

## Between Aesthetics and Politics: Lithuanian Literature of the Soviet Period

The book *Between Aesthetics and Politics: Lithuanian Literature of the Soviet Period* draws on a variety of methodologies (including postcolonial, sociocritical, sociological, interpretative, feminist, translation theory, historiographic etc.) to present an overview of Lithuanian literature of the Soviet period. The research presented investigates controversial questions around literary process and literary agency; situations involving ambiguous and complicated relations with institutional literary frameworks (official literary method such as Socialist Realism, censorship, the concept of the writer); key literary phenomena that received little attention during the Soviet period (literature of the Stalinist decade, prose versions of the internal monologue) or were studied superficially (Aesopic language); writers whose works and personas played a unique and unequivocal role (Justinas Marcinkevičius); and specific case studies. In examining cultural processes of the Soviet period, the authors of this collection make every effort to avoid dichotomies around *resistance against* vs. *collaboration with* the Soviet system, maintaining the position that the structure of the literary field in the Soviet period affected all of its participants in some way.

In the introductory section, editor Dalia Satkauskytė presents a history of the study of Lithuanian literature of the Soviet period, discusses the challenges that face current researchers, and reveals the issues of terminology and communication that arose during the writing of this book.

# THE GENESIS OF LITHUANIAN LITERATURE OF THE SOVIET PERIOD

TAISIJA ORAL

## **Lithuanian Literature Within the Metafield of Multinational Soviet Literature**

This chapter of the monograph discusses Lithuanian literature of the Soviet period within the context of the metafield of Soviet literatures. It focuses on the specific circumstances of its incorporation into the multinational network of Soviet literature, stages of its initiation into Socialist Realism, and how it was perceived in relation to other literatures.

Lithuanian literature was drawn into the metafield of the literatures of the USSR at a time when the main principles of a multinational Soviet literature had already been formulated and institutionalized. Soviet literature had gone through three different but overlapping historical periods – it was an integral part of revolutionary, totalitarian, and (World War Two) military culture. Socialist Realism, as a political-ideological project of cultural unification, had reached its culmination during the years of Stalin's reign. Thanks to this project, with the beginning of the Thaw the network of relationships between multilingual literary fields was transformed into a partially autonomous literary metafield whose structures could no longer be described according to a “hierarchy of subordination,” leading to the search for another model.

The author of this chapter proposes looking at the system of Soviet literatures as a discourse within world literature, with its own ideology, center, and logic of relations between its multilingual fields. She borrows analytical tools from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the literary field, which gained new relevance with the context of Pascal Casanova and John Guillory's intercultural literary studies. This approach makes it possible to grasp the place and role of Lithuanian literature of the Soviet period in relation to other literatures of the USSR.

ALGIS KALĖDA

### **Early Soviet-Era Literature: Projects for a “Bright” Future**

The author of this chapter seeks to describe and analyze the situation of Lithuanian literature of the first decade of the Soviet period (1940-1950) within official, public space. He devotes most of his attention to representations of a “bright” communist future that were dictated by the Communist Party and other Soviet state institutions. Various government authorities continuously stressed the political role of the author: to efficiently produce activist texts in prose or verse, regardless of their artistic merit – it was only crucial that they passionately promote socialism. Afraid of persecution and wanting to publish, or motivated by other reasons, writers succumbed to these demands. Kalėdas’s textual analysis focuses on the representative two-volume anthology *Tarybinė lietuvių poezija. 1940-1950* (Soviet Lithuanian Poetry. 1940-1950) and *Tarybinė lietuvių proza. 1940-1950* (Soviet Lithuanian Prose. 1940-1950). The poetry volume contains works by 29 authors, the prose volume the texts of works by 28 writers of different generations. As most of the texts operate according to a repertoire of common stylistic clichés, claims, and epithets, it is difficult to discern any distinct individual differences among them. It is like a collective creative work compiled from rather disparate texts, as though the editors’ main priority was to fill the anthology pages with any kind of material as long as it created at least the slightest illusion of literature. The chapter’s author also offers a focused analysis of the mechanisms of manipulation in the prose of one of the most famous of the Soviet-era writers, Juozas Baltušis (1909–1919), showing how, during the first post-war decade, Soviet Lithuanian literature was wrenched from its national roots and forced to meet propagandist demands.

## Two Women Writers and One Utopia in the Early Soviet Period

This chapter discusses the creative destinies of two Lithuanian women writers of the early Soviet period – Valerija Valsiūnienė (1907–1955) and Halina Korsakienė (1910–2003) – as well as works dealing with similar themes published during the mid-1950s. These two women’s fates were very different. Although Valsiūnienė, a teacher, and her family were deported from Lithuania by the Soviets in 1941, she was able to regain her freedom. Today, however, the work of this woman who so energetically sought to establish herself as a writer is largely forgotten. On the other hand, Korsakienė was married to one of the most important post-war Lithuanian literary critics, and today is best appreciated as a memoirist. These different destinies make it possible to consider what kinds of possibilities were open to women trying to develop literary careers during the Soviet era.

Each of these writers at one point published a more substantial work (at the time referred to as novellas, these pieces would today be considered novels) that depicted a young woman encountering forces hostile to the Soviet authorities. In Valsiūnienė’s *Keliai kekeliai* (Roads and Paths, written originally as a film script in 1955; published in 1957), the heroine is a history student from a small town who has come to Vilnius University; in Korsakienė’s *Gyvenimą išėjus* (Off to Life, 1955), the main character is a young woman doctor sent by the government to work in a small town. While repeating formulaic subjects, these two Socialist Realist works reveal the Soviet regime’s attitudes towards women. Each focuses around a struggle for the woman’s worldview. Torn from their safe environments (home, groups of fellow students), the young women are easily tempted by “vestiges of bourgeois life.” The young Soviet woman lacks independence and is easily disoriented and drawn back to the past, but with the help of friends who have grasped the superiority of socialism, she eventually recognize her mistakes. This chapter asks how gender politics can

be reconstructed from these works, how the gender politics they explore accord with officially proclaimed ideas about gender equality, and how they aspects of the Soviet emancipatory project.

LORETA JAKONYTĖ

### **The Socialist Realists' Forge: Lessons for Young Writers During the Early Soviet Period**

This study builds on the claim that while Socialist Realism drew on one Moscow-based doctrine, it manifested itself in different national versions; it is therefore relevant to examine how Socialist Realism was practiced in Lithuania – to explore its origins, institutional consolidation, and literary specifics. This chapter of the monograph discusses one aspect of the process: the Socialist Realist training sessions that were held for young writers during the early Soviet period. Analyzing the archives of the Young Writers' Unit and regional clubs (meeting records, work plans and reports, speeches from republic-level conferences, and hundreds of letters between new writers and official state literary consultants), the author asks what methods and arguments the Lithuanian SSR Writers' Union – the central literary institution during that era – used in its efforts to shape local experts in Socialist Realist technique. The chapter presents the network of educational institutions that was formed (young writers' units, lower level clubs), identifies problems related to its activities (the sluggishness of members, their ambivalence about ideological training, their inability in or resistance to applying Socialist Realist methods, and their conflicted relationships to the doctrine – acceptance, rejection, or formal deception). The analysis also considers efforts by another type of new author (amateurs lacking cultural education) to apply Socialist Realism and the literary consultants' attitudes (a combination of ideological criteria and aesthetic exigency). The author argues that this imported Soviet system for training youth failed to achieve the quantitative and qualitative dimensions that

the leaders of the literary field had hoped for: the older curators lacked seriousness of attitude and did not accord any particular importance to “educating” younger generations, while a large portion of their younger colleagues lacked a sufficient feeling of collectivity – they did not identify solely with Socialist Realist ideology or aesthetics, using these in an “applied” rather than a creative manner. In the process of the shaping of new Socialist Realists during this early Soviet period, a strong tension arose between the new “creative method” and enduring pre-Soviet literary traditions.

IMELDA VEDRICKAITĖ

### **The Image of the Leader as Justification for Power in Lithuanian Socialist Realist Literature**

Socialist Realism claimed to offer a reflection of reality, but what it really did was present a simulacrum of reality which it programmatically called “socialist reality.” One of the most distinct expressions of this “socialist reality” perspective in literature became the image of the leader and its role in the legitimation of authority. This literature was based on falsified biographies of Lenin and Stalin.

Socialist Realist literature inscribed the image of the leader within the hagiographic tradition. While literary representations of Lenin and Stalin blend characteristics of the political ruler and the religious leader (Christ), the leaders’ aliases appear in Socialist Realist texts as prototypes of a new form of human. Relations between the individual and the godly, the leader and the masses, were expressed as a two-way relationship between the “family” leader and the people, and imagined as a form of divine care and worship of the caregiver. Socialist Realist literature celebrated the leader’s titanic powers and projected them onto his monumental portrait. Two sub-themes emerged from this saintly image: the ability of the leaders’ words to alter reality and the related fetishizing of portraits, sculptures, autographs, as well as pilgrimages to their

mausoleums and birthplaces. The leader is immortal, because he lives on through his words. Directing the will of the masses toward the goal of communism, his word and his power can create heavenly bliss on Earth. Each individual makes heroic sacrifices to help attain this goal of universal welfare. The theme of the innocent victim in Socialist Realist children's literature is frequent and is loosely related to descriptions of the lives of the saints. This study examines these aspects of the image of the leader in Lithuanian Socialist Realist literature and draws attention to shifts in this image in the post-Stalinist period. As still unknown or poorly known texts, such as Juozas Grušas's *Diktatorius* (The Dictator, written about 1951-1952, published 1991) are discovered, the rebellion against leader-worship that was both generated and suppressed in that same era is interwoven into the Soviet period's dominantly idolatrous tone.

## AESTHETIC AND CULTURAL ATTITUDES DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

DONATA MITAITĖ

### **Ideology and Poetry in the Works of Juozas Macevičius**

The poetry of long-lived author Juozas Macevičius (1928-2011) is a good illustration of the post-war generation's illusions and disillusionments. Having come to literature from a very poor background, Macevičius for a time sincerely believed Communist propaganda and expressed its claims in his poetry: the Party and its leaders took the place of a God with whom there could be no dialogue, who could never be doubted. The poet identified with the post-war generation of activists; in his work he defended their activities (even their "ritualistic vice" of drinking) to the end, even though by the sixties he himself began to grasp the discrepancy between beautiful ideas of equality and brotherhood and their

implementation in real life. Macevičius combined his generation's belief in the redemptive power of poetry with his own doubts about the goals his friends were defending. He doubted not the Marxist-Leninist idea itself, but its failure in implementation. Following the restoration of Lithuania's independence, Macevičius admitted to still holding leftist views, though by that time he had distanced himself from all social activism and was very involved with translation (particularly of children's literature). His last collection of poetry, *Atsisveikinimas* (The Farewell, 2006) reveals the drama of a man who has lost faith in his life's ideals and experiences the existential void.

RIMANTAS KMITA

### **A Position and its Dividends: Justinas Marcinkevičius's Stance (prior to 1965)**

This study examines new archival material and describes how one of the most important figures of Lithuanian literature, Justinas Marcinkevičius (1930-2011), established himself within the literary field.

Marcinkevičius shaped his position within the literary field at the beginning of the Thaw, taking advantage of the possibilities that emerged with that period of political warming. His early works represent the Party's policies after the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU – they shape the worldview of the New Man (especially in *Publicistinė poema*/Publicist Poem, 1961) and illustrate his contemporaries' correct choices (the book-length poem *Dvidešimtas pavasaris*/Twentieth Spring, 1956, and the novel *Pušis, kuri juokėsi*/The Pine That Laughed, 1961). This makes it possible to question ideas that dominated around reception of the author – how Marcinkevičius was seen as a writer who did not alter his principles, who in his early years protected himself with only the most necessary lightning rods. At that time Marcinkevičius was working with full conviction in the potential of Soviet literature.



The themes and genres of his writing focused attention on the Soviet historical narrative and the Soviet person's worldview, and the positions he held in the Writers' Union allowed him to have considerable influence upon the literary field. Marcinkevičius represented a position of confronting the generation of older writers who dominated during the Stalinist period. He also had tense relations with younger colleagues and some of his peers, who maintained a more careful distance from literary processes.

The comparisons made in this study reveal how Marcinkevičius's contemporaries demonstrate that several alternatives to official public discourse were available to writers of this period: armed resistance, working with the partisan press, delaying one's literary debut to a later age, or remaining on the literary margins. This analysis of Marcinkevičius's position within the literary field makes it possible to see that while the writer's administrative responsibilities and implementation of the Party line guaranteed his political credibility, it also constrained him, forcing to constantly defend his loyalty. The political, social, and symbolic capital he later accrued allowed him to take a more autonomous position.

AURIMAS ŠVEDAS

### **Justinas Marcinkevičius's Drama *Mindaugas* as a Site of Memory**

The author of this study sees Justinas Marcinkevičius's drama *Mindaugas* (1968) as a "site of memory" (following Pierre Nora's term "lieu de mémoire") and raises a series of questions: What programmatic ideas are expressed in this poet's work? How did these ideas interact with Soviet ideology and historiography? How did this process of interaction undermine or strengthen the claims of official Soviet discourse? What effect did this work, and the whole cycle of dramas, which turned into a "site of memory," have on Lithuanian society's historical memory? The analysis of the work focuses on four main areas: history as a space for the intersections

and manipulations of different positions; the Lithuanian state's genesis as the expression of a despot's idea and human drama; the West as a source of constant danger to the Lithuanian state; paganism as Lithuanian identity and Christianity as the reason for its loss. The play is analyzed and these questions are raised within a broader context – the question of Lithuanian society's complicated and insufficiently understood relationship to the Soviet era, the people who lived and created during this time, and the “sites of memory” these individuals left us.

ELENA BALIUTYTĖ

### **Breaks in Eduardas Mieželaitis's Creative Work, or How *Context* Destroyed and Created *Text* During the Soviet Period**

The author of this chapter analyses the work of Soviet-era writer Eduardas Mieželaitis (1919-1997), focusing in particular on how his poetry evolved as a result of social and political circumstances. Baliutyte explores how socio-cultural context destroyed and created text and how the poet felt within this “creative” process, and the repercussions this had on Lithuanian poetry. The main objects of Baliutyte's attention are two distinct breaks in the writer's poetics and how these were determined by ideological factors. The first resulted from a forced post-war reorientation from song-like lyricism (the books of poetry *Lyrika/Lyrics*, 1943, and *Tėviškės vėjas/Fatherly Wind*, 1946) to Stalinist “classicism” (*Pakilusi žemė/The Risen Land*, 1951; *Dainų išausiu margą raštą/I Will Weave a Colorful Pattern from Song*, 1952; *Broliška poema/Brotherly Poem*, 1954). The second break, related to the emergence of Socialist Realist Modernism in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Khrushchev Thaw (the poetry collection *Žmogus/Man*, published in Russian in 1961 and Lithuanian in 1962; *Autoportretas. Aziaeskizai/Self-Portrait. Aerial Sketches*, 1962; *Atogražos panorama/Tropical panorama*, 1963). Drawing on archival documents and literary criticism as well as other public forms of the era, the

author demonstrates how, in the case of the first break, ideological coercion destroyed the neoromantic, lyrical poetic tradition, while in the second case the Soviet Union's system of ideological support contributed to the canonization of Mieželaitis's book of Modernist poetry *Žmogus*, which was awarded the Lenin Prize in 1962. In this study the author also notes key points related to Mieželaitis's further creative development, in particular his essay-writing decade (six books published 1964–1973) and his period of classic meditative lyricism (the books *Postskriptumai/Postscripts*, 1986; *Gnomos*, 1987; *Laidai/Conductors*, 1992; *Consonetai Helenai/Consonnets for Helena*, 1994; and *Saulės vėjas/The Sun's Wind*, 1995).

## LITHUANIAN LITERATURE AND OFFICIAL SOVIET DISCOURSE: VERSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP

PAULIUS JEVSEJEVAS

### **The Semiotic Mechanisms of Aesopic Language**

The author of this study discusses Aesopic language – one of the main concepts used to describe alternative forms of expression in relation to official Soviet-era norms. The investigator modifies this concept, claiming that Aesopic language is a general semiotic mechanism. Although Aesopic expression assumes a connection between literary and political discourse, it does not presuppose a concrete political position. The author demonstrates this using an example of pro-Soviet Aesopic language in Lithuanian literature – Justinas Marcinkevičius's poem "Jaunystė" (Youth, 1955). In addition to this poem, he offers interpretations of two either non-Soviet or anti-Soviet texts: the introductory paragraph to Juozas Aputis's novella "Dobilė. 1954 naktį" (Clover. The Night of 1954, published in 1967) and Sigitas Geda's poem "Lietuvos

atsiradimas” (Lithuania’s Rise, 1966). In his analysis of these three texts, the author elaborates studies of Aesopic language by both Lev Loseff and Lithuanian critics, distinguishing several of its common features: he reinterprets the static screen/marker opposition introduced by Loseff as a dynamic intention-forming trajectory, the hitherto considered passive Aesopic ambivalence as a purposeful Aesopic process of destabilizing meanings, and the writer-reader contract, a condition for understanding Aesopic content, – as a textualized interplay between common memory and its concrete fragments. The chapter raises hypotheses around the possibility of studying Aesopic language as an expression of so-called quiet resistance, and considers whether it might be possible to perceive, in the ways that Aesopic language is used, tendencies related to the stereotyping and political hermetization of common memory.

LORETA MAČIANSKAITĖ

**A Man With a Camera Facing the Censor’s Scissors:  
Discourses of Freedom in Films Based on Scripts by  
Ichokas Meras**

The history of the development of films based on scripts by Ichokas Meras (1934-2014) – *Kai aš mažas buvau* (When I was Young, 1968), *Birželis, vasaros pradžia* (Summer Begins in June, 1969), and *Maža išpažintis* (A Small Confession, 1971) – is a powerful illustration of the shifts of consciousness experienced by the Soviet artist. These processes are evident at all the main stages in the creation of a film: initial enthusiasm about the project; the drama of dealing with the ideological authorities; and the mysterious workings of the censorship machine and its regulation of all aspects of how the film would circulate in society. The author examines a heterogeneous body of work, including literary and directorial scripts and their drafts, and various archival documents (contracts, letters, discussion records, expert evaluations), as well as the actual film and literary works. Combining different

methodological instruments – genetic-contact relations, the study of intertextual connections, structural analysis, and comparativism – the author analyzes methods of evading censors, trajectories in the development of Aesopic language, and the different kinds of artist-government relationships that were possible between the periods of Thaw and stagnation. The study demonstrates that, prior to 1972, the development of cultural life during the Soviet period had approached a critical moment of choice, and that the self-immolation of Romas Kalantas's (1953-1972) in Kaunas marked a point of no return.

DALIA SATKAUSKYTĖ

### **How Socialist Realism Deconstructed Itself, or on the Question of Mimetic Resistance**

The author of this study presents the three strategies that are generally used to assess literature and culture of the Soviet period. The first two are based on the resistance/collaboration opposition and validate adherents of one or the other position. The strategy of *condemnation* emphasizes the collaboration pole: it views resistance as possible only through dissident activity, and impossible within the legal cultural field. In contrast, the strategy of *justification* emphasizes the resistance pole, discerning opposition to the Soviet order even within the work of official Soviet functionaries. The third strategy draws on the concept of mimetic resistance, which *stricto sensu* sees any kind of opposition to the system as practically impossible, because a discourse (even a dissident one) that opposes the system must use the means of the official discourse and in this way strengthens the regime. Post-revisionist analysts of Soviet culture interpret the concept of mimetic resistance differently: the use of elements from the official discourse can mean not only endorsement of the system, but also the occupation of a liminal position (as in Alexei Yourchak's *vnye*). Drawing on this latter strategy, the author of this chapter analyzes

the work of the poet Vladas Šimkus (1936-2004) and reveals how the conscious use of elements of official discourse, such as Socialist realist clichés, can become tools for deconstructing that same discourse. Šimkus's poems are full of details of everyday life in the Soviet period; while these can formally correspond to elements of official discourse, they rarely represent official discourse and its structures. In most cases, concepts of time and space, and of the position of the subject, are completely different than in Soviet discourse. The experience of being in the position of the *vnye* is best expressed by the subject of Šimkus's poetry: he can be considered a (non)Soviet hero within the Soviet topography.

GINTARĖ BERNOTIENĖ

### **License Around Ideological Rewritings: Early Russian Translations of Judita Vaičiūnaitė's Poetry**

Early translations of Judita Vaičiūnaitė's (1937 -2001) poetry into Russian reveal how the Union of Soviet Writers (USW) viewed national representation of "smaller" nations; the author's right to his/her work as an unchangeable, meaningful unit; and the degree of license enjoyed by institutes responsible for translation quality and control. In the field of translation, faithfulness to the original and concern with maximum clarity were applied only from one perspective – in translating works from the dominating Russian culture and in creating and disseminating a new, union-wide Soviet literary canon. Other rules were applied to translations of works from peripheral languages from the "cauldron of nations," which, according to comparative translation theorist André Lefevere, should be regarded as deliberate re-writings that adapted texts to the ideological and poetic model of the culture into which they were being translated.

In 1964, the major Soviet publisher Молодая гвардия issued a collection of poems in Russian by the rising Lithuanian poet Judita Vaičiūnaitė. The small volume, titled Стихи (Poems), was

a calculated, officially sponsored, and ideologically constructed project, but it did not become a significant fact in the writer's creative biography. The publishers treated Vaičiūnaitė's poetry instrumentally: they exploited it as a convenient example of the increasing modernity of Soviet poetry and of a voice representing the younger generation, one that was more reliable because it was not too engaged. But they did not respect the autonomous nature of the work: the poems are mutilated by ideological insertions (multiple additions of poetic text by the translator, without authorial approval), deletions, and inaccuracies, demonstrating that the aesthetic value of the work and its translation where of secondary value to the publishing and propaganda industries of that time, as was the figure of the author within the ideological process of literary production as a whole. In these translations, the sensitive, intimate tone of Vaičiūnaitė's poetry and her subdued treatment of dramatic experiences (the losses of the Second World War, the division of the world by the Cold War, which were favored poetic themes at that time) were manipulated by the publishers, so that the volume's lyric intimacy is camouflaged under the poems' more distinct ideological accents and the publishers' arbitrary insertions.

In addition to offering a detailed comparative analysis, the author of this article also examines the broader context of translations of Vaičiūnaitė's early poetry into Russian and their appearance in different periodicals, and considers the general state of Soviet poetry translation in the 1960s. These approximate translations, which are based on the original in the most basic, subject-related way, and replace Vaičiūnaitė's subtle poetic technique (intertextual references, alliterative melody, complex expressions of experience) with a combative pathos, and the discrepancies between authors' and translators' aesthetic qualifications, show that, in the process of adapting literary works, ideology clearly superseded poetics. This was typical of 1960s translation practice, and only began to shift a decade later.

## Contradictions and the Internal Monologue Novel

The author of this chapter discusses the phenomenon of the internal monologue as a significant manifestation of Lithuanian Soviet-era literature's modernization in the 1960s and 1970s. She relates the internal monologue to the concept of "Socialist Realism without borders," which was much discussed at the time, and presents discussions and differing opinions around the question of internal monologue in the journal *Pergalė* (Victory) in 1968. During the Soviet period, the novel was the genre the censors supervised the most and considered most reliable, and it was therefore the one that critics paid the most attention. Pro-government writers were heavily translated into other Soviet bloc languages and elevated by Russian critics. Mykolas Sluckis's *Adomo obuolys* (Adam's Apple) and Alfonsas Bielauskas's *Kauno romanai* (A Kaunas Novel), both published in 1966, were the leaders in this respect – they were considered export-quality Soviet novels capable of representing Soviet Modernism in Eastern and Central Europe.

Interest in these writers' work was determined by the fact that their protagonists were repenting communists (usually of the Stalinist period) reflecting upon their errors and debating the cost of compromise, but also, in conformity with the ideological orientations of the time, unconditionally confident in socialism "with a human face". The communist experiencing doubt and examining his consciousness was considered an important advance in the conception of humanity. Unfortunately, writers modeled internal monologue (as internal, open dialogue with oneself, and in particular stream-of-consciousness) in such ways that it would not question official doctrine. On the other hand, propagandist Party critics consistently accused these writers of psychological "fogginess" and "dimness" of consciousness, influence by bourgeois Western literature, cosmopolitanism, and other flaws.

In Lithuanian literature of the Soviet period, it was the shorter prose genres (novellas, short stories), rather than the novel, that were the "trial grounds" where new writing techniques first



appeared – in the “quite Modernist” work of Jonas Mikelinskas, Juozas Aputis, Romualdas Granauskas, Bronius Radzevičius and other authors who debuted in the 1960s and 70s. Consisting of three long sentences, Granauskas’s story *Jaučio aukojimas* (The Bull’s Sacrifice, 1975) remains unsurpassed as an example of internal monologue in Lithuanian literature.

Literary critics were inclined to ignore innovation in the shorter prose forms. Novelists appreciated innovations in the shorter genres and in foreign literature and applied them to their own needs, happily accepting laurels for being the first to introduce modern forms.

## JŪRATĖ ČERŠKUTĖ

### **About *Them* and *that Fantasmagoria*: Soviet Imagery in the Novels of Ričardas Gavelis**

The author of this chapter discusses Soviet imagery in the earlier works of novelist Ričardas Gavelis (1950-2002): *Jauno žmogaus memuarai* (Memoirs of a Young Man, 1989), *Vilniaus pokeris* (Vilnius poker, 1989), and *Vilniaus džiazas* (Vilnius Jazz, 1993). She offers a study of the main characters and images, reconstructing the circumstances of their appearance and their roles in the writer’s creative universe.

Čerškutė comes to the conclusion that the use of fantasmagorical imagery intensifies with each novel, revealing the author’s changing relationships – from the intimate, almost identical, mirror-like reflection of the Soviet system of *Jauno žmogaus memuarai* to the painfully ironic and absurd circus of *Vilniaus džiazas*. While creating metaphors of the Soviet era, Gavelis maintains a similar relationship with the Soviet system and at the same time transforms it. Like his characters, Gavelis identifies with the system and consciously rejects all types of relationships. The analysis suggests that this doubleness connecting the characteristics of *homo sovieticus* and *homo lithuanicus* is a distinct manifestation of postcolonial consciousness.

# THE LEGITIMIZATION OF SOVIET LITERATURE

AUŠRA JURGUTIENĖ

## **A Methodological Reevaluation of the History of Soviet-Era Lithuanian Literature**

The author of this chapter draws on contemporary historiographic methodologies to examine the writing, under the supervision and editorship of the director of the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature, Kostas Korsakas, of a four-volume Soviet academic *Lietuvių literatūros istorija* (History of Lithuanian Literature, 1957-1968), and considers what kind of model of literary development it offers. This work developed a Marxist understanding of the national literature's evolution and reinforced the Socialist Realist canon, which constituted the most important orientation of Soviet-era Lithuanian literary studies and school literary textbooks. The most interesting thing in this history is the paradoxical intersection of the work's declared purpose (scientific, objective truth) and its non-academic (propagandist, mendacious) result.

Marxist ideology led the authors of *Lietuvių literatūros istorija* to explore the complex question of what produces literature. They were unsatisfied with the argument, by previous "bourgeois" historians, that the source of literature was individual talent, and tried to identify the elements that literature unconsciously absorbs from its social environment. In Soviet literary history, however, Marxist principles were dogmatized, the hermeneutics of suspicion serving its primitive propaganda and equally primitive, so-called criticism of bourgeois literature and aesthetics. All of Lithuanian literature was reorganized according to the classical opposition of "progressive" (centred around the literary figures of "Trečias frontas" (The Third Front) *versus* «reactionary» (post-war émigrés were excluded). But the largest portion of the text was dedicated to an ideologically schematic evaluation of the classic figures of Lithuanian literature, both recognizing the importance of their

works and applying a Marxist critique that viewed them as ideologically limited.

Despite its ideological specificity and critique of “bourgeois histories,” the historiographic methodology of the Soviet period should not be seen as opposed to bourgeois modernity, as it enabled the metanarrative to flourish. In its ideological re-working of Lithuanian national literary history, Soviet literary history retained its metanarrative and did not generate anything qualitatively significant. Dedicated to entrenching Soviet patriotism, its metanarrative cannot be characterized as a pure alternative to “bourgeois nationalist” historicism and is better interpreted according to ideas of deconstructive hybridity.