvos rašytojai tautų draugystės imperijoje* (Framed Identity: Lithuanian Writers Within the Empire of National Friendship). In his review of a recent *magnum opus* produced by Lithuanian literary scholars – *Tarp estetikos ir politikos: Lietuvių literatūra sovietmečiu* (Between Aesthetics and Politics: Lithuanian Literature of the Soviet Period) – Marius Šidlauskas argues that, although these kinds of studies should help promote healing from historical hang-ups, the methodological approaches used include too much (neo)Marxism, relativist values, and unbalanced assessments. Like the historian Ivanauskas’s work, this collective monograph’s subtitle has a political texture; nevertheless, literature scholars consider this kind of rethinking as their primary, and very important, duty.

Solveiga Daugirdaitė’s study *Švystelėjo kaip meteoras. 1965-ieji su Simone de Beauvoir ir Jeanu Pauliu Sartre’u*, (Like a Meteor Flash: 1965 with Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre), reviewed by Donata Mitaitė, powerfully demonstrated that, thanks to careful restoration work, a single event – the short week-long visit of the French intellectual couple in the summer of 1965 – can activate broad contexts and help sketch out a portrait of the Soviet elite.

In the traditional “Discussion” section, Laura Laurušaitė interviews a member of Latvian Academy of Sciences, the comparativist and multidisciplinary scholar Benedicts Kalnacs, who talks about cooperation between Baltic literary scholars, methodological fashions, his Latvian colleagues’ research, and Latvian mentality.

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