

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

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THE POLITICS OF TASTE IN INDEPENDENT LITHUANIA: PUBLISHING
AND CRITICISM OF LITERARY TEXTS

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Introduction

After Lithuania declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, there came a time of great political, economical, but also social and cultural turmoil. No field of the public (and to a great extent, even the private) sphere could avoid major transformations, and the arts – including literature – was no exception. Soviet Lithuania saw a complete state control of cultural production, including but not limited to outright censorship of works of art. At the same time, a lot of people, one way or another, came to settle into the system, which had ways to entice them, as the economic and social standing of artists and writers also depended on it. After the system broke down, the relationship between the new democratic state and its culture needed to be redefined, while democracy brought about countless other, often unforeseen factors that influenced both the cultural production and consumption. Under the Soviet regime, with the state censorship, the question of quality and value of arts was almost a non-issue. The control over what got published and circulated was so strong that no open debate about literary values was necessary, even if it were somehow allowed.

That was the greatest challenge to the literary community (including publishers, critics, scholars, educators besides writers and readers) after the system broke down. Who is supposed to decide what is good quality literature? Who and what would such decisions affect? Almost immediately it became clear that simple democratic majority of readers prefers lighter, more entertaining works, but it does not seem fair to consider entertainment value the single criterion for literary and artistic value in general. What is the new role of a writer, a critic, even a publisher under these new conditions? Whose opinion should matter more than others, and why? These questions do not have easy answers, and often they lead to disillusionment and disappointment in the literary community. Even more pertinently they affect situations where someone, somehow has to make a definitive decision about the value of literary works, for example, when handing out public funds for literary projects.

Instead of trying to answer those questions, this study is an attempt to find possible points of reference when discussing and debating them. The majority of literary and

cultural sociology in Lithuania since the independence focuses on the writers themselves and their situation. A lot of interesting work has also been done to better understand their very ambiguous situation under the Soviet regime and to describe the various changes in their (professional) life and art after the independence. The focus of this study is mostly the consumption of literature. It attempts to cover the different ways of reading, perceiving and making value judgements about literature – first of all, making the distinction between professional and non-professional readers, and comparing both of those groups to the institutionalised judgements made on behalf of the state expressed in providing funding to publishing projects.

Because of its ambitious scope, the study faced two major challenges. The first was the amount and availability of data. It was important to find indicators of the value judgements of the various groups that would be not only accessible and available, but also easily quantifiable for comparison. No data on consumption of literature is collected in Lithuania on a regular basis in general, much less in a systematic way. There have been two larger-scale reading habits surveys in and a few more smaller ones (mainly focusing on children and educational context), but each was carried out using different methodology and their data is difficult to compare. No quantitative study of literary criticism has been done. Even the Ministry of Culture does not collect any data on the books that have been funded with public money. This meant that the data sample had to be assembled specifically for this study, which limits it to collecting available data sets from various sources instead of a more sociological survey. The second major challenge was finding or creating a theoretical model that would allow the interpretation of the limited amount of data without regard for wider demographic, sociological, ethnographic factors for which no data was available. Probably the most in-depth study of taste in arts was carried out by Pierre Bourdieu in *Distinction*¹, however, applying Bourdieu's methods – essentially, reconstructing habitus - requires amounts of data far beyond the scope of this study. Therefore a **theoretical model** of three main parts was composed.

Theory and Methods

The first part is the “New Model of the Study of the Book”, proposed by Thomas

¹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice, Harvard University Press, 1996.

Adams and Nicholas Barker², which describes “lifecycles” of books: publishing and production are followed by distribution and reception, eventually achieving survival, which in turn leads to (re)production and starts a new cycle. However, it takes human involvement to carry the book from one stage of the lifecycle to the next – when people fund the book, review it, cite it, recommend it to other readers, award it prizes, write scholarly publications about, translate it to other languages, etc., they perform “acts of transmission”. Obviously, they choose or happen to perform these acts with some books, but not others, and accordingly, some books are much more likely to survive and continue new life cycles than others.

This model helps define the **object** of this study. Adams and Barker's understanding of the acts of transmission is broad enough to include many factors that do not always seem comparable in different models, and at the same time many (though obviously not all) acts of transmission are rather easily quantifiable, which allows to compare and contrast the various acts of transmission performed, on the one hand, with the same book, and on the other hand, with different books that faced different outcomes in terms of survival and the beginning of new life cycles. Therefore collecting and analysing quantitative data on acts of transmission performed with works of Lithuanian literature published in 1989–2012 allows for insights into “politics of taste” in broader sense: performing the acts with some books and not others implies a preference, or taste; the survival or failure of different books (and especially different types of books, if it may be demonstrated) implies an interplay of interests at work and probably variations in significance or weight among acts of transmissions or the agents performing them.

The second part of the theoretical model is the script acts theory suggested by Peter L. Shillingsburg³. He proposes a three-fold understanding of a literary text: as a material text, something that is written down in a language, in a document made of a particular material and is entirely fixed; as concept, something that is entirely in the mind of a

² Thomas R. Adams, Nicolas Barker, „A New Model for the Study of the Book“, in: Nicolas Barker (ed.), *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society. The Clark Lectures 1986–1987. The British Library Studies in the History of the Book*, 5–43, London: The British Library.

³ Peter L. Shillingsburg, *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997; Peter L. Shillingsburg, *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

person (either the writer or the reader) and not accessible without a material expression, but at the same time not identical to it and most probably not even permanent or fixed; and as an action, or rather, as a collection of script acts, which include all the actions that the various agents (author, reader, editor, publisher, etc.) take around the text. While no connection between the two models has been made by the theorists themselves, it seems reasonable to suggest that acts of transmission from Adams and Barker are quite comparable to script acts. The additional detail of the script acts theory that is most pertinent to this study is its attempt to understand and discuss the processes of the mind related to the text, which are entirely left out from Adams and Barker's model. One of the script acts is *performance*, which involves reading the material text and creating its concept in the reader's mind. This process involves sememic molecules, which are a metaphor for a framework or network of nodes for generating meaning. Any element of the linguistic text is such node that invokes a sememic molecule of contexts and associations that pre-exist in the reader's mind from previous experience of the world and of texts. Each person may invoke a different sememic molecule for the same element, therefore the text as concept exists in an unlimited variety of shapes in the minds of various readers, or even the same reader at a different time. The most important element of the script acts theory for this study is the performance protocol, which is any material record about a particular performance of a particular text. The performance protocol – which takes shape of a review, an academic study, personal notes and diaries, blog posts, and the like – may also contain information about the sememic molecule that was invoked in relation to the text or its elements. The sememic molecule itself may never be reconstructed in its entirety, and probably may not even be thought of in that way, therefore any information about it will be only partial. However, this study makes use of comparing partial sememic molecules in different performance protocols and finding similarities among them.

The final part of the theoretical model involves a description of the act of judgement. For that, John R. Searle's concept of intentional states⁴ is employed. An intentional state is the state that defines any kind of relation of the mind to the world: a

⁴ John R. Searle, *Making the Social World: The Construction of Human Civilization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

belief that something is true; a desire that something would happen; love and respect or hatred and derision of some thing, person or phenomenon. Judgement – a statement that the book is good or bad, that the reader liked it or not - also stems from an intentional state of expectation, and the sememic molecules in the performance protocols also contain pointers towards such states. Searle also defines collective intentionality, which means not only a similar intentional state of more than one person, but also a believe that other members of the same collective are in the same intentional state (in other words, not only wanting to achieve the same goal as others, but also believing that others want the same thing; not only appreciating the same book, but also believing that other members of the community appreciate it in the same way). This is especially helpful to explain how institutionalised judgements work: when a book prize is granted, it is not only each member of the committee of the prize that believes the book deserves it, but also the whole community must believe that the committee is capable to decide that. This is called collective recognition (of the powers), and it is important to note that it does not necessarily mean approval, but simply not challenging the power. If the book prize is funded with public money, it means that all tax payers implicitly agree that the book was worth it and that the committee is capable to decide that.

The **methods** of research involved, first and foremost, collection of quantitative **data** about the acts of transmission. The sample of books themselves was selected based on general criteria:

1. The sample contains books by Lithuanian authors.
2. The sample contains books first published between 1989 and 2012.
3. The sample contains works of prose and drama, but not poetry or non-fiction.

Where the distinction did not appear clear, the choice was made based on how the book is perceived by transmission agents in their performance protocols such as ????

4. The sample contains literary works published as books (as opposed to, for example, serialisation in periodicals).

Besides these, special criteria coinciding with acts of transmission were applied. The acts of transmission taken into account in this study had to be easily quantifiable, so, for example, academic publications from the definitive database were included, but not

book reviews from general public media. Also, the decision was made to only include data that was available from public sources, like library lending statistics, but not publishers' sales data, which in certain cases are confidential. The final list of criteria is as follows:

1. The sample contains books that have been awarded a *literary prize*.
2. The sample contains books that are the object of an *academic publication*.
3. The sample contains books that are the object of an *BA or MA level finishing thesis*.
4. The sample contains books the publishing of which was *funded with public money*.
5. The sample contains books that have been *translated into a foreign language and published abroad*.
6. The sample contains books that were among the *most often borrowed from public libraries*.

As literary prizes are sometimes awarded not to a particular book, but to an author for more broadly defined achievements, the sample also occasionally includes authors as such and not just their individual works. The same solution was also practical for academic publications and students' finishing theses, as these too sometimes discuss an author instead of a work. When more than one edition of the book was published during the research period, the sample contains data for the first edition of the book. Even though unconventional genre descriptions are common in the books themselves, for practical reasons all works in the sample were considered to belong to one of five genre categories: 1) novels; 2) plays; 3) short prose; 4) essays; 5) autobiographical prose.

The sample contains the total of 475 books written by 195 authors. More than half of them are novels, about a quarter are short prose, with the other genres comprising much smaller parts. The books have been published by 61 publishers, however, only seven of them have published more than 10 of the books in the sample, and one publisher – the Lithuanian Writers Union Publishing House – has published 140 books in the sample. The sample contains 3-6 books from the years 1989-94, 12-19 books from the years 1995-2001, and 25-41 books from the years 2002-12. These differences may

partly be accounted for with the fact that more data is available from the more recent years, but also by the fact that literary and publishing life in general became more intense.

There is no definitive register of *literary prizes* in Lithuania, so the data about them was collected from press releases and similar public sources and then the lists of laureates were checked with the prize giving institutions. The data about 20 literary prizes and their winners were collected. Since some prizes are awarded for both poetry and prose, and sometimes even for both fiction and non-fiction books, only the winners that match the general selection criteria were included in the sample.

The data about *academic publications* were gathered from the *Lituanistika* database⁵, which is specifically designed to collect and monitor academic work in various fields of Lithuanian studies. The database is also selective for academic quality, meaning that not every publication is included, but only the ones that are deemed worthy by the appointed managers, thus also representing a consensus of the academic community. To be included in the sample of this study, the books had to be not simply mentioned or listed in an academic publication, but discussed or analysed as objects of interpretation. The same principle was applied when selecting the *BA and MA theses* from the database called *Electronic theses and dissertations*⁶ maintained by the network of academic libraries. As *translations into foreign languages* of Lithuanian literature are actively promoted and funded by institutions of the Ministry of Culture, these data are quite readily available. However, upon closer examination this subset of data turned out to be the least intriguing, as it simply coincided with the consensus of various agents of transmission, thus no more detailed analysis of these data is presented in the study. The *public funding* for book publishing came from two main sources: directly from the Ministry of Culture and from the Culture and Sports Support Fund (later Culture Support Fund). The funds of the publishing programme of the Ministry were assigned by the Minister's orders approving the recommendation of the committee of experts. All such orders since 1996 were found in the archives of the Ministry. Orders from earlier years were sometimes not found in the archive, and other times contained much less

⁵ Available (including an English version) at lituanistikadb.lt

⁶ Available (including an English version) at elaba.lt

informative recommendations, for example, to support „the whole list“ from a particular publisher. Similarly, quite a lot of documentation about support from the Culture and Sports Support Fund was missing or imprecise, though apparently the Fund more often supported either publication of foreign literature or literature-related projects that did not involve publishing of books (like public readings and similar events), rather than publishing of new Lithuanian literature, therefore this study does not suffer greatly for the imprecisions. Whenever possible, more precise data was deducted from financial documents of the Ministry detailing payments to publishers at appropriate times. Some books were published under different titles than mentioned in the Ministry's documents, some books were published later than the funding was granted, and some books that received funding did not appear to be published at all. Finally, public library lending were used as an indicator of a book's *popularity* with the general public. It is not a very precise indicator, as it only covers one of the major ways in which books are accessed by readers (besides buying, borrowing from friends, etc.), however, it is a more systematic and available indicator than other publishing and sales statistics. The sample includes books that were borrowed from the libraries more than 500 times in the year 2012. Then, every book in the sample was given an „average annual popularity“ number that equals the times it was borrowed from 13 public libraries in which the borrowing statistics system has been functioning the longest (since 2004) divided by the years the book has been circulating (either since its publishing or since 2004 when the data is first available). The books in the sample have then been divided into four categories of popularity: above 500 borrowings annually, 250-500, 50-250, and below 50.

All of these are indicators of acts of transmission. All except funding relate to distribution, therefore they are also considered to be indicators of the book's impact among readers.

The other set of data was the *performance protocols*. One subset of those are the academic publications and finishing theses themselves. Another subset, the performance protocols of non-professional readers, does not have any definitive source like the *Lituanistika* database for academic publications. These performance protocols came from two major sources online – the discussion boards and personal blogs. The largest among

the discussion boards was *supermama.lt*, but in general a section for discussing books can be found on almost any forum. This type of communication is generally very brief, without greater elaboration and much discussion among the participants – opinions are simply expressed, but very little argument or discussion ensues. However, the participants tend to value their relationships with each other, for example, by thanking for an answer to their question. The participants of the discussion boards seem very straightforward, even glib, and quite superficial, as they often see no necessity to support their opinion with facts or arguments – this is not to be taken as any judgement of their actual character, but as a description of the manner of writing the performance protocols in this particular medium. On the other hand, the personal blog writers seem much more sophisticated. Even if the blog is signed under a nickname, the authors tend to provide quite a lot of information about themselves. The majority of them seem around forty or younger, well-educated and professionally employed, most have families, they tend to speak foreign languages and be quite well-traveled, and only a tiny minority could be identified as professionally connected to literature, publishing, cultural management and similar occupations. Blogs usually have one or several authors, but there is also a community around them. The bloggers often read each other and give each other feedbacks in comments or mention each other in their own posts using regular nicknames. The impression that the bloggers are more intelligent and well-read may partly be accounted for by the fact that a blog post tends to be a longer, more structured and more considered piece of writing than a posting on a discussion board. However, the bloggers also tend to pay more attention to cultural life in general, like discussing literary events they attend, or keeping track of their favourite authors' interviews and public appearances, they also much more often read and discuss books in foreign languages, read foreign language reviews and keep up with literary events in the world, like the most famous literary prizes. Interestingly, few Lithuanian literary events catch their interest, most notably the Vilnius International Book Fair.

Results

The **results** of the study revealed that besides the two groups of the readers – the professional and the non-professional ones – that may be distinguished according to the

place of publication of the performance protocols, there is a third institutionalised taste represented by a large proportion of the books that are funded with public money but have little or no impact on either group of readers. These three tastes or situations of value judgement are explored in more detail.

The **non-professional readers** are the least studied group. While few reading habits surveys or similar have been carried out, at the same time assumptions abound. Promoting reading has been on cultural policies priorities list for the past ten or fifteen years, and plenty of activities intended to encourage reading are funded and organised. Most of these activities are essentially public readings and/or meetings with authors and other professionals to hear them speak about books, though there have been some more creative projects especially among the ones targeted to children and adolescents. However, the effectiveness of such activities has never been measured in terms of whether (more) people begin to read (more) books after being exposed to or taking part in such activities. A review of the various proposals and documents related to propagating reading reveals a rather patronising view of the reader: he or she is seen as, first, inclined to read low-quality literature, and second, almost entirely passive in developing his or her literary taste. Therefore the reader needs to always be improved – educated, formed – by someone who knows better.

The library lending statistics from all Lithuania (as opposed to 13 libraries included in the sample) for the year 2012 are reviewed as background of general reading trends. A close look at the list of 1000 books that were borrowed most often reveals several such trends. First, despite constant alarm among educators and the literary community about the children's lack of interest in books and reading, a very large part of the books that are borrowed the most often are for children and especially adolescents. There is plenty of such literature published, and some Lithuanian authors find their place among others. The adolescents seem to be very loyal to their favourite authors and especially enjoy serialised stories with the same characters and story lines recurring or continuing in several books. Second, there is a definite trend of femininity. It is even more apparent in the adolescent literature: most of the favourite books feature a girl as a main character and the topics often deal with the experience of girls. The same is true for Lithuanian

authors. It is even difficult to come up with an example of an equivalent book for boys – something that would deal with experience of boys in a similar fashion. Instead, another option for young readers are mostly gender-neutral adventure stories. Similar trends are observed among books for adults. Even among the authors of the most popular books the vast majority are women. The romance genres feature quite prominently, and the few reading habits surveys that are available clearly indicate that men hardly ever read these. But other types of fiction, for example, the thrillers of which there are also plenty among the most popular books, also are dominated by women authors and often feature women as main characters and include romance stories alongside crime or legal storylines. Another background trend is loyalty to the author: often more than one book by the same author is among the most popular, and vice versa, many of the most popular authors tend to be very productive, publishing a new title every year or a couple of years. While it may seem as a commercially motivated mechanism of cultural production, a review of performance protocols will show that the author really is very important to the reader on other levels too. One more trend is that around the middle of the list of the 1000 most popular books, the variety of them starts to expand. Older books appear instead of just the most recent ones, translations from more various languages start piling up, and the few most prominent genres of entertainment (especially romance novels and thrillers) start giving way to more high-brow literary fiction. Along with the data of Lithuanian literature to be analysed later, this indicates that while there definitely are some entirely short-term literary fashions, there is also a place for more stable, long-term popularity which is not focused so narrowly. Finally, the Lithuanian authors seem to follow all the same general trends more or less evenly. Where the romance is prominent, so are the Lithuanian romance novels. When the variety increases, the books by Lithuanian authors also become more varied. Even Lithuanian women writers are much more popular than men. However, the general proportion of Lithuanian books among the 1000 is rather small. On the one hand, it implies lack of favour from the readers and a certain competition of translated books. On the other hand, the readers do not seem to have any special prejudice against local authors, as sometimes they appear even among the most popular books. This proportion should be kept in mind when discussing the preferences

of solely Lithuanian authors henceforth.

Among the most popular books (borrowed from the libraries more than 500 times a year on average), of which there are 15, only one is written by a male author. Two are very new, but some are also among the oldest books in the sample (dating from the early 1990s). It is also notable that only four are romance novels, with the others belonging to the category of literary fiction. The four are also the only ones that are not discussed in academic publications.

There are 25 romance novels among the 57 borrowed from the libraries between 250 and 500 times. 19 in this category are discussed by scholars in their publications, and besides the romance novels, only a few others are not (mostly written by the same authors whose other books are discussed in academic publications). The prevalence of women authors is still strong.

187 books were borrowed between 50 and 250 times, and 83 of them are discussed in academic publications. There are hardly any romance or other genre fiction. Most of the prominent literary fiction authors appear here, the disproportion of men and women authors remains, but is much less pronounced. A greater variety of genres appears as well, as the most widely read books are almost exclusively novels, and now more short fiction and essays show up.

Among the least read books there are a lot of memoirs, some short fiction and essays. Only 63 of 213 little-read books are discussed in academic publications.

These numbers quite clearly show that while the readers tend to enjoy romance novels which attract little attention from the academic scholars, in all other respects the popularity with the general public and the appreciation from the professional community tend to go hand in hand instead of being opposites.

The review of performance protocols from the online discussion boards and blogs reveal more details about the readers' preferences. The process of reading itself is described as intense and very involving, often using metaphors of illness (like “mania” for reading) and food (books are „swallowed“, meaning read very fast and in one sitting). Such process, which also includes “forgetting” everything else, is seen as a source of rest and escape. Readers do not find any practical use in reading books, aside from language

learning when reading in foreign languages, they see reading entirely as pleasure and relaxation. When the book is enjoyable, it is most often described as “easy” or “light” reading. This is mostly applicable to the style and manner of writing, and it is also seen in its reverse, when books are not enjoyed because they feel “heavy” or “clumsy”, whereas the story is best when it is “suspenseful”, and “difficult” topics are also a positive evaluation. The “difficult” or “serious” topics may appear in genre fiction works as well – they usually imply a sememic molecule related to dramatic social phenomena, such as violence against children or other vulnerable characters, mental illness, addictions and the like. In general books are most enjoyed when they have a clear key issue at their core, especially if the issue is seen as ambiguous and problematic and discussed from various perspectives. Readers also appreciate any commentary on the book (a review, and interview, a reply from a peer reader) providing additional information that helps understand this key issue (for example, a real-life information about drug addiction that helps understand a character's motivation, or a detail from the author's biography that is somehow represented in the book).

However, the almost decisive factor between “liking” and “disliking” a book is recognition of something that is true in the sememic molecule of the reader. For romance novels, this is most easily described as “true to life”. It is even more prominent in negative evaluations – readers “don't like” books because “it's not like that in real life”. Readers recognise as “true” not only situations, representations and descriptions, but also opinions and judgements, which are occasionally taken to be factual statements and not evaluations of the narrator or even the author. There is a tendency to find “information” about facts of reality in works of fiction without a reflection on whether such information is reliable. The prevalence of recognition in the performance protocols indicate that the sememic molecules or the readers primarily stem from personal, immediate experience.

Besides recognition, the books are expected to “affect” the readers. In one instance, a performance protocol from a discussion board almost perfectly matched the annotation of the same book (without any similarities of expression to indicate that the reader had paid attention to the annotation and was deliberately trying to match it) by stating how the book encouraged her to see the brighter things in life and to better appreciate the

people closest to her, as the annotation described almost identical intentions of the author. In cases like this, the readers both acknowledge the positive effect of the book on their life and behaviour, and enjoy what they perceive to be direct communication with the author. In general readers tend to experience reading as communication with the author as a real person, even though it is likely to be, in Shillingsburg's words, a “functional author”. For example, readers often assume the sememic molecule of the author to be based on personal experience – like the reader who could hardly believe that Lionel Shriver does not have her own children, because pregnancy, childbirth and bonding with one's child was so vividly described in *We Need To Talk About Kevin*.

Even more often, the books are enjoyed because they “make readers think”. This phrase is used in a way that does not require a better explanation of what the reader came to think about, or what conclusions he or she arrived at – the very act of “thinking” is considered a positive influence, and it does not seem to happen on its own but needs to be induced. Descriptions like these sometimes also suggest the readers' lack of skill to express how they feel and what they think about books. It appears that such lack of expression is very prevalent and might be traced back to school curricula. However, it goes beyond the scope of this study.

The readers most often describe their relationship with the Lithuanian literature by stating that they do not like it as a whole, but the occasion to say this is often an “exception” - a particular Lithuanian book or author that they liked. In the few cases where the dislike of Lithuanian literature was supported with more elaborate argumentation, it was considered dull, dreary and pessimist. However, hardly ever particular books are described in this way, and that suggests that this image of the Lithuanian literature comes from something other than actual experience of reading, and the school is again a likely culprit. At the same time, it appears to be not true. Even the bloggers who read more Lithuanian literature than others believe that they “never” read Lithuanian books but for the “exception” at hand, and often at least a few Lithuanian names are mentioned in lists of favourite authors.

It seems that people who enjoy reading have to put considerable effort to be constantly on the look for new books. There seem to be very few of “pure” readers who

would stick to their favourite authors or genres (with possible exception of fantasy and sci-fi fans). Most people deliberately aim for variety, they read a lighter and more entertaining book after something more serious, they look for different subject matter, different genres, even different languages. Quite a large proportion confess to reading several books at once. At the same time, they do not appreciate in-depth analysis and long reviews (to which they pay hardly any attention at all). It seems like the most appropriate form for the readers is simply a list. “Book challenges” are a currently popular example of compiling a list of books to read, with some thought put into it in advance, so that the next book does not have to be chosen by browsing bookstore shelves. Often, literary prize shortlists are also used as such lists of recommendations.

But recommendations is also the most important form of communication among the readers. Asking to recommend the books is the most widespread topic in discussion boards. Often no clarification is provided, sometimes recommendations are required for a particular situation, like going on vacation, or for books that are similar to a previously read book. In most cases recommendations arrive in great numbers, but there is seldom any feedback on whether the recommended books were read and whether the recommendations were good. In the few cases where such feedback is provided, it is usually with great joy: similar tastes in books are taken as a sign of a “kindred spirit”. Less often the feedback is negative, and it almost always comes with an apology “I am sorry I do not like the same books as you do”, again implying that literary taste is an important measure of personality and disagreeing with it could be an offense.

Readers do not reflect on such communal feeling based on literary taste, but an even better example of how books are a part of human relationships is unsolicited book recommendations. There are two main ways in which this happens. One is a book recommendation instead of advice (when someone is complaining, usually about personal issues with partners, children, parents, etc.), and the other is invoking a book when trying (and failing) to describe one's own feelings or state (especially in really complicated situations, like facing a potentially terminal illness). In both cases the book is employed as a kind of prosthesis: instead of attempting to express something difficult or complicated, the person is directed to a text that already has that thought or feeling

expressed. These situations seem to close the communicative process of *script acts*: after writing, producing, reading, comprehending, the texts are integrated into experience and come up later as parts of new sememic molecules, thus enriching both the experience of the reader and their skill at expressing it.

If the choices of books among the non-professional and the **professional readers** seem to be more similar than different, are they motivated by the same intentional states? If non-professional readers seemed to imply sememic molecules mostly relating to immediate personal experience, it is very unlikely to find those among the professional performance protocols, as the general trend in academic writing is to avoid being too personal. The circumstances under which professional performance protocols are written are very different. The performance protocols themselves have to follow more rules, and their writers often impose various restrictions on themselves, like minimising all personal reaction.

This study attempted to review the publicly expressed attitudes of professional readers (critics, scholars, etc.) towards their own field and profession, however, that was not very productive. It is very likely that most serious discussions take place away from public view, as the members of the same professional community has many ways to meet and communicate without involving public. As public reflection of the state of literary criticism tends to be rather bitter, it is also quite likely that the debates and opinions that do appear publicly are extreme and indicate failure to communicate and solve any issues within the community.

Only two implications can be made from such review. One, the professional community is feeling at a loss and grasping for any standards, any ways to measure and evaluate its own state and performance. Two, the professional community is feeling either underappreciated by the general public, or blames itself for lacking to better engage with the society at large, but either way perceives itself to be out of touch with the consumers of literature. These two insights partly contradict each other, as standards, and especially academic ones, tend to focus on quantitative criteria and not take into account impact on or relationship with the general public. However, the results of the study cast doubt on such convictions.

As already noted, the books that attract the attention of professional and non-professional readers tend to be largely the same. A closer look at the authors whose books are most often discussed in academic publications reveals a few more subtle differences. As already mentioned, being prolific generally helps an author win favours with the non-professional readers. However, it appears the scholars sometimes fail to keep up with such productivity. There are some instances where an author's all or most books are very widely read, but only some of them are discussed in academic publications. On the other hand, there are also authors whose whole work is constantly and even repeatedly analysed by scholars, but only some of their books are read more or less widely. In some instances it is possible to trace the popularity of the book or books to a particular factor – including one, but not other books into the school curricular, or awarding one, but not other books an important literary prize. There are also a few authors none of whose books achieve any popularity, but they are still important for scholars. However, such authors are clearly an exception, and the feature that is common to them is their very heavy and difficult literary form.

There are a few trends in the academic publications themselves. One is the tendency to apply feminist or gendered approaches to female writers. In fact, the professional readers discuss male authors more often, and this is one difference from non-professional ones, who have a strong preference for women. But male authors are very seldom discussed by professionals as men: the variety of approaches to their work is much greater. It is also has to be noted the female writers, especially the ones that tend to be studied in a gendered way, in fact tend to write in a similar fashion, by focusing on experiences of femininity?, so these approaches are not usually misapplied.

Similarly, quite a number of publications focus on literary representation of recent Lithuanian history, but it is also true that such representations are a very important part of contemporary Lithuanian literature. It is more difficult to explain the trend of studying representations of the city and of Vilnius in particular. It seems like these relate to some very important literary works of the early 1990s, which must have influenced both literature and its study.

A great number of academic publications seem technical in character, they analyse

works of literature from structural, stylistic, even purely linguistic perspectives. In part it is an indication of conformity and lack of creativity on the part of scholars, or possibly their response to the pressures of academic requirements. But the data also reveal a phenomenon that implies that all scholarly work serves a common goal even regardless of its quality.

The most important trend in the data is that the most active and productive scholars tend to focus on a number of works and authors throughout their career and often even in the same publication. There are constant attempts to describe “trends” or “generations”. It is even true of the “technical” publications, which also usually focus on comparing different authors or works. This could describe the sememic molecules most often employed in professional reading. While non-professional readers judge works of fiction based on how “true” they are, the professionals base their evaluations on how innovative they are. If the non-professionals see “the real life” as a point of reference, the professionals refer to literature itself. And at the same time they establish points of reference within literature, which is one way of describing the process of compiling the canon. An important part of this process is canonising not only a work of literature, but also its interpretation: a well-established book is one that “everyone knows” for a particular feature or interpretation. These interpretations are usually blunt and simplified, and scholars themselves may actually resist them, but it seems like this is the main form in which a work along with its interpretation is disseminated among wider public (most likely through education and public reviews, but this process was not part of this study).

Such concept of canon formation is supported by the data of the students' finishing theses. The students are perceived as being in between the professionals and the general public. On the one hand, they are at the end of the same formal training that most professionals have gone through. On the other hand, most students of languages and literature do not become professional scholars, turning to non-academic careers. Such perception is supported by the fact that students more often choose to analyse more popular books than scholars, and they also react to current issues more quickly, such as writing theses about more recent books and by becoming interested into books which are widely publicised when they are made into movies. The students' work indicates the

beginning and the end of the process of „canonisation“. They often choose to write about new books, but very seldom about new authors. They often prefer books that are less popular with scholars. However, after a certain period of time the students stop writing about a particular book. It seems that when students first notice a book, it is likely to be on its way into the work of scholars and thus into the canon. But once the students stop writing about a book, it means it has become established in the canon and may still be discussed by scholars, because it becomes a point of reference in discussing other books.

However, nearly 48 % of the books that received public funding were borrowed from the libraries the least often, and have never been analysed in an academic publication or a student's finishing thesis. The value judgements that do not seem to coincide with neither professional nor non-professional taste are in this study considered to stem from **institutionalised taste**, and the final chapter is an attempt to analyse the criteria and expectations that such taste represents.

The total number of books that received funding is 284. 81 of them are analysed in an academic publication, and 122 have been borrowed from the libraries more than 50 times a year on average. It is important to note that the funding is provided not to a book, but to a publishing project, which is not required to include a finished manuscript. A brief review of the various guidelines and rules for how the funding is provided indicates that, essentially, the responsibility lies with the experts, who are expected to be members of the professional literary community. However, since so few of the books that are eventually published actually interest the professionals, other aspects need to be taken into account.

As the receivers of the public funds are the publishers, a closer look was taken at how the funding corresponds to the publisher of the book. It turns out that 39 % of all state-funded books were published by the same publisher, the Lithuanian Writers' Union. The largest commercial publishers actually perform best in terms of impact – when they publish state-funded books, they are much more likely to be popular among non-professional readers especially, but also among the professional ones. However, the lion's share of the funding goes to the Lithuanian Writers' Union and a few other publishers whose books more often than not fail to achieve any impact. A closer look at the

impactless books themselves reveals that the most prominent feature among them is the tendency to be autobiographical (either as memoir, as fictionalised memoir, or as diary-like notes and essays).

Another set of data pointing to the Writers' Union is literary prizes. Contrary to intuitive common sense and research done in other countries⁷, in Lithuania literary prizes do not usually imply increased popularity. Almost 43% of books that received a literary prize are among the least popular, and more than half never appear in academic publications. Also, unlike in other countries, Lithuanian books tend to win only one prize each. A closer examination of the process of awarding the prizes revealed that the majority of the prizes, whose winners tend to be of very little impact, are also very similar among themselves. The main similarities is that the prizes generate very little interest and very few (sometimes no) nominations, and that the decision on who to award is, one way or another, in the hands of the Writers' Union. Almost 44 % of the prize-winning books were also published by the Writers' Union. The funding for these prizes also comes from public money, typically from local governments of small towns. The two most impactful prizes seem to avoid such associations.

The study by James F. English shows that the recent global proliferation of literary prizes means that they are useful tools for „capital conversion“ from economic to social or cultural. But in order for them to work as such, they need to be very publicized? and attract attention in every possible way – by celebrities on committees, celebrities as winners, major public events for awards ceremonies, even scandals and the like. It seems like in Lithuania they work in an opposite way. They have so little impact that they do not even pique any interest in the books that win them.

So the data indicates that the Writers' Union, on the one hand, is influential enough to ensure disproportionate state funding to its own publishing house, to have most of taxpayer-sponsored literary prizes under its control, but at the same time it has very little influence among readers, who do not care for the books even if they (eventually) pay for publishing them. Such findings required a review of the legal situation of the Writers' Union and similar organisations.

⁷ Most notably, English, James F., *The Economy of Prestige. Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value*, Harvard University Press, 2005 (Kindle).

The relationships between the state and the cultural production in Lithuania are defined by the Law of the Creators of Art and Organisations of Creators of Art (the Law henceforth). Upon close reading, the Law appears to be flawed and contradicting. The main flaw is that the state is committed to supporting not the arts, but the artists, and in order to be legally considered an artist one has to become a member of the Writers' Union or its equivalent in other arts. However, the Unions are only accountable to themselves and their own organs for how well they carry out the task and follow the criteria to grant the special legal status of the artist. The requirements for such status are minimal and mostly related with professional acknowledgement (reviews, important prizes, etc.). However, the Unions for a long time before the independence included members from the academic field of humanities who do not create art but instead study it, and the present Law also allows that. It means that there really is no outside reference – everyone who makes any decisions regarding the functions of the Unions is also, at least in theory, a potential member of a Union. So no accountability, and no real evaluation from the outside. The Law in effect puts the Unions themselves in a very ambiguous position: on the one hand, they are in charge of representing their members' interests, but at the same time they are in charge of judging their members as “real” or “not real” artists, and that is definitely not in their interest.

Unsurprisingly, a lot of aspects of such functioning of the Unions can easily be traced to the Soviet times. A review of the cultural media of the very early 1990s reveals the circumstances under which the Law was first written. It was a time of great turmoil, and while the Unions did have an interest to maintain their previous power and wealth, there were also people who offered a very different vision of how such organisations could function under the new circumstances. The greatest Soviet legacy seen today is the fact that the Union essentially decides who gets to be called an artist – and this was literally its function under the Soviet regime.

Such legacy was described by Tomas Daugirdas⁸ as “a culture of preservationism”. It is typical of self-appointed cultural elite, who are convinced of various threats for the “purity” of culture and its “true” values, are quick to reject any difference in opinion as

⁸ Daugirdas, Tomas, *Sparnuoto arklio dantys. Šiuolaikinės Lietuvos kultūros profiliai*, Vilnius: Naujasis Židinys-Aidai, 2008.

“destroying” the values, and anyone who expresses such opinion as “unworthy” of engaging in the debate. Such “elite” is not considered to be elite by the public, as it hardly ever engages with it. However, this lack of esteem is a self-fulfilling prophecy: the “elite” feel surrounded by destroyers of values and protect themselves even more forcefully.

Conclusions:

1. The main reason for reading in general revealed in the analysis of the performance protocols of non-professional readers is *relaxation* that comes from escaping one's daily life and surroundings. On the other hand, the main reason to like a particular book is *recognition*, a perceived similarity to their own life and surroundings. Even more, the books are perceived as aiming to be *true*: if the reality depicted in them does not coincide with the experience or even an opinion of the reader, the books are disliked.

2. The readers care very little for immanent literary interpretation that does not establish a link between literature and experience of reality. They very seldom make use of professional literary criticism, and in their own discussions, they soon digress from literary text to the experience of reality. However, the readers greatly appreciate *factual information* relevant to books and recommendations about what to read.

3. The readers perceive *reading as communication with the author*, show great interest in his or her person, take any chance to know more about him or her. They also experience the process of reading as communication with the book itself – they desire to be “affected” by it or to feel that it “made them think”. If such affect is observed, the book is evaluated positively. Eventually, *the books are integrated into the experience of reality* and into new sememic molecules: they are invoked as pointers when giving advice to others and as a way of describing one's one state or situation.

4. The Lithuanian literature is a relatively small part of the most widely read books, but it is perceived as exceptional by many readers. They often confess to not reading and not liking Lithuanian authors – even when they appear to read more of them than average – but they usually say positive things about particular books, considering them to be exceptions from the rule. There are some grounds to suspect that this negative

perception of Lithuanian literature comes from school.

5. The books that are very often read by non-professional readers and seldom or never discussed by professionals are almost exclusively *romance novels*. It is possible that non-professional readers find the cliched romance stories to be very realistic and recognisable as similar to their own experience, and the professionals have little interest in their lack of literary innovation. The books that are seldom read, but often discussed by professionals, tend to be, on the contrary, very innovative and even experimental, but they are too exhausting and too distant from the experience of the non-professional reader. However, the greatest part of the books appreciated by professional and non-professional readers is the same, but they are appreciated for different reasons.

6. In the case of professional readers, the most personal part of the sememic molecule, relating to actual experience of the reality is suspended. The results show that its place is taken by the experience of reading and studying literature: *the main mechanism employed by academic publications is comparison to other works of literature*. Such comparisons establish points of reference, which is a way to describe the process of forming a canon. But in order for the canon to be established in the wider society, collective recognition is needed not only for works and authors, but also for certain *fixed interpretations*.

7. The results show that almost half of all books published with the funding from the public money are of no interest neither to professional nor to non-professional readers. Also, literary prizes that are often funded by the state or local governments are frequently awarded to books that have no impact. The Lithuanian Writers' Union received disproportionate amount of both the state funding and of literary prizes, but it also publishes almost 40% of all books that have no impact. Such disproportions indicate the distance between the community of the artists, who under the Law of the Creators of Arts and of Organisations of Creators of Arts are entitled to make value judgements about arts on behalf of the state.

8. The Law contains several contradictions. On the one hand, the state is committed to supporting the artists, which makes them a special group within the society – both more valuable than other citizens, and more in need of care and support. On the other

hand, since the commitment is to support not all arts, but only valuable ones, the value of art has to be legally defined. The state and its institutions do not have the competence to make such decisions and delegate the task of defining and identifying such value to the community of artists (and / within their organisations), but they do not need to provide arguments to support their decisions or account for them in any way. Under such conditions, a very narrow understanding of value of arts and conformity prevail.

9. The study of the institutionalised taste indicates that in the institutionalised taste in Lithuania in the post-Soviet period the “culture of preservationism” as defined by Tomas Daugirdas is established. It is preoccupied with maintaining the purity, tradition and heritage, but in order to protect them, it sacrifices its vitality and relevance, thus losing touch with the wider society and culture-consuming community. The prevalence of the culture of protectionism in the artists' organisations and in the Writers' Union in particular may be traced back to the Soviet times, when the Union was the institution that would grant (or not) the right to be called a writer.

Implications for further research:

1. This study underscores a great need to study how literature is taught at school, in part as a factor in forming the reading habits, but also as a very important, maybe even decisive factor in the forming of the canon.

2. The study reveals certain problems and contradictions on the process of providing state funding to culture, but it only covers a small part of all the tools of funding. The rest also deserves a closer analysis.

3. The study almost entirely left aside cultural media and literary criticism published there. It may be useful to carry out a more in-depth analysis of, on the one hand, the relationship between the cultural media and the academic community, and on the other hand, to create a more complete picture of who the consumers of cultural media are and what parts they play in the field of culture.

Skonio politika nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje: literatūros tekstų kritika ir leidyba

Disertacijos santraukaAtgavus Nepriklausomybę 1990-aisiais, Lietuvos politiniame, ekonominiame ir socialiniame gyvenime įvyko didžiulių lūžių, prie kurių

prisitaikyti ne visada pavykdavo lengvai ir greitai. Net ir po daugiau kaip dviejų dešimtmečių literatūros lauke justi sumaištis. Išnykus sovietmečiu tvėrusiai cenzūrai ir griežtiems mechanizams, nulėmusiems, kokie meno ir jo kritikos kūriniai gali pasiekti viešąją erdvę ir kaip joje apie tai kalbama, daugelis anksčiau šiuos procesus valdžiusių institucijų (rašytojai, jų sąjunga, kritikų bendruomenė) jaučiasi praradusios kontrolę ir nebeturi atskaitos taškų, kuriais remiantis galima apibrėžti literatūros kūrinio vertę ir kokybę. Lygiagrečiai vyksta ir demokratiško neprofesionalaus skaitymo ir leidybos procesai, kuriuose vadovaujamosi kitokiomis prielaidomis.

Šio **tyrimo objektas** pavadintas *skonio politika*. Sąvoka pasiskolinta iš George'o Steinerio. Jis pats skonio politiką laiko *oligarchine* ir teigia, kad neproporcingai daug galių kanono sudarymui turi viena iš šios politikos interesų grupių – profesionalūs ir ypač akademiniai menų (literatūros) tyrinėtojai ir kritikai. Kol kas nesiimant nei tokiam teiginiui pritarti, nei su juo ginčytis, galima konstatuoti, kad Steineris implikuoja ir kitas interesų grupes. Tiksliau, jis pats kalba apie „mažumą“ ir „didžiumą“, smulkiau neišskirdamas nei grupių, nei jų interesų, ir kaip tik dėl to reikia ieškoti kitų pavyzdžių, kur tokia interesų sąveika skonio ir meno kūrinijų klausimais būtų tiriama metodiškiau. Tačiau tuo pat metu prieinamų duomenų kiekis apribojo galimybes atlikti tikrą sociologinį tyrimą, todėl ieškota teorinių modelių, kurie leistų atskirai aptarti veiksmus, žmonių atliekamus su konkrečiomis knygomis.

Paaikškinti, kokie yra skonio politikos padariniai konkrečioms literatūros kūriniais, patogu remiantis Thomo Adamso ir Nicholo Barkerio modeliu, išdėstytu straipsnyje „Naujas knygotyros modelis“⁹. Modelio esmė tokia: knygos „gyvenimas“ suvokiamas cikliška – pradedant leidyba ir gamyba, aprėpiant distribuciją ir recepciją ir taip užtikrinant išlikimą, kuris savo ruožtu reiškia, kad knyga leidžiama iš naujo ir pasiekia vis naują auditoriją¹⁰. Nuo vieno ciklo etapo prie kito knyga pereina dėl sklaidos (*transmission*) veiksmų – kai žmonės ją ne tik skaito, bet ir pavidalu dalijasi ja su kitais, ją cituodami ar referuodami, recenzuodami ar rekomenduodami. Kadangi modelyje išlikimas suprantamas plačiai – tai ne tik knygos kaip spausdinto fizinio objekto

⁹ Thomas R. Adams, Nicolas Barker, „A New Model for the Study of the Book“, in: Nicolas Barker (ed.), *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society. The Clark Lectures 1986–1987. The British Library Studies in the History of the Book*, London: The British Library, p. 5–43.

¹⁰ Modelis išsamiau paaikškintas teorinėje disertacijos dalyje.

išlikimas, bet ir teksto citatų, interpretacijų ar net prisiminimų apie turinį ir idėjas išlikimas, – bent kai kurie sklaidos veiksmai ir lemia išlikimą, ir kartu yra jo požymis. Savo ruožtu, knygos (ar kelių to paties autoriaus, žanro, tematikos knygų) „gyvenimo ciklo“ etapų stebėseną leidžia rekonstruoti tam tikras skonio politikos tendencijas.

Tyrime surinkti duomenys apie tokius sklaidos veiksmus, kuriuos buvo galima aiškiai užfiksuoti (t. y., pavyzdžiui, apie literatūros premijas ar akademinės publikacijas, bet ne apie asmeninius pokalbius), lyginta jų gausa, šitaip siekiant nustatyti, kurios knygos išlieka. Paaiškinimų, kodėl sklaidos veiksmai su vienomis knygomis atliekami, o su kitomis ne, ieškota *atlikimo protokoluose*, kaip juos vadina tekstologijos teoretikas Peteris L. Shillingsburgas¹¹. Shillingsburgo rašto aktų teorijoje *atlikimas (performance)* yra procesas, kai perskaičius materialų (t. y. užrašytą ar kitokiu dokumentu įamžintą) tekstą, susiformuojamas *suvokinys (concept)*. Suvokinį formuojantis mechanizmas vadinamas *sememine molekule*. Ji sudaryta iš konkrečių kontekstų „tinklo“, kurio kiekvienas „mazgas“ susijęs su kitais, todėl jo reikšmė priklauso nuo jų visų ir nuo jų tarpusavio sąsajų. Atlikimo protokoluose – t. y. raštiškuose atsiliepimuose apie perskaitytas knygas – vykdant tyrimą buvo ieškoma sememinių molekulių, kitaip sakant, paaiškinimo, kokiais kontekstais remdamiesi skaitytojai suvokia knygas, laikantis prielaidos, kad nuo tų kontekstų priklauso ir vertinimas.

Pats vertinimas apibūdinamas kaip intencionali būseną, kaip ją supranta Johnas R. Searle'as¹². Jo socialinės tikrovės sampratoje intencionali būseną yra bet kokia santykio su pasauliu būseną – tikėjimas, kad koks nors teiginys yra tiesa; troškimas, kad nutiktų koks nors įvykis; pagarba ir meilė arba, priešingai, panieka ir pasibjaurėjimas žmonėmis, daiktais ir reiškiniams. Vertinimas – konstatavimas, kad knyga yra gera arba prasta, kad skaitytojui ji patiko arba ne – taip pat yra intencionali patenkintų arba nepatenkintų lūkesčių būseną. Todėl atlikimo protokoluose taip pat ieškoma ir tokių lūkesčių išraiškos. Galiausiai, norint pasverti, kurie sprendimai labiau už kitus lemia knygų išlikimą, atsižvelgiama ir į kolektyvinį intencionalumą bei kolektyvinį pripažinimą. Šitaip

¹¹ Žr. Peter L. Shillingsburg, *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997; Peter L. Shillingsburg, *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

¹² John R. Searle, *Making the Social World: The Construction of Human Civilization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

aiškinamas institucinis veikimas – finansavimas, jį reglamentuojantys įstatymai, o iš dalies – ir profesionali literatūros kritika. Kolektyvinis intencionalumas Searle'o modelyje yra institucijų kūrimo mechanizmas (institucijas Searle'as suvokia labai plačiai – kaip bet kokį asmenį, asmenų grupę ar instituciją siaurąja prasme, kuri vykdo socialinę funkciją), o institucija savo ruožtu yra bendradarbiavimo mechanizmas. Kad institucija įgytų sau prisiskirtas deontines galias (galias veikti), jai reikalingas kolektyvinis pripažinimas: kiti bendruomenės nariai turi manyti, kad tos galios jai priklauso.

Darbo tikslas:

* Remiantis kiekybiniais duomenimis ir kokybine analize, aprašyti literatūros kūrinių vertinimo ir pripažinimo tendencijas Lietuvoje posovietiniu laikotarpiu.

Darbo uždaviniai:

1. Identifikuoti ir surinkti kiekybinius duomenis, reprezentuojančius literatūros kūrinių vertinimo ir jiems teikiamo pripažinimo situacijas.

2. Remiantis surinktais duomenimis, atskleisti skonio srovės, susietas su skaitymo situacijomis.

3. Identifikuoti ir surinkti atlikimo protokolų korpusą, adekvatų kiekvienai skonio srovei.

4. Išanalizuoti atlikimo protokolus, ieškant bendriausių vertinimo kriterijų ir tendencijų.

5. Palyginti skonio srovės tarpusavyje ir nustatyti reikšmingiausius panašumus ir skirtumus tarp jų atliekamų vertinimų.

Pirmasis darbo skyrius skirtas teorijai, metodams ir kokybiniais duomenimis pristatyti; toliau aptariamos pačios skonio srovės. *Antrajame skyriuje* nagrinėjamas neprofesionalių skaitytojų, kartais vadinamų tiesiog skaitytojais, skonis. Pagrindinė duomenų grupė, kuria remiamasi, yra knygų populiarumas, kurį rodo bibliotekų statistika. Papildomai pasitelkti atlikimo protokolai surinkti iš asmeninių tinklaraščių ir pasisakymų interneto forumuose. Siekiant aiškiau apibrėžti tokių skaitytojų galias ir padėti literatūros lauke, taip pat aptariami skaitymo įpročių tyrimai ir LR kultūros

ministerijos vykdoma Skaitymo skatinimo programa. *Trečiajame skyriuje* pristatomas profesionalių skaitytojų, apibendrintai vadinamų kritikais, skonis. Jį pagrindžiantis kiekybinis rodiklis – publikacijų apie šiuolaikinės lietuvių literatūros kūrinius ir kūrėjus skaičius; atlikimo protokolais laikomos pačios publikacijos. Papildomai pasitelkta įvairių straipsnių, diskusijų, interviu ir pasisakymų viešumoje apie literatūros kritiką ir jos padėtį. Kaip atskiras profesionalių skaitytojų atvejis interpretuojami duomenys apie studentų baigiamuosius darbus, kur nagrinėjami literatūros kūriniai. *Ketvirtajame skyriuje* aprašomas duomenų atskleidžiamas reiškinys, kai labai dažnai pripažinimas, kūriniams ir kūrėjams reiškiamas per valstybės institucijas ir finansavimą, nesutampa nei su profesionalių, nei su neprofesionalių skaitytojų reiškiamu pripažinimu. Pasitelkti duomenys – tai valstybės parama knygų leidybai ir literatūros premijos, kurių daugelis taip pat finansuojama valstybės lėšomis. Tokie sprendimai nepalieka atlikimo protokolų, bent jau viešai prieinamų, todėl vietoje jų skonio turinį mėginama rekonstruoti remiantis teisinių meno, jo kūrėjų ir valstybės santykius reglamentuojančių dokumentų analize.

Darbas užbaigiamas išvadomis, o prieduose pateikiami naudotų duomenų pjūviai, kuriuos įterpti į tekstą neatrodė praktiška.

Ginamieji teiginiai:

1. Nors įprasta priešinti „paprastą skaitytoją“ ir „literatą“ (profesionalų kritiką ar rašytoją), iš tikrųjų išskiriamos trys skirtingų santykių su literatūra srovės – literatūros vartotojų, profesionalių kritikų ir institucionalizuota, t. y. numatyta įstatymuose ir gaunanti valstybės finansavimą.

2. Profesionalių ir neprofesionalių skaitytojų knygų pasirinkimai skiriasi palyginti nesmarkiai, tačiau juos motyvuoja kitokie poreikiai ir lūkesčiai.

3. Beveik pusė knygų, išleistų su valstybės parama, nesudomina nei profesionalių, nei neprofesionalių skaitytojų.

4. Įstatymuose, reglamentuojančiuose menininkų ir valstybės santykius, įtvirtintas valstybės įsipareigojimas remti ne meną, bet menininkus kaip išskirtinę ir savaime itin vertingą visuomenės grupę, nors konkrečiose finansavimo gairėse ir taisyklėse

deklaruojamas paties meno vertės ar išliekamumo kriterijus.

Atliekant tyrimą buvo surinkti ir analizuojami duomenys apie su knygomis atliekamus sklaidos veiksmus. Atrenkant pačias knygas, kurių atlikimo protokolai ir su kuriomis susiję sklaidos veiksmai bus aptariami, bendrieji formalūs atrankos kriterijai buvo tokie:

1. Į imtį įtraukiamos lietuvių autorių knygos. Keletas autorių rašo ne lietuvių kalba (pvz., Ruta Sepetys, Ugnė Karvelis, Grigorijus Kanovičius), tačiau jie vis tiek įtraukti į imtį, nes pagal siauresnius atrankos kriterijus nustatyta, kad Lietuvos literatūros lauke jie laikomi lietuvių autoriais (pavyzdžiui, apdovanojami lietuvių literatūrai skirtomis premijomis, kaip lietuvių literatūra analizuojami mokslininkų darbuose ir pan.).

2. Į imtį įtraukiamos knygos, pirmą kartą išleistos nuo 1989 m.¹³ iki 2012 m., mat 2013 m., įsteigus Lietuvos kultūros tarybą, pasikeitė valstybės paramos leidybai skyrimo tvarka. Į imtį įtrauktos anksčiau tik užsienyje (kartais ne lietuvių kalba) leistos lietuvių autorių knygos, po 1989 m. išleistos Lietuvoje, tais atvejais, jei jos atitikdavo siauresnius atrankos kriterijus (pvz., joms būdavo paskiriama valstybės parama leidybai arba literatūros premija).

3. Į imtį įtraukiami grožinės literatūros veikalai. Esant abejonių, ar veikalas laikytinas grožiniu, ar ne (pavyzdžiui, atsiminimai, publicistika ir pan. žanrų knygos), grožiniais veikalais buvo laikomi tie, kurie buvo traktuojami kaip grožiniai literatūros lauko agentų – pavyzdžiui, apdovanojami šiaip jau už grožinę literatūrą skiriamomis premijomis arba aptariami mokslininkų kaip grožinės literatūros kūriniai.

4. Į imtį įtraukiami prozos ir dramaturgijos veikalai. (Šiuo atžvilgiu į imtį neįtraukti dviejų poetų – Sigitos Gedos ir Justino Marcinkevičiaus – autobiografinio pobūdžio prozos tekstų rinkiniai, mat pastebėta, kad jie gali iškreipti duomenis: šie kūrėjai yra labai stipriai vertinami ir pripažįstami būtent kaip poetai, ir jų prozos tekstų rinkiniai lauko agentų iš esmės laikomi jų kūrybos tąsa, pavyzdžiui, mokslininkų veikaluose jie

¹³ Tokį „nepriklausomos lietuvių literatūros“ atskaitos tašką mini Laimantas Jonušys, siedamas jį su Ričardo Gavelio *Vilniaus pokerio* ir *Jauno žmogaus memuarų* leidimo data. Žr. „Svarstymai. Du lietuvių literatūros nepriklausomybės dešimtmečiai“ [pokalbyje dalyvavo Jūratė Sprindytė, Laimantas Jonušys, Valdemaras Kukulius, Mindaugas Kvietkauskas, Vytautas Rubavičius, Regimantas Tamošaitis], *Metai* 3, 2010 (<http://tekstai.lt/zurnalas-metai/6010-svarstymai-du-lietuviu-literaturos-nepriklausomybes-desimtmečiai?catid=573%3A2010-m-nr-3-kovas>; 2016-04-29).

pasitelkiami tik kaip papildomas pavyzdys ar šaltinis, analizuojant poetinę kūrybą. Kita vertus, daugumos kitų autorių, rašančių ir prozą, ir poeziją (pavyzdžiui, Sigito Parulskio, Donaldo Kajoko), atvejais atskirti prozos recepciją nuo poezijos pasirodė visai nesudėtinga.)

5. Į imtį įtrauktos tik tos knygos, kurios yra išleistos knygos pavidalu ir turi ISBN numerį. Tai reiškia, kad atskira eilute imtyje nėra nurodyti, pavyzdžiui, kai kurie Herkaus Kunčiaus romanai, kurie buvo spausdinti tik periodinėje spaudoje, nors jie ir atitiktų siauresnius kriterijus.

Siauresnieji knygų atrankos kriterijai yra su knygomis susiję sklaidos veiksmi. Jie pasirinkti atsižvelgiant į du dalykus. Pirma, apsispręsta duomenis tyrimui rinkti tik iš viešai prieinamų šaltinių, neatliekant papildomų apklausų ar interviu. Taip nuspręsta visų pirma dėl to, kad vien tokių duomenų esama labai daug, o jų nesurinkus ir nesusisteminus, sunku taikliai suformuluoti apklausos ar interviu klausimus. Pavyzdžiui, pradedant tyrimą, buvo manyta rengti interviu su leidėjais ir jų klausti apie valstybės finansavimo įtaką pasirinkimui, kokias knygas leisti, tačiau prieš darant tokį interviu pasirodė logiška pirmiausia objektyviai apskaičiuoti, kiek kuri leidykla gauna paramos knygų leidybai, o tai jau savaime didelė užduotis. Antra, pasirinkti tokie sklaidos veiksmi, kuriuos būtų kuo paprasčiau kvantifikuoti. Todėl, pavyzdžiui, atrinktos akademinės publikacijos iš duomenų bazės *Lituanistika* kaip iš akademinės bendruomenės konsensusą reprezentuojančio šaltinio, bet nerinkta duomenų apie recenzijas kultūriniuose leidiniuose, mat daug sunkiau pamatuoti, kieno požiūrį ir kaip tiksliai jos parodo, kieno nuomonei gali daryti įtaką. Šitaip nusistačius kriterijus, surinkti duomenys apie tokius sklaidos veiksmus:

- 1) literatūros premijas;
- 2) akademinės publikacijas;
- 3) BA ir MA pakopų studentų baigiamuosius darbus;
- 4) valstybės finansinę paramą knygų leidybai;
- 5) vertimus į užsienio kalbas;
- 6) panaudą bibliotekose.

Kadangi kartais literatūros premijos skiriamos ne už konkrečią knygą, o už ilgesnį

kūrybos laikotarpį (pvz., LR Nacionalinė kultūros ir meno premija), kai kuriose imties eilutėse nurodomas tik autorius, o ne konkreti knyga. Tai pasiteisino ir renkant duomenis apie mokslininkų bei studentų publikacijas, nes jose kartais taip pat kalbama, pavyzdžiui, apie autoriaus viešąjį įvaizdį ar bendresnius kūrybos bruožus, neaptariant vieno kurio nors kūrinio.

Visos knygos imtyje aprašytos remiantis LIBIS katalogo duomenimis. Joje nurodytas kiekvienos knygos autorius, pavadinimas, žanras, leidimo metai ir leidykla. Jei knyga buvo išleista daugiau negu vieną kartą, nurodomi pirmojo leidimo duomenys. Išimtis padaryta tik Doloresos Kazragytės *Gyvenimui prieš gyvenimą*, mat valstybės finansavimas skirtas vėlesniam šios knygos leidimui, nors paprastai to nedaroma.

Kadangi palyginti dažnai bibliografiniame apraše nurodomi nekonvenciniai žanrų apibūdinimai (pvz., *vaizdeliai, prisiminimų fragmentai, noveletės* ir pan.), siekiant apibendrinti, žanro požiūriu visos knygos buvo suskirstytos į:

- 1) romanus ir apysakas;
- 2) trumpąją prozą – apsakymus, noveles, miniatiūras ir t. t.;
- 3) eseistiką – jai priskiriama ir tai, kas įvardijama kaip *esė* ar *publicistika*;
- 4) autobiografinę prozą.

Pirmąją ir antrąją žanrų kategoriją nuo trečiosios ir ketvirtosios skiria „fikciškumas“; tarpusavyje pirmoji ir antroji skiriasi visų pirma kūrinių apimtimi ir atitinkamai, jų kiekiu vienoje knygoje (romanai retsykais leidžiami ir po du, bet dar smulkesnės prozos formų paprastai vienoje knygoje telpa dešimtys). Trečioji kategorija nuo ketvirtosios skiriasi tuo, kad autobiografinės prozos atveju autobiografiškumo elementas nurodomas jau knygos paantraštėje – *dienoraščiai, atsiminimai, vaikystės vaizdeliai* ir t. t. – o *eseistikai* priskirta tai, kas tiesmukos nuorodos į kalbėjimą apie save neturi.

Imtį sudaro 475 knygos, parašytos 195 autorių.

Lietuvoje nėra vieno šaltinio, pateikiančio informaciją apie visas šalyje teikiamas **literatūrinės premijas**. Todėl pačių premijų pavadinimų buvo ieškoma internete viešuose šaltiniuose, pavyzdžiui, pranešimuose spaudoje, o vėliau tikslinami jų laureatų sąrašai. Stengtasi atrinkti visas premijas, skiriamas už grožinę prozą, tačiau nesant

galimybės patikrinti bendrą jų sąrašą, neįmanoma tiksliai žinoti, kad jų nėra daugiau. Esama nemažai tokių, kurios skiriamos ir prozos, ir poezijos kūriniais – tokiais atvejais skaičiuoti tik laureatai prozininkai. Kai premija skiriama ir grožiniams, ir negrožiniams kūriniais (paprastai tokios premijos teikiamos regionų savivaldybių kūriniais, skirtiems įamžinti nusipelnusio kraštiečio atminimą arba pačiam regionui tirti ir aprašyti), jomis apdovanotos atsiminimų ar publicistikos knygos laikytos grožinėmis tada, jei atitinka ir dar bent vieną iš siauresniųjų kriterijų (pvz., yra aptariamoms mokslininkų darbuose). Iš viso surinkti duomenys apie 20 literatūros premijų.

Duomenys apie **lietuvių literatūros vertimus į užsienio kalbas** yra bene patikimiausi ir lengviausiai prieinami – juos renka ir viešai skelbia VŠĮ „Lietuviškos knygos“ interneto svetainėje www.booksfromlithuania.com, skiltyje „Vertimai“. Į imtį įtrauktos tik tos knygos, kurios užsienio kalbomis išleistos kaip atskira knyga, bet neįtrauktos atskirų kūrinių ar jų ištraukų publikacijos antologijose ar almanachuose. Manyta atsižvelgti ir į tai, ar knygos išleistos užsienio leidykloje, ar tik užsienio kalba, bet Lietuvoje, tačiau paaiškėjo, kad Lietuvoje užsienio kalba išleista tik viena knyga – Vytauto Bubnio *Svečio* vokiškasis vertimas. Atliekant tyrimą ši duomenų grupė pasirodė mažiausiai intriguojanti žvelgiant iš Lietuvos konteksto: beveik visos į užsienio kalbas verčiamos knygos yra pakankamai tolygiai pripažįstamos ir vertinamos visų sklaidos agentų ir nesudaro jokie savarankiško imties pogrupio, todėl išsamiau disertacijoje šie duomenys neaptariami¹⁴.

Mokslinių publikacijų, kuriose analizuojami šiuolaikiniai lietuvių autoriai ir jų kūriniai, ieškota duomenų bazėje *Lituanistika*. Joje publikacijos kaupiamos nuo 2000 m. Išsami informacija apie duomenų bazės struktūrą pateikiama interneto svetainėje www.lituanistika.lt, skyrelyje „Apie duomenų bazę“.

Tyrinėjant publikacijas *Lituanistikoje*, buvo stengiamasi nagrinėjamas knygas ar autorius atrinkti ne mechaniškai, bet atsižvelgiant į tai, kad jie būtų publikacijoje iš tikrųjų aptariami ir analizuojami, o ne vien paminėti. Jei duomenų bazėje būta viso publikacijos teksto arba jei pateiktas šaltinių sąrašas, buvo atrenkamos tos knygos, kurios

¹⁴ Šis tyrimas neaprepia labai intriguojančių duomenų – apie lietuvių literatūros recepciją užsienyje. Pavyzdį – Ričardo Gavelio romano *Vilniaus pokeris* lietuviškų ir angliškų atlikimo protokolų analizę – žr. Gabrielė Gailiūtė, „*Vilnius Poker* by Ričardas Gavelis: the Reception of a Soviet Novel in the North American Market“, *Textual Cultures* 8(2), 2013, p. 157–167.

publikacijoje cituojamos. Taip pat buvo įtraukiamos knygos ar autoriai, paminėti prie raktažodžių. Galiausiai, jei duomenų bazėje buvo pateikiamas publikacijos tekstas, ieškota ilgesnių vieno autoriaus kūrybos ar vieno kūrinio atkarpų. Be to, buvo stengiamasi priskirti publikaciją konkrečiam kūriniiui, o ne vien autoriui.

Studentų baigiamieji darbai ir jų santraukos elektroniniu pavidalu kaupiamos ir saugomos Lietuvos ETD duomenų bazėje, kurioje ir tvarkomoje Lietuvos akademinė bibliotekų tinklo. Šie duomenys rinkti kaip papildantys duomenis apie mokslines publikacijas, studentus laikant atskiru, ypatingu tarpiniu atveju tarp profesionalių ir neprofesionalių skaitytojų. Duomenų bazėje sukaupta 15 Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų įvairių specialybių studentų baigiamieji BA ir MA pakopų darbai, pradėdant 2004 m., bet kai kurios aukštosios mokyklos yra prisijungusios dar vėliau. Išsami Lietuvos ETD statistika pateikta LABT interneto svetainėje¹⁵.

Iki 2013-ųjų, kai įsteigta Lietuvos kultūros taryba, knygų leidybai **valstybės parama** buvo skiriama iš dviejų šaltinių: LR kultūros ministerijos leidybos finansavimo programos ir Kultūros rėmimo fondo (KRF; iki 2008 m. vadinto Kultūros ir sporto rėmimo fondu). Duomenys apie abu šaltinius surinkti LR kultūros ministerijos archyve. Kultūros ministerijos leidybos paramos programos lėšos¹⁶ skirstytos ministrų įsakymais, kuriais patvirtinamos ekspertų komisijos rekomendacijos. Nuo 1996 m. visi tokie įsakymai rasti archyve ir į imtį įtrauktos juose minimos knygos, atitinkančios bendruosius kriterijus. Pasitaikė keletas atvejų, kai paramą gavusi knyga išleista kitu pavadinimu – tuomet jis patikslintas LIBIS kataloge pagal autorių, leidyklą ir leidimo metus. Dar keliais atvejais knygos išleistos vėliau, negu numatyta, teikiant paraišką paramai. Pasitaikė ir knygų, kurioms buvo paskirta parama, bet LIBIS kataloge jų aptikti nepavyko – labai tikėtina, kad jos apskritai nebuvo išleistos, todėl nebuvo įtrauktos ir į imtį. 1994 ir 1995 m., t. y. pačioje leidybos programos įgyvendinimo pradžioje, ekspertų išvados buvo mažiau tikslios, rekomendacijų sąrašė ne visada nurodoma tiksli suma kiekvienai knygai, kartais rašoma, pavyzdžiui, „rekomenduojama paremti visą leidyklos

¹⁵ Žr. „Apie LABT: Statistika“, *Lietuvos akademinė bibliotekų tinklas* (<http://www.labt.lt/Apie-LABT/Statistika/eLABa-ETD-objektai>).

¹⁶ Pinigų sumos visur šioje disertacijoje nurodomos tokia valiuta, kuri galiojo jų skyrimo metu – litais, siekiant išvengti iškraipymų, kurių gali atsirasti, konvertuojant tas sumas pagal skirtingu metu galiojusį euro ir lito kursą. Dėl tos pačios priežasties neatsižvelgiama į kitus ekonominius svyravimus, pavyzdžiui, infliaciją, MGL ir panašiai.

programą“. Tačiau kadangi archyve nebepavyko rasti tų metų paraiškų, į imtį įtrauktos tik tos knygos, kurios tiksliai minimos ekspertų rekomendacijose ir nurodoma konkreti joms skiriama suma.

Kiekvienais metais pagal leidybos programą buvo skiriama parama Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidyklos rengiamam „Pirmosios knygos“ konkursui. Nutarta laikytis prielaidos, kad taip remiamas pats konkursas kaip galimybė jauniems rašytojams debiutuoti, o ne konkrečių knygų leidyba. Todėl į imtį įtrauktos ir valstybės remiamomis laikytos tik tos „Pirmosios knygos“ konkursą laimėjusios knygos, kurios atitiko ir bent vieną kitą kriterijų.

KRF dokumentai archyve dažnai buvo nesutvarkyti. Nuo 2008 m. jie tikslūs, tačiau iš senesnių ekspertų komisijos nutarimų rasti pavyko ne visus. Kai kuriais atvejais tikslios paramos sumos nustatytos iš buhalterijos ataskaitų ar sutarčių dėl mokėjimų, tačiau vis tiek galėjo likti netikslumų. Bet turimi duomenys rodo, kad lietuvių grožinės literatūros leidybai KRF parama skirta pakankamai retai, dažniau verstinėms knygoms arba literatūros sklaidos projektams, todėl tikėtina, kad duomenų netikslumai vis tiek netrukdo susidaryti bendrą įspūdį apie valstybės paramos knygų leidybai apimtį ir prioritetus.

Santykiniam knygų **skaitomumui** nustatyti buvo pasitelkta panauda bibliotekose. Apskritai, ko gero, vienintelis būdas tiksliai nustatyti, kokias knygas ir kaip dažnai skaito žmonės, yra stebėti ir ilgesnį laiką registruoti, ką skaito reprezentatyvi skaitytojų imtis. Nesant tokios galimybės, tenka rinktis kitą rodiklį, leidžiantį jei ir ne tiksliai nustatyti skaitymo dažnį ir preferencijas, tai bent jau santykinai palyginti, kas skaitoma dažniau, o kas rečiau ir kaip šie dydžiai koreliuoja su kitais rodikliais. Pardavimų duomenis bent kai kurios leidyklos laiko komercine paslaptimi, be to, tie duomenys nerodo, kiek skaitytojų iš tikrųjų pasiekia vienas parduotas egzempliorius. Tiražai LIBIS kataloge dažnai nenurodomi, ypač jei tiražas kartojamas, be to, nėra duomenų apie tai, kokia tiražo dalis nepakliūva į apyvartą arba labai greitai iš jos pranyksta, jei knyga nėra paklausi. Bibliotekų panaudos duomenys reprezentatyvūs ta prasme, kad daug labiau tikėtina, jog kiekvienas, pasiskolinęs knygą, skaito pats, o ne dalijasi su artimaisiais (kurie gali tą pačią knygą pasiimti iš bibliotekos patys). Jie mažiau patikimi dėl to, kad ne visi

skaitytojai apskritai lankosi bibliotekose – kai kurie knygas tik perka, gauna dovanų arba skolinasi privačiai. Tačiau kadangi šis tyrimas apskritai nepajėgė aprėpti detalesnės skaitytojų demografijos, nuspręsta bibliotekų panaudą laikyti pakankamai tiksliu rodikliu knygų skaitomumui lyginti.

Bibliotekų panaudos statistika¹⁷ pradėta kaupti 2004 m. trylikoje Lietuvos viešųjų bibliotekų; visos bibliotekos į posistemę sujungtos 2010 m. Siekiant nustatyti santykinį lietuvių autorių knygų skaitomumą, pirmiausia iš Lietuvos nacionalinės Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekos buvo gauti 2011 ir 2012 m. visų Lietuvos viešųjų bibliotekų panaudos duomenys, parengti pagal LATGA užklausą. Iš šių duomenų į imtį papildomai įtrauktos bendruosius kriterijus atitinkančios knygos, kurių skaitomumas viršijo 500 pasiskolinimų per metus. Tuomet parengta visas į imtį įtrauktas knygas apimanti užklausa ir išsiųsta 13 bibliotekų, kuriose panaudos duomenys kaupiami seniausiai, t. y. nuo 2004 m. Į užklausą įtraukti visi kiekvienos knygos leidimai, o jų skaitomumas buvo sumuojamas, t. y. buvo skaičiuojamas ne kiekvieno leidimo skaitomumas atskirai, bet kiekvienos knygos visų leidimų kartu. Gauti duomenys rodė, kiek kartų kiekviena knyga buvo pasiskolinta iš šių bibliotekų per visą 2004–2012 m. laikotarpį. Šie skaičiai padalyti iš knygos cirkuliavimo trukmės: jei knyga išleista iki 2004 m., tuomet cirkuliavimo trukme laikytas 2004–2012 m. laikotarpis, o jei vėliau, tuomet – laikotarpis nuo jos leidimo metų. Taip gautas vidutinis kiekvienos knygos pasiskolinimų iš bibliotekų skaičius per metus.

Pagal šį vidutinio skaitomumo rodiklį knygos padalytos į keturias kategorijas: labai didelio skaitomumo knygomis laikomos tokios, kurios vidutiniškai pasiskolinamos iš bibliotekų dažniau negu 500 kartų per metus. Didelio skaitomumo knygos pasiskolinamos dažniau negu 250 kartų per metus, vidutinio – dažniau negu 50, o jei dar rečiau, tuomet knyga laikoma menko skaitomumo.

Visos išvardytos duomenų grupės laikytinos sklaidos veiksnių rodikliais, tačiau skaitomumas rodo patį išlikimą apyvartoje. Visi sklaidos veiksniai, išskyrus finansavimą, susiję su distribucija, tad laikomi atgarsio rodikliais. Kitas tyrimo objektas yra **atlikimo protokolai. Profesionalių skaitytojų atlikimo protokolais** šiame tyrime laikomos

¹⁷ Informaciją apie bibliotekų panaudos statistikos rinkimą suteikė ir duomenis gauti padėjo Lietuvos nacionalinės Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekos LIBIS centro sistemų administratorė Renata Balandienė.

pačios mokslinės publikacijos ir studentų darbai. Tyrimas neapėmė knygų recenzijų kultūros leidiniuose ar kitose viešosios informacijos priemonėse, nes, kaip jau minėta, jos pasirodė per sunkiai kvantifikuojamos ir skatino kelti dar daugiau klausimų apie kultūrinės žiniasklaidos sklaidą ir įtaką, o tokie klausimai smarkiai peržengė šio tyrimo ribas (nors neabejotinai būtų labai įdomūs ir verti tirti).

Neprofesionalių skaitytojų atlikimo protokolų aptikti ir juos susisteminti dar sunkiau. Visi jie rasti viešai prieinamuose interneto šaltiniuose, neatliekant tikslingų apklausų ar interviu. Iš dalies taip nuspręsta dėl jau minėtų praktinių tyrėjų kompetencijų ir išteklių apribojimų. Kita vertus, esama tikimybės, kad spontaniškai ir savanoriškai apie knygas mąstoma ir kalbama kitaip, negu būtų atsakinėjama siauresniame formalaus kiekybinio tyrimo kontekste. Tokia skaitytojų atsiliepiamų apžvalga negali būti laikoma iki galo reprezentatyvia jau vien dėl to, kad viešai ar pusiau viešai apie knygas kalbėti linkęs tam tikras skaitytojų tipažas – tikėtina, kad nemenka dalis žmonių tenkinasi knygų aptarimu žodžiu su asmeniškai, o ne su virtualiai pažįstamais, arba apskritai su kitais žmonėmis apie knygas kalbėtis nemėgsta ir jas skaito vienuoje. Nepaisant to, ypač tinklaraščių autoriai atrodo priklausą aktyviausiems ir uoliausiems skaitytojams, o sprendžiant iš to, kad leidėjai bent retsykais juos pasitelkia knygų sklaidai ir reklamai, galima manyti, kad jie diktuoja ar bent yra laikomi diktuojančiais skaitymo madas.

Iš esmės knygų aptarimai internete būna dvejopi. Pirmasis pavidalas – forumai, iš kurių didžiausias – *Supermama*, bet iš tikrųjų skyrelį „apie knygas“ galima rasti beveik bet kuriame, bet kurios temos ar bendruomenės forume. Forumuose paprastai kalbama labai glaustai, dažniausiai keletu žodžių, retsykais keletu sakinių. Diskusijų kartais pasitaiko, bet dažniau tiesiog išsakomos nuomonės viena po kitos, menkai reaguojant į tai, kas parašyta kitų. Tačiau ten labai svarbus bendravimas su kitais skaitytojais – pavyzdžiui, beveik visada padėkojama už rekomendacijas, paaiškinimus ar atsakymus į konkretų klausimą. Forumuose rašantys skaitytojai (galbūt iš dalies ir dėl glaustos išraiškos) atrodo paprastesni ir menkiau linkę gilintis, be to, jie labai tiesmuki – jeigu knyga jiems nepatiko, tą jie išsako daug šiurkščiau ir su mažiau išlygų ar argumentų. Pastaruosius porą metų atsirado ir į forumus labai panašios grupės feisbuke, pavyzdžiui: „Rekomenduoju šią knygą“.

Kita skaitytojų raiškos vieta yra tinklaraščiai. Jie skiriasi nuo forumų jau vien tuo, kad čia galima rasti daug daugiau informacijos apie jų autorius, net jei jie ir neprisistato tikraisiais vardais. Sprendžiant iš to, kiek jie pasako apie save, matyti, kad dažnai tai išsilavinę žmonės, palyginti jauni, bet suaugę, baigę mokslus, turintys šeimą, dirbantys aukštos kvalifikacijos darbą, bet tik nedaugelis susiję su literatūra ar kultūra profesine prasme. Tinklaraščiai paprastai turi vieną ar kelis autorius, tačiau juose taip pat vyksta bendravimas. Pirma, tinklaraštininkai skaito ir deda nuorodas vieni į kitų įrašus, kuriems pritaria ar su kuriais polemizuoja. Antra, jie nuolat bendrauja komentaruose, kur bent dalis prisistato visada tais pačiais slapyvardžiais, dažnai ir su nuorodomis į savo pačių tinklaraščius. Tinklaraštininkai atrodo daug labiau išprusę už forumininkus: ne vien dėl to, kad įrašai ilgesni ir rišlesni, bet ir dėl to, kad jie daug dažniau skaito ir aptaria knygas užsienio kalbomis ir daug labiau seka kultūrinį gyvenimą. Jie, pavyzdžiui, domisi garsiausiomis pasaulio literatūros premijomis, skaito knygų apžvalgas kitomis kalbomis, pasakoja savo įspūdžius iš Vilniaus knygų mugės ar kitų stambių kultūros renginių. Jie taip pat beveik visada sureaguoja į „Metų knygų rinkimus“, juos priima kaip iššūkį perskaityti visas ar bent kelias nominuotas knygas. Rečiau, bet irgi paminimi „Kūrybiškiausios knygos rinkimai“, „Poezijos pavasaris“, Nacionalinė kultūros ir meno premija, bet beveik jokia kita lietuviška literatūros premija į jų akiratį nepakliūva.

Išvados

1. Tirtuose neprofesionalių skaitytojų atlikimo protokoluose išryškėjanti pagrindinė priežastis, kodėl neprofesionalūs skaitytojai apskritai skaito knygas, – *poilsis*, teikiamas galimybės atsiriboti, atitrūkti nuo savo kasdienio gyvenimo ir aplinkos. Kita vertus, pagrindinė priežastis, kodėl konkreti knyga patinka, yra *atpažinimas* arba *tikroviškumas*, t. y. panašumas į jų kasdieninį gyvenimą ir aplinką. Dar daugiau, knygos suvokiamos kaip pretenduojančios į tiesą: jei jų vaizduojama tikrovė neatitinka skaitytojo patirties ar net nuomonės, knygos vertinamos neigiamai.

2. Skaitytojams menkai rūpi imanentiškos literatūrinės interpretacijos, nesiejančios literatūros su tikrovės patirtimi. Jie tik labai retai pasitelkia profesionalią literatūros kritiką, o diskutuodami tarpusavyje, greitai nukrypsta nuo teksto prie tikrovės patirties. Tačiau skaitytojai labai atviri įvairiai informacijai apie knygas ir rekomendacijoms, ką

skaityti.

3. Skaitytojai suvokia *skaitymą kaip komunikaciją su autoriumi*, juo labai domisi, naudojami progomis daugiau apie jį sužinoti ir geriau jį pažinti. Be to, patį skaitymo procesą jie taip pat suvokia kaip komunikaciją su pačia knyga – jie trokšta ir tikisi būti jos „paveikti“ ar „priversti susimąstyti“. Pajutus tokį poveikį, knyga vertinama teigiamai. Galiausiai perskaitytos knygos integruojamos į tikrovės patirtį ir į naujas sememines molekules: jos pasitelkiamos kaip nuorodos, duodant patarimus kitiems įvairių problemų atveju, arba kaip priemonė nusakyti savo savijautą ar situaciją.

4. Lietuvių literatūra sudaro palyginti nedidelę dažniausiai skaitomų knygų dalį. Tačiau dažnam skaitytojui ji atrodo išskirtinė. Skaitytojai nuolat prisipažįsta neskaitą ir / arba nemėgstą lietuvių autorių knygų – net jei jų skaito santykinai daugiau už kitus, – tačiau apie konkrečias knygas dažniausiai atsiliepia teigiamai, traktuodami jas kaip išimtis. Esama pagrindo įtarti, kad toks neigiamas santykis su lietuvių literatūra atsinešamas iš mokyklos.

5. Knygos, labai dažnai skaitomos neprofesionalių skaitytojų, bet retai arba niekada neaptariamoms profesionalių skaitytojų, tik su nedidelėmis išimtimis priklauso tai pačiai kategorijai – pramoginiams meilės romanams. Tai aiškintina tuo, kad neprofesionaliems skaitytojams šabloniški meilės romanų siužetai atrodo labai tikroviški ir atpažįstami kaip panašūs į nuosavą patirtį, o profesionalų jie nedomina todėl, kad juose nesama literatūrinių inovacijų. Ir, priešingai, labai menkai skaitomos, bet profesionalių skaitytojų dažnai nagrinėjamos knygos dažniausiai būna labai inovatyvios ir net linkusios į eksperimentus, tačiau neprofesionaliems skaitytojams jos per daug varginančios ir nutolusios nuo atpažįstamos tikrovės patirties. Vis dėlto didžiąja dalimi profesionalių ir neprofesionalių skaitytojų labiausiai vertinamos knygos sutampa, net jei yra vertinamos skirtingu pagrindu: tai, kas dažniausiai nagrinėjama profesionalių skaitytojų, dažnai skaitoma ir neprofesionalių.

6. Profesionalių skaitytojų atveju kaip tik asmenišką, su konkrečia tikrovės patirtimi susijusią sememinės molekulės dalis suspenduojama. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad vietoje jos svarbiausia tampa literatūros skaitymo ir tyrinėjimo patirtis: pagrindinis mokslinių publikacijų apie literatūros kūrinis mechanizmas yra jų lyginimas su kitais

literatūros kūriniais. Tokie palyginimai leidžia įvairių bendrybių ir panašumų pagrindu steigti kūrinių aibes. Tai iš esmės yra kanono formavimas. Tačiau kad suformuotas kanonas būtų įtvirtintas, kolektyvinis pripažinimas reikalingas ne tik kūriniais ar autoriams, bet ir tam tikroms nusistovėjusioms jų interpretacijoms. Interpretacijos generuojamos profesionalių skaitytojų, o įtvirtinamos visų pirma per literatūros mokymą(si) mokykloje ir universitete.

7. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad beveik pusė knygų, išleidžiamų su valstybės parama, nesudomina nei profesionalių, nei neprofesionalių skaitytojų. Taip pat literatūros premijos, kurių daugelis finansuojama valstybės arba savivaldybių, labai dažnai skiriamos atgarsio nesulaukiančioms knygoms. Ir valstybės paramos knygų leidybai, ir literatūros premijų neproporcingai daug – kelis kartus daugiau už kitas – gauna Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, tačiau ji taip pat išleidžia ir beveik 40 proc. visų atgarsio nesukeliančių knygų. Tokios disproporcijos rodo meno kūrėjų bendruomenės, kuriai Meno kūrėjų ir jų organizacijų įstatymu (MKiJOĮ) valstybė deleguoja nustatyti meno vertę, atotrūkį nuo visos visuomenės.

8. Pačiame MKiJOĮ išryškėja keletas prieštaravimų. Viena vertus, valstybė įsipareigoja remti menininkus, išskirdama juos kaip ypatingą visuomenės grupę – ir vertingesnę už kitus piliečius, ir reikalingą didesnės globos ir paramos. Kita vertus, kadangi įsipareigojama remti ne visą ar bet kokį meną ar kūrybą apskritai, o tik vertingą, tenka teisiškai apibrėžti meno vertę. Valstybė ir jos institucijos, neturėdamos tam kompetencijų, tokios vertės apibrėžimą ir nustatymą deleguoja pačiai meno kūrėjų (organizacijų) bendruomenei, tačiau nereikalauja iš jos jokio sprendimų pagrindimo ar atskaitomybės. Tai sudaro sąlygas įsigalėti tam tikrai siaurai meno vertės sampratai ir konformizmui.

9. Institucionalizuoto skonio tyrimas rodo, kad Lietuvos institucionalizuotame skonyje posovietmečiu yra įsitvirtinusi kultūros apžvalgininko Tomo Daugirdo aprašyta „išsaugojimo kultūra“, kuri rūpinasi paveldo ir tradicijų išlikimu ir grynumu, tačiau dėl to aukoja kultūros ir kūrybos gyvybę ir aktualumą, šitaip prarasdama sąlytį su platesne visuomene ir kultūros vartotojų bendruomene. Išsaugojimo kultūros kaip dominuojančios įsitvirtinimą meno kūrėjų organizacijose ir konkrečiai Lietuvos rašytojų

sąjungoje galima atsekti iki sovietinių laikų, kai Sąjunga buvo organas, suteikiantis (arba nesuteikiantis) teisę vadintis rašytoju.

Publications on the subject of dissertations

Mokslo straipsniai disertacijos tema

1. „Literatūros kritika šiuolaikinėje Lietuvoje: institucijos refleksija“, *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai*, 2012 7, p. 448–457.
2. „Vilnius Poker by Ričardas Gavelis: the Reception of a Soviet Novel in the North American Market“, *Textual Cultures* 8(2), 2013, p. 157–167.
3. „Artistic Value as a Legal Problem: The Case of Contemporary Lithuania“, in: *Integrating Social Sciences Into Legal Research*, Vilnius University, 2014, p. 154–159.
4. „Skonio politika: kas ir iš ko moka atskirti geras knygas?“, *Knygų aidai* 1, 2014, p. 1–9.

Conference papers on the subject of the dissertation

Mokslinėse konferencijose skaityti pranešimai disertacijos tema

1. „(Un)perceivable Contexts: The Reception of a Soviet Novel in the North American Market“, pranešimas *Society for Textual Scholarship Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference*, Lojolos universitetas, Čikaga, JAV, 2013-03-05.
2. „Lithuanian Authors Inside and Out: Translating Contemporary Lithuanian Fiction“, pranešimas AABS, SASS ir Jeilio universiteto Europos tyrimų tarybos Baltijos ir Skandinavijos studijų konferencijoje, Jeilio universitetas, Njū Heivenas, JAV, 2014-03-15.
3. „Artistic Value as a Legal Problem: The Case of Contemporary Lithuania“, pranešimas Vilniaus universiteto Teisės fakulteto tarptautinėje konferencijoje *Integrating Social Sciences Into Legal Research*, Vilnius, 2014-04-11.

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dirbo leidykloje „Tyto alba“ užsienio literatūros projektų vadove ir autoriaus teisių vadybininke, 2014–2016 m. – VšĮ „Naujasis Židinys-Aidai“ direktore. 2013–2014 m. Vilniaus universiteto Filologijos fakultete dėstė kursą „Knygų leidybos pagrindai filologams“, nuo 2013 m. Vilniaus verslo kolegijoje dėsto kursus „Šiuolaikinė literatūra anglų kalba“ ir „Vertimo praktika“. Nuo 1999 m. iš anglų kalbos yra išvertusi daugiau kaip 50 grožinės ir humanitarinės literatūros knygų. Bendradarbiauja „Mažojoje studijoje“, kultūrinėje žiniasklaidoje.

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