

Claudia Criveller, Andrea Gullotta

Introduction

The eighth issue of «AvtobiografiЯ» continues our enquiry into autobiographical genres in the Russian context by focussing on the diary. Thanks to the indefatigable work of Patrizia Deotto, this issue proposes a series of insights into the diary in Russian culture, through a variety of approaches and across a wide time spectrum – from Alexander II’s diaries to Lotman’s private diaries, from the study on travel diaries to the analysis of the interconnection between diaries and fiction in the works of Aleksandr Blok and Ivan Bunin. While Patrizia Deotto’s introduction describes in detail the aims and results of the special section, we would like to underline the importance of working on Russian and Soviet diaries, a topic that to date seems to have been slightly understudied both in Russia and abroad, with the exception of some outstanding researches – just to quote two, the study by Catherine Viollet and Elena Grechanaia on the diaries of the end of the eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries (Вьолле, Гречаная 2006) and Irina Paperno’s pivotal work on the dia-

ries of the Soviet era (Paperno 2009).

After the special section, we host three contributions in the general section. Marlow Davies’s article introduces the academic community to the diaries of Iraida Barry and in particular to the surprising dialectic between what the author calls “ephemeral primary texts” – diary entries and regular correspondence – and a “monumental” autobiographical narrative implemented by Barry. Polina Maksimovich proposes a study of Iurii Olesha’s works under an autobiographical perspective through the analysis of the interplay between some of the autobiographical characters in Olesha’s plays and the image of the beggar. Finally, Natalia Zlydneva’s article introduces us to an area that to date has not received adequate consideration, i.e. that of the self portrait in its interaction with the ego-texts written by some of the most prominent artists in Russian culture (Malevich, Filonov, Petrov-Vodkin, Chagall).

The *Materials and discussions* section is rich with contribu-

tions. Thanks to Sergei Alpatov's work, we are able to publish a "naïve autobiography" by Fedor Kudreshov, *Tkachev's Life*, written in 1850. Two more unpublished documents follow (introduced and edited by Melanie Ilic), i.e. those written by Nelson Fell in 1917. They provide two snapshots of life immediately before and after the February revolution. Marina Balina offers two texts that take a close look at a truly extraordinary text, the *dia-ography An Encyclopedia of Youth* by Mikhail Epstein (whom Balina interviews) and Sergei Iur'enen. The section is closed by the first translation ever published by our journal: it is the Italian translation of the tale *The Snowman* by Vladimir Sorokin, made (and introduced by) Federico Iocca, which comes before the book reviews by, Joanna Jarzab-Napierała, Aleksandr Raspapou, Marco Sabbatini, Irina Sapunova, Giovanni Savino and Galina Shpilevaia.

This issue comes at a significant time in the history of our journal: born under the aegis of the University of Padua and subsequently turned into an independent academic journal, from this year «AvtobiografiЯ» comes full circle and returns to where it

has started. As of the summer of 2019, our journal is published by the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies of the University of Padua. This renewed partnership with one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Italy allows us to improve the international reputation of our journal and to work in a long-term perspective with the objective of further enhancing the ranking and status of «AvtobiografiЯ» as a reference point for academic research on auto/biography and life writing in Russian culture. This important change comes along other changes, i.e. the decision to make a small reshuffle in the editorial board of our journal. We would therefore like to thank Emilia Magnanini and Roberta De Giorgi for their work on our journal over these years, and Giulia De Florio for accepting the invitation to join our board. We would also like to thank Enza De Francisci, Anita Frison, Chiara Rampazzo, Samuele Saorin and especially Adriano Pavan, whose work has been fundamental for the publication of this issue.

Bibliography

Paperno 2009: I. Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience. Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, London, 2009.

Вьолле, Гречаная 2006: К. Вьолле, Е.П. Гречаная, *Дневник в России в конце XVIII – первой половине XIXв. как автобиографическая практика // Автобиографическая практика в России и во Франции*, К. Вьолле, Е.П. Гречаная (ред.), ИМЛИ РАН, Москва, 2006, с. 57-111.