

Foreword

Although the sociologist Vytautas Kavolis once suggested that the celebration of anniversaries is a sign of cultural paralysis, such celebrations can be meaningful when those organising them attempt to take a fresh, reinterpretive look at texts from the distant or recent past, and to consider their influence on contemporary culture. In this issue of the journal such an analytical perspective was applied to three important literary figures – the critics Vytautas Kubilius and Rimvydas Šilbajoris, and the playwright Kostas Ostrauskas, each of whom would have celebrated his 90th birthday in 2016.

The “Articles” section opens with an academic analysis by Aušra Jurgutienė, who offers an original, deconstructive analysis of the two most influential Lithuanian literary critics of the second half of the twentieth century. Having acknowledged that deconstruction is currently “experiencing the fate of a ghost,” the author polemically and playfully “deconstructs” Kubilius’s and Šilbajoris’s creative trajectories while at the same time recognising their legacies and significance for contemporary criticism. Virginija Cibarauskė provides a thorough analysis of Yuri Lotman’s reception in Lithuania and the world and presents this scholar’s central cultural semiotics theories and establishes their relevance, especially in terms of discussions around the status of text and context. Viktorija Šeina offers a theoretical and practical analysis of always relevant discussions about literary canon in her article about the establishment of Maironis, the bard of Lithuanian national revival, within the permanent, representative Lithuanian literary canon. Experimental art and examples of postdramatic theatre – as they made their way into the absurdist poetics of Kostas Ostrauskas’s oeuvre and became its intertexts – are the object of Aušra Martišiūtė-Linartienė’s article.

The remaining publications correspond among themselves, i.e., they contain direct echoes with or connections to other texts in this issue. The reflections on children’s literature, a genre which only occasionally receives attention from Lithuanian researchers, are connected: an article about interwar children’s literature magazines and awards and a review of a book by leading children’s literature scholar Kęstutis Urba. The question of Baltic literature, which keeps coming up in the journal, is in this issue represented by the linguist

Regina Kvašytė's unusual perspective on the joint efforts of literary scholars, ethnographers, and historians to produce the collection *Baltiška, tautinė, regioninė savimonė baltų literatūrose ir kultūrose* (*Baltic, National, and Regional Consciousness in Baltic Literatures and Cultures*); there are also Latvian references in the above-mentioned article about interwar children's literature.

The traditional inclusion, in each issue of *Colloquia*, of material analysing the Soviet period in this case consists of three publications of different genres – an article, a conversation, and the discussion format “Domino of Opinions.” Donata Mitaitė's article “The 1930s Generation's Conformism and Illusions” explores the discrepancies between Soviet-era poets' writing, attitudes, and secret, internal lives. Drawing on extensive oral histories collected by the author as well as new archival material, the author identifies significant contradictions between official and private life – contradictions which are softened by the author's determination to neither judge nor justify, but rather understand “unheroic, fallible, reflective, and yet also working individuals.”

The remaining two texts are also marked by a similar, humanizing approach – Neringa Butnoriūtė's in-depth conversation with the poet Almis Grybauskas, who resides in the Czech Republic, about his intellectual coming of age during the Soviet period, and sociologist Irena Eglė Laumenskaitė's polemical review of developments in Soviet era studies – “What is Real?” – in the section “Domino of Opinions.” This author considers three social networking projects, that have appeared in book form, and presents the argument that, because the currently popular approach of oral history can only provide a fragmented view of a concrete individual's development, such analyses should always be viewed within the broader context of that individual's entire *life history*. This publication is especially suggestive because it is not speaking from an abstract distance, but is dealing with the legacy of Soviet mentality as a question of personal fate.

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