

Foreword

This issue of *Colloquia* has several areas of focus – contemporary Lithuanian literature, analysis of communality, translation theory and practice, examination of certain conservative elements within Latvian and Lithuanian mentality, and the interdependence of language and apprehension.

Within the broader context of Holocaust studies Žana Raškevičiūtė attempts to understand how Ichokas Meras chose to speak about the great tragedy in his existentially and aesthetically enduring novel *Lygiosios trunka akimirka* (1963; *Stalemate*, trans. Jonas Zdanys, 2005). She identifies two related aspects within the conception of the novel the importance of the choices that determine whether an individual becomes a moral subject within the conditions of the Holocaust; and that ghettoization can be overcome through both the most personal and universal means, by accepting the commonality of destiny and language.

Neringa Butnoriūtė's article applies the innovative, for Lithuanian literary studies, approach of cognitive poetics to the poetry of Antanas A. Jonynas. Tracing how Jonynas's poetic language blends imagery, non-discursive experience, and emotion, she identifies the layers in the process through which an image of reality emerges in the text, distinguishes the separate spheres of metaphor and the iconic, and discusses how imagination participates in conveying reality through language.

Although the influential Latvian critic Guntis Berelis has said that the national epic tale *Lāčplēsis* is a nineteenth century anachronism that is only distantly connected to literature, the work's cultural influence continues to be immense. This is further evidenced by Justyna Prusinowska's article, which offers an original perspective on sleep, drowsiness, and dreaming as evidence of a lack within Latvian national consciousness, resulting from colonisation. Working around the conceptual axis of the dream, she groups different Latvian authors' interpretations of the myth, from historiographic sources to the contemporary émigré writing.

The literary and theological researcher Dalia Čiočytė identifies new versions of the concept of the demonic in several works: in a story by Herkus Kunčius's it is an untreatable psychiatric illness; in a play by Marius Ivaškevičius it is a form of political aggression. Imelda Vedrickaitė explores how Saulius Tomas Kondrotas's prose works and Šarūnas Saukas's paintings used the surrealistic imagination to unmask a dying regime. In their discussion of the case

of how one Biblical concept was translated into Lithuanian, sociologist Eglė I. Laumenskaitė and rev. Algirdas Akelaitis emphasise the importance of upholding the essential connection between language and thought in order to resist the erosion of meaning.

In the “Publications” section Jūratė Levina presents early, heretofore unpublished archival texts by Lithuanian semiotician Algirdas Julius Greimas: a review of a textbook by the young Greimas and a polemic with Juozas Girnius around the question of literary “generation” are marked by polemical ardour and a catchy writing style. The section is further strengthened by Brigita Speičytė’s translation of an excerpt from contemporary Polish philosopher and researcher of modern subjectivity Agata Bielik-Robson’s book *The Other Modernity*. Titled “Irony, Tragedy, and Community: Richard Rorty Through the Eyes of a Barbarian,” this text responds to many of the questions raised in this issue. Here the changes that the *conditio humana* has undergone during the postmodern era of constructing differences and identities are considered as a conflict between individualism and community-mindedness. The author clearly has a preference for the state of *dedifférenciation* and its capacity for bringing a community together, for that kind of cathartic experience that makes individuals feel equal and profoundly interconnected.

In this issue, *Colloquia*’s strategic intention to increase the number of scientific investigations reviewed is fulfilled optimally. A good third of the journal is taken up by academic reviews of five books: three look at important monographs, while two focus on the figure of Maironis (his critical reception up to the present and a volume of his letters and memoirs). The “Dominoes of Opinions” section presents a speech given by Beata Kałęba, winner of a prize named after the Lithuanian literature scholar and Polonist Algis Kalėda (1952–2017); Kałęba bears witness to the organic contacts between Polish and Lithuanian literatures and literary figures, while Speičytė’s review of Kałęba’s book *Rozdroże: Literatura polska w kręgu litewskiego odrodzenia narodowego* (*Crossroads: Polish Literature in the Context of Lithuanian National Rebirth*, 2016) both confirms and consolidates them.

That experience community not only in times of hardship, that in celebrating the centenary of Lithuania’s statehood we succeed in considering the foundations of our identity with the distance of irony – these should be our concerns as we develop contemporary humanities studies.

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