

The first issue of the 67th year of the magazine includes a range of contributions which are distinctly novel for the Slovenian scene. The poet, dramatist, essayist, professor of poetry at the Faculty of Philosophy in Ljubljana, and renowned experimenter with poetic forms **Boris A. Novak**, born on the same day as the poet France Prešeren (though not in the same year!), has (as a *hommage* to the central figure of the Slovenian annual "cultural holiday") produced a *corona*. This is the Renaissance poetic form from which the sonnet wreath was developed.

The young writer **Barbara Lenarčič** argues seriously against any language editor's correction of texts, and contends that language editing serves merely to prop up the writer and perpetuate semi-literacy, instead of promoting the advance of literacy. "The better the product is, the easier it is to spoil it," she maintains, "and the worse it is, the harder it is to improve it, so it is more suitable to reject it if it doesn't match up to the standard envisaged." No doubt many will disagree, starting a controversy with which we will be engaged for some time to come.

Helena Motoh presents seven contemporary Chinese poets (she has translated the poems from the Chinese), and with her essay *Compromise with the wall* (*Kompromis z zidom*) she provides a thorough insight into the political constraints of Chinese literature of the late 20th century. **Irena Svetek**, in her essay on "the paradoxicality of the feminine", researches into French feminist discourse and the *écriture féminine* syntagma; this she confronts with the theory of Julija Kristeva, and with numerous skilful arguments uses her rejection of the idea of *écriture féminine* as evidence that the syntagma is, after all, meaningful.

In his notes on "living with books", the poet, storyteller, editor, essayist and critic **Josip Osti** reflects on the prose of one of the most eminent contemporary Slovene writers, Lojze Kovačič. The poet and writer **Milan Vincetič** assesses the poetry collections of Jurij Kovič, Miklavž Komelj (winner of last year's Veronika Prize for Poetry) and Aleš Steger, while **Lucija Stepančič**, who in the pages of *Sodobnost* reflects in an individual way on the works of other writers, here publishes an extract from a longer prose text of her own.

Tomaž Šalamun, the most translated Slovene poet, in the leading article designates the Slovene legislation imposing the fourth highest rate of VAT on books in Europe as an auto-terrorist act, and wonders whether perhaps we elect idiots (it is worth recalling that when the Croats abolished the tax on books, book sales immediately soared). Among the pleasanter contributions in this issue is the chat between **Petra Pogorevc** and the stage director **Mateja Kolečnik**, this year's winner of the Prešeren Fund Award, who modestly and thoughtfully speaks about her achievements, dilemmas and plans for the future.

The poet, writer, essayist and playwright **Milan Dekleva** provides a witty one-act play *Plitvina* (*The Shoals*), while the critic and essayist **Jože Horvat** offers a comparative reflection on five plays by Evald Flisar, Slovenia's most-performed playwright abroad, and concludes that his texts are woven out of the "substance of culture and of the spirit of the present times". Yet another successful Slovene playwright, **Vinko Möderndorfer**, with Lorca under his arm (and accompanied by Eva), has roamed around the streets of New York and the theatres, about which he writes in the first part of his *Dnevnik* (*Dairy*).

Somewhat less delight is brought to Slovene theatre artists by the inexorable **Vesna Jurca Tadel**, who in the continuation of her infamous Theatre Diary grapples with the Slovene theatre productions of the past autumn. Fresh, erotic poetry is provided by **Barbara Korun**, and new poems are included by the veteran Slovene poet **Valentin Cundrič** (who, apart from Veno Taufer, is surprisingly the only other Slovene poet to be mentioned in the Encyclopaedia Britannica!). The sketches are contributed by the painter and illustrator **Damijan Stepančič**. It would not be superfluous to note that seven (precisely one-half) of the fourteen contributors are women (even though Julija Kristeva would say that this statement is absurd and reactionary).

Sodobnost

ISSN 0038-0482



9 770038 048008