

The cultural and political value of sincerity in the literature of Soviet Lithuania

DALIA SATKAUSKYTĖ

DOI: [10.31577/WLS.2026.18.2.4](https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2026.18.2.4)

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Sincerity. Soviet literature. Lithuanian literature. Ideology. Romanticism.
Lyricism.

The concept of “sincerity” held different meanings across periods of the Soviet era, while retaining a shared political dimension. Lithuanian literature, as part of multinational Soviet literature, reflected broader Soviet developments but also displayed distinctive traits shaped by Lithuania’s later incorporation into the USSR, its interwar orientation toward Western culture, and the individual positions of writers. During the Stalinist period, sincerity functioned as a mechanism of ideological control: writers were expected to renounce their bourgeois past, declare loyalty to the regime, and repent previous “insincerity”. In the Thaw period, the imperative of sincerity in both Soviet and Lithuanian literature emerged as a reaction against Stalinist discourse, returning to personal experience and emphasizing lyricism in poetry and prose. In Lithuania, this tendency also meant a return to Romantic ideals, which paradoxically assumed the role of a cultural avant-garde. Yet the late Soviet cult of sincerity in Lithuanian literature also revealed dependence on the system, discouraging modernist and experimental forms that were often seen as alien to the national literary tradition.

Dalia Satkauskytė
Institute of Lithuanian Literature
and Folklore
Vilnius
Lithuania
dalias@liti.lt
ORCID: 0000-0001-6299-3288

The devaluation of “sincerity” as a critical term was caused by the modernist and avant-garde literary paradigm, which sought artistic effect in ways other than the pursuit of sincerity characteristic of the literature of Romanticism. One of the main themes of Romantic poetry, the impossibility of achieving sincerity (as words cannot truly convey the writer’s inner world) was replaced by the modernist conviction that there is no inner world before it is expressed. According to René Wellek and Austin Warren, “the poem is a sincere expression of the poem”, the linguistic construct shaping in the author’s mind as he writes (1949, 215). Sincerity was considered an old-fashioned term and fell into critical disrepute for a long time (Forbes 2004, 3). New criticism and structuralism challenged sincerity even more profoundly, rejecting the idea of an unconstructed lyric persona. According to Patricia M. Ball, who observed in the mid-1960s that literary criticism since 1930 had increasingly focused on the “gift of the word” and its analysis, resulting in a corresponding shift of the notion of sincerity to an earlier stage in critical reaction (1964, 8). In subsequent decades, deconstructionism and postmodernism denied outright the possibility of a stable self that does not dissolve in language (Goldberg 2023, 10). However, the manifestations of sincerity in literature, as well as its cultural value, have never disappeared. Its rhetoric and reception depend on the literary tradition, the condition of the literary field, and the political situation, and can mean radically different things in different contexts (12).

The Western-oriented literature of the first Lithuanian Republic (1918–1940) began to overcome the syndrome of lateness inherent in small and late-emerging literatures, creating an alternative to the Romantic literary paradigm associated with the expression of feelings. In the 1920s, with the advent of the avant-garde movement, Lithuanian literature turned towards the criticism of Romantic sincerity.¹ One of the most prominent critics of Romantic sincerity in Lithuanian literature at that time was the neo-romantic poet Jonas Aistis (1904–1973), who created theatrical *mise-en-scènes* of sincerity as a manipulation of the reader in his poems and embodied the very idea of the “performance of sincerity” (Taylor 2009, 19). The poet interchanges modes of sincerity and irony, tells stories of masks and the revelation of true faces, and manipulates the reader who expects sincerity. All these layers intertwine in the poem “Evening Came” ([1932] 1988):

Evening came, knitting its eyebrows,
Like a murderer with blood on his hands,
I wandered in my thoughts through that old path of love,
I had the power to say “become!” And it became...

Unfortunately, there was no evening, no eyebrows...
That evening is fake – it’s my creation,
But you will wander through my love’s old paths
After taking the book off the shelf.²

It is not sincerity *per se*, but rather communication and the cathartic effect on the reader that constitute the axis of Aistis’s poetic reflection, grounded in a modernist belief in the power of the poetic world he has created. Nevertheless, the traces of a Romantic tension between language and the inner world remain. Longing for au-

thenticity often glimmers in the performance of emotions, and Aistis uses the figures of mask and face, ink and blood to express the impossibility of their correspondence (“And blood does not drip with black ink”; 1988, 83).³

In contrast, his contemporary Henrikas Radauskas (1910–1970) abandons this tension and turns towards “ink” – irony, intertextual play, and anti-subjectivist poetry. The poetic speaker hardly appears in his poems, and the poet’s inner world can only be reconstructed as an active poetic consciousness that has the power to destroy reality and create a new poetic fabulous world in its place: “And a poem emerges – like the wind – from nothing,” declares the poet in his 1955 poem “Winter Song” (1980, 161).⁴ The antithesis of active poetic consciousness for Radauskas is Romantic emotionality, which he considers passive (for example, in the poem “Romantic Poets”, sleeping poets write a poem about sleep; 191).

However, Soviet occupation interrupted the process of convergence with Western literature and restored the value of sincerity in Lithuanian literature. The process took place not only in Soviet Lithuania, but partly in the diaspora. For example, the above-mentioned Aistis, who emigrated to the USA after World War II, radically changed his poetics, shifting from modernist playfulness to the direct expression of patriotic feelings and open emotional rhetoric, which is traditionally regarded as sincerity (Rutten 2017, 7; Scheer 2020, 142–173; Goldberg 2023, 13). Nevertheless, this was more of a sideline in the development of diaspora literature. In Soviet Lithuania, the pursuit of “sincerity” took a significant place. This article aims to discuss the formation and dynamics of this value in the literature and literary life of Soviet Lithuania, presenting some significant cases.

SINCERITY AS AN IDEOLOGICAL INTERPELLATION IN THE STALINIST ERA

According to Ellen Rutten, sincerity throughout the Soviet period complemented a wider complex of positive emotions and served as the cement of society; however, in different periods, it performed different, though sometimes overlapping, political functions and had varying cultural value (2017, 66). During Stalin’s regime, the demand for sincerity in literature existed primarily as a strategy of the Party’s management of literature, but also as a rhetorical strategy. We can find the requirement of sincerity in the documents of writers’ meetings, the minutes of congresses of the Writers’ Union, and writers’ letters to various organizations, as well as other archival documents. The present study is based on the analysis of a collection of documents, *Rašytojas pokario metais* (Writer in the post-war years, 1991), which represents the management of Lithuanian literature and strategies of its Sovietization immediately after the country’s second Soviet occupation in 1944.

The demand for sincerity or sincerity/insincerity as a modality of action or state, by which the writer’s engagement with Soviet literature is interpreted, is quite common in the documents published in the book. The argument of sincerity is used slightly differently by Communist Party functionaries, writer-functionaries, and writers who were the target of criticism. In all cases, the argument participates in the general theater of becoming a Soviet writer, which consisted of two acts: the unmasking

of the bourgeois identity of a writer and interpellation into Soviet ideology. As Sheila Fitzpatrick argues, such a theater of sincerity was characteristic of Soviet discourse in the 1930s (2005, 13). Lithuania and other Baltic countries repeated it after the second occupation in 1944, with certain modifications.

In the speeches of Soviet functionaries, sincerity appears as a confirmation that the writer is really committed to the system. For example, Kazys Preikšas, the Lithuanian Communist Party secretary for propaganda and agitation, considered the Lithuanian equivalent of Andrei Zhdanov, declared at the Visuotinis rašytojų susirinkimas – General Meeting of Writers (1946): “Thus a large number of writers are sincerely taking part in the creative work of reconstruction of the whole nation” (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 53). However, the declaration of sincerity can also be interpreted as unconvincing and false: the chairman of the Writers’ Union, Petras Cvirka, states that he does not believe in the sincerity of the poet Antanas Miškinis’s intention to change and become a Soviet writer (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 109).⁵ Miškinis becomes one of the impostors who, according to Fitzpatrick, are extremely important to unmask as falsely claiming a revolutionary identity (2005, 4).

Sincerity serves as a justification or confirmation of the certainty of repentance regarding the lack of participation in the Sovietization of Lithuanian literature. Declarations of sincerity are usually made by the writers who have been denounced for silence, ideological mistakes, or “bourgeois” aesthetics, as in the above-mentioned case of Miškinis. In his speech at the 1946 General Meeting, the poet Jonas Graičiūnas also uses sincerity as a key argument to convince his listeners of the genuineness of his repentance: “Comrades, yesterday we heard many true words about our mistakes and silence, about our lack of participation in the currently active literary work. *I have never been insincere, nor can I be.* I confess that I am guilty of having remained silent until now and not having dared to return to literature with my original poetry or my spoken word” (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 91, ital. added).⁶

In the speeches of writers, sincerity is directly (“true words”) or indirectly related to truth, to the congruence between the words spoken and the speaker’s beliefs. However, as Mihhail Lotman argues, sincerity belongs to a category different from truth. On one hand, it is a concept wider than truth, on the other hand, it is narrower than truth (2015, 91). It is rather the modality by which an utterance is given a meaning of truth, or a communicative strategy. Nevertheless, having in mind the historical context (Lotman as well as Goldberg assert that sincerity is always contextual; 2015, 91), it is evident that in all these utterances, one can recognize *ideological interpellation* in the way that Louis Althusser defines it (1971, 174). In his speech, Preikšas uses sincerity as a confirmation of the writer’s acceptance of communist ideology, almost as a trope of religious conversion.⁷ The confession becomes the first step in the ideological interpellation, usually followed by a pledge to follow the right path, i.e., to become a subject of communist ideology, or a Soviet writer.

According to Algirdas Julien Greimas’s model of narrative grammar (Greimas and Courtès 1982, 203–210), the situation of the writer’s confession is a typical example of manipulation (causing to do or, in this case, to believe). In other words, it is the act of persuasion, the success of which does not depend so much on the speaker

as on the decision of those who hold the power. The writers' sincere apologies for past ideological mistakes can be seen as a case of forced confession, structurally similar to the Stalinist trials of the late 1930s, or the witch trials in which people confessed to fantastic crimes (Fitzpatrick 2005, 13; Lotman 2015, 91–96). The only difference is that the torture in these writers' deliberations was not physical but discursive. However, unconvincing sincerity also had real consequences. Writers had to compose "sincere" works in the style of socialist realism; some of them were restricted in their active participation in literature, and some, like Miškinis and Graičiūnas, suffered repression.

It is worth noting that among the many addresses at the General Meeting of Writers that use the sincerity argument, the speech by Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas stands out (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 100–104). Mykolaitis-Putinas (1893–1966), a poet and prose writer, and former Catholic priest, was a significant figure in interwar Lithuanian literature, and it was important for the Soviet authorities to have a writer of such importance on their side. However, the writer is clearly trying to avoid ideological interpellation. His discourse combines Soviet newpeak ("unhealthy individualism", "abstract aestheticism", "futile formalism") and the theme of inner fluctuation, characteristic of his entire oeuvre, which is expressed by using the motifs of prewar work, such as "between two dawns" (the title of the symbolist collection of his poems), and the aspiration for liberation. The latter is an allusion to the novel *Altorių šešėly* (In the shadow of the altars, 1932–1933), the protagonist of which decides to give up the priesthood. The writer questions the imperative to create Soviet literature by asking if it is possible to reconcile the national literary tradition, its lyricism, and the demands of socialist realism. He considers the fear that socialist realism will kill literature and the writer's creative inclinations to be unjustified ("perhaps sincere, but false"). He asks whether the man of Soviet literature should not be a living person. All these reflections are an extended version of the answer to the *sincere* (the word Mykolaitis-Putinas employs) question: "Am I a Soviet man today?" The short version of this answer is: "I have to say frankly that I am not" (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 102). The "thunderous applause" at the end of the speech (which is recorded at the end of the script) would confirm that the position of the hesitant writer, who could not unconditionally accept the new demands on literature, was appreciated by many as sincere.⁸

FINDING A "STRONG SOVIET VOICE" FOR SINCERITY

Mykolaitis-Putinas, like many at the congress, begins his speech with a critique of formalism and individualism as inappropriate for Soviet literature,⁹ but concludes with a subtle questioning of some of the principles of socialist realism. Quite boldly in the context of the time, he criticizes the "mechanical" opposition of the good ("militiaman", "settler") and the bad ("bandit", "kulak") as unrealistic, and strongly suggests an alternative: "We have to create a person, to get to know him, to create a person who, when you get to know him, when you read about him, the reader will find a part of himself, and he will say: 'Indeed, this is what I have experienced, this is what I have thought'" (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 103–104).

Mykolaitis-Putinas raises the question of making Soviet literature more persuasive by drawing on the understanding of aesthetic value that has developed in the modernizing Lithuanian literature. Although he does not speak directly about sincerity, he mentions “the mechanical”, or artificiality, which will be criticized as insincerity in the post-Stalin period. Mykolaitis-Putinas attempts to universalize the concept of sincerity, and his approach is similar to that found in the early 1950s in Russian literature, even though he is speaking a decade earlier.¹⁰

The requirement for sincerity in art appears quite differently in the statements of many other writers, although they often use a similar opposition between formality or artifice and sincerity. Artificiality and its synonyms (such as wooden language, coldness, and falseness) can suggest different things, for example, remnants of the pre-Soviet literary tradition, often referred to as formalism or modernist poetics, implying that only literature written according to the rules of socialist realism can be truly sincere. Sincerity is often defined by its opposite, insincerity, which is characterized by a lack of enthusiasm, passion, and zeal (all of these words are frequently used in various documents), as well as an insufficient commitment to writing in accordance with the new ideological requirements.¹¹ This concept of sincerity is clearly reminiscent of the party slogans in George Orwell’s novel *1984* (“War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength”; 1984, 16), where a subject is referred to as its opposite. In other words, conformity, hypocrisy, lies, and socialist realist clichés are considered sincerity. Criteria for the sincerity of a literary work were applied in a circumstantial way; therefore, it was not easy for the writer to adjust to them. For example, during World War II, lyrical sincerity and lyrical poetry were tolerated in Soviet literature, as in the works of Eduardas Mieželaitis (1919–1997), the future winner of the Lenin Prize. However, in 1946, Preikšas fiercely criticized Mieželaitis’s collection of lyric poetry, *Tėviškės vėjas* (The wind of the homeland, 1946), for its “nationalist drive”, and the poet sincerely (this word is repeated several times in his apology) repented that he had been unable to rid himself of “old formalism” (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 83–86, 112).

Perhaps the most interesting case I discovered while analyzing documents on literary management during the Stalin era was the combination of the Romantic notion of sincerity and commitment to Soviet ideology. “After all, it is important that the essence of creation should flow from the poet’s heart and coincide with his heart,” declares translator Valys Drazdauskas at a 1947 meeting of the Kaunas section of the Writers’ Union (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 130). Aleksys Churginas, poet and translator, speaking at the same meeting as Drazdauskas (both discussing Adomas Lastas’s poems), also uses the argument of sincerity: “Lastas tries to reconcile Soviet themes and a non-Soviet style. The sincerity of the poet’s poems is not at all in doubt. All that remains is to find a strong Soviet voice” (129–130). Churginas’s speech suggests that sincerity alone is insufficient for a Soviet poet when the voice is experienced as interior and simultaneously exterior (Goldberg 2023, 13). The voice must have a regulated exterior, a Soviet expression. Does sincerity understood in this way not become its opposite, artificiality? This question will be addressed quite openly after Stalin’s death.

BACK TO GENUINE SINCERITY

The post-Stalinist discussion on sincerity is generally considered to have begun with Vladimir Pomerantsev's article "Ob iskrennosti v literature" (On sincerity in literature), published in 1953 in the "thick" journal *Novyi mir* (New world). The intelligentsia and so-called common readers discussed the article all over the Soviet Union, and in letters to the journal's editors, they "unequivocally supported" the author's attitude to sincerity as an opposition to "falsity". Denis Kozlov argues that the sincerity imperative in Pomerantsev's article was not radical. Sincerity for him implied harmony not only between inner belief and verbalization, but also among the three components: belief, text, and the greater cause which meant the socialist ideal (2013, 47). Although such sincerity aimed to pursue not only the "truth of life" but also the "truth of party" (Pomerantsev 1953, 220–221), it was perceived by readers as an opposition to the insincerity of the Stalinist epoch, which Pomerantsev identified with falsity, artifice, and the "varnishing of reality".¹² In other words, he employed the same opposition of sincerity/insincerity, but reinterpreted it, shifting the emphasis, especially in relation to the category of truth. What had been considered an expression of sincerity during Stalin's reign came to be called fake and a "lacquering of reality", and what had been called artificiality, formalist leavening, or subjectivity, which hinders "the true-to-life" representation of reality, has come to be interpreted as sincerity, the voice of the inner self.

In Lithuanian literature, the renewal of sincerity manifested itself in various forms. One of them was a shift to the protagonist's inner world. It became the dominant structural element of a poem or short story, and the ideological construction of reality in a novel was partly replaced or supplemented by descriptions of the protagonist's feelings or inner monologue.¹³ The other one was a folkloric lyricism, which, according to Elena Baliutytė-Ryliškienė, "melted the frost of post-war poetry" (2024, 16). This is how a literary critic describes the poetry of Justinas Marcinkevičius (1930–2011). Marcinkevičius is perhaps the most prominent Lithuanian poet of the Soviet epoch, whose relationship with official ideology was controversial.¹⁴ He brings intimacy back to poetry (love lyrics, poems dedicated to his wife and daughters), harmonious experiences of nature, and reflective introspection. However, he also makes Soviet ideology more intimate by comparing the Communist Party to his own mother in the first collection of poems, *Prašau žodžio* (I ask for a word, 1955), or inserting thoughts about Lenin into the everyday routine as in the poem "Šiandien – Lenino gimimo dieną" (Today – Lenin's birthday, 1966, 38–39). The abstract humanism and kindness as fundamental human values in his poetry were in line with the nature of Soviet subjectivity (Pinsky 2017, 461–463).

Janina Degutytė (1928–1990), who belonged to the same generation as Marcinkevičius, expressed sincerity in a different way. Her poems are characterized by intimacy, based on a close connection with nature and other individuals (the structure dominated by the "I" addressing "You"). The mindset of the poetic speaker in her early poetry is romantically maximalist and optimistic ("And I am happy that the rain carries bells to the earth, / Spring water glistens like mirrors in the forest / And that I walk across the wonderful earth, sharing myself drop by drop. / No! Giving myself

completely each time”).¹⁵ The development of Degutytė’s poetry can be seen as a path to revealing her tragic and painful experiences, becoming increasingly explicit in addressing her relationship with her alcoholic and abusive mother. (Šmitienė 2018, 27). Her last book, *Purpuru atsivėrusi* (Unfolded in purple, 1984), could be regarded as a collection of confessional poetry.

Although space does not allow for a detailed discussion of Degutytė’s poetic sincerity and its evolution, her early work and its reception reveal that sincerity is not the truth itself; the effect of truth is created not only by the text, but also by the expectations of readers and the cultural context. Readers and literary critics responded positively to the poet’s first collection, *Ugnies lašai* (Drops of flame, 1959; Russian translation published in 1960 as *Kapli ognia*). The bright emotionality of the poetry, although at times overly forced, the Romantic maximalism, and the subtle experience of nature conveyed in it were perceived as a return to sincerity without an ideological shadow, as in Marcinkevičius’s case. However, as Degutytė herself would later reveal, the emotional content of the poems did not correspond at all to her own emotional state, exposing that psychological verisimilitude in the case of sincerity is both highly subjective and ambiguous in its implications (Goldberg 2023, 13). “Everyone was delighted with the bright mood of the poems, but I was constantly thinking about ending my life. [...] I was criticized for being overly enthusiastic, using a high voice, and being too optimistic. My goodness, I was pulling myself out of the darkness by my hair” (Degutytė 1998, 33). The poet creates the effect of sincerity in her early poems using rather traditional Romantic poetic devices (openly expressing emotion or transferring it to images of nature). Nevertheless, Degutytė offers an entirely different approach to the relationship between sincerity and truth, raising the question of whether the artistic transformation of personal emotions into their opposite can also be considered a variant of sincerity. Is joy in a poem, as an attempt to overcome despair and horror, insincere?

According to diaspora literary critic Rimvydas Šilbajoris, Degutytė’s lyrical poetry does not bring by significant innovation in poetic techniques; however, it was perceived as something new and even avant-garde in the Lithuanian literary process (1992, 527). The return of personal address, the valorization of intimacy, which the reader perceives as sincerity, as well as trust in nature in Degutytė’s work, oppose the discourse of conquering nature, the Promethean humanism of the Thaw period, and therefore gains a political meaning of being non-Soviet.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

The concept of sincerity was prevalent in Lithuanian literature throughout the Soviet period. During Stalin’s rule, it was primarily part of the interpellation mechanism, and in the post-Stalinist epoch, the rhetoric of sincerity served as an alternative to Soviet discourse. However, this alternative was only partial. On the one hand, this rhetoric manifested as a return to subjectivity, a renewal of poetics, and a liberation from ideological control of art. Such examples of the rhetoric of sincerity were found not only in Degutytė’s poetry, but also in so-called lyrical prose, characterized by “a sense of the individual world, self-expression, fractures not in the plot or

characters, but in the narrator's consciousness, a poetic transformation of everyday life" (Sprindytė 1989, 24). On the other hand, the rhetoric of sincerity drew close to the official cultural program of the late Soviet period, as seen in the internal monologue novel or in certain parts of Marcinkevičius's works.

However, the dominance of sincerity in Lithuanian literature and prose writing had its "side effects". It hindered the national and political thinking necessary for the novel, as literary critic Liudvikas Gadeikis said at the end of the Soviet era (1988, 171). Even the most progressive and influential literary critics of the Soviet period viewed intellectual prose with caution, often as an experiment that "does little to excite" (Zalatorius 1998, 310), as something artificial, a rational structure which is not "an expression of human life" (Zaborskaitė 2002, 628). They considered the poetics of sincerity, although they did not name it directly, to be the main condition for successful artistic communication. In independent Lithuania, Vanda Zaborskaitė acknowledges that her approach may seem "old-fashioned and provincial" in the context of Western literary criticism, but adds that she still adheres to it (628). This approach can be considered an outline of the conservative cultural and political values of sincerity in the late Soviet period.

NOTES

- ¹ The first wave of the avant-garde in Lithuania began with the movement known as "Keturi vėjai" (Four winds), as reflected in the title of the literary magazine (1924–1928). The participants of the movement ironized Romantic emotionality and claimed to be creators of objects from words. However, their work, especially poetry, contains not only bold, futuristic, and expressionistic experiments but also attempts to establish alternative forms of subjectivity. Instead of Romantic contemplation and doubt, they spoke in the first person, declaring their confidence in poetry as an act and provocatively proclaiming their value as creators ("Labas, jūra! Aš pirmutinis Lietuvos poeta..." [Hello, sea! I am the first poet of Lithuania...], Tysliava [1924] 1967, 97). Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Lithuanian are by the present author.
- ² "Atėjo vakaras, suraukęs antakius, / Kaip žmogžudys krauju rankas sutepęs / Klajojau mintimis tuo meilės sentakiu, / Turėjau galios tarti „tapk!“ Ir - tapo... // Deja, nebuvo vakaro nei antakių... / Tas vakaras netikras – mano sukurtinis, / Bet tu klajosi mano meilės sentakiu / Nuėmęs knygą nuo lentynos" (Aistis 1988, 78).
- ³ In Lithuanian, *sincerity* ("nuoširdumas") means coming from the heart. Blood in Aistis' poetry functions as a metonymy for the heart, with connotations of pain.
- ⁴ It is a quote from Radauskas's collection of poems *Žiemos daina* (Winter song, 1955), published while in exile after the Soviets occupied Lithuania in 1944. However, neither Radauskas's poetic program, nor his stylistics, nor his ironic approach to poetry as an expression of feelings had changed since his first collection, *Fontanas* (Fountain, 1935), published in independent Lithuania.
- ⁵ Miškinis declares: "Dear comrades, here at this meeting, some sincere voices have already echoed. I would like to make my voice as sincere as a poem sometimes sounds" (Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 79).
- ⁶ Speeches delivered at the meeting have been published in Kubilius and Pakalniškis 1991, 43–119.
- ⁷ In her analysis of representations of religious conversion, Jane Taylor proposes the notion of sincerity as a trope of conversion (2009, 30).
- ⁸ This interpretation may seem risky, as not all reactions to the speakers may be precisely scripted. However, Mykolaitis-Putinas was a significant figure in Lithuanian literature, one of the few literary

classics who did not leave for the West. His status likely allowed him to say more, and his speech echoed the fears and doubts of many writers.

- ⁹ The General Meeting of Writers in Soviet Lithuania had to respond to Zhdanov's speech on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* at the Meeting of Communist Party activists and writers on August 14, 1946.
- ¹⁰ I want to acknowledge the reviewer of the first version of the article for the suggestion that Mykolaitis-Putinas's speech is "fascinatingly in harmony" with the approach to sincerity found in Pomerantsev's "Ob iskrennosti v literature" (On sincerity in literature) and Olga Bergolts's "Razgovor o lirike" (A conversation about lyric), published a decade later; see Goldberg 2023, 144–145.
- ¹¹ Monique Scheer defines enthusiasm as the mediation of conviction through emotion (2020, 201).
- ¹² For more information on Pomerantsev's article, see Goldberg 2023, 144–146; Rutten 2017, 75–76; Kozlov 2013, 44–87.
- ¹³ Authors of the so-called internal monologue (Alfonsas Bieliauskas, Algimantas Sluckis) used a technique similar to stream of consciousness to represent the sincerity of the protagonist, who was usually an active communist. It was an example of the mimetic modernization of Soviet literature: the self-doubting hero never questions communist ideology itself.
- ¹⁴ On Marcinkevičius' place in Soviet Lithuanian literature, see Ivanauskas 2018, 37–55; Mitaitė 2018, 116–137.
- ¹⁵ "Ir laiminga aš, kad lietūs varpelius į žemę neša, / Tviska veidrodžiais miškuos pavasario vanduo / Ir kad aš einu per žemę nuostabią dalint save po lašą. / Ne! Save kiekvieną kartą visa atiduot" (Degutytė 1988, 80). English translations of Degutytė's poems can be found on <https://allpoetry.com/Janina-Degutyte/>; http://www.old.lituanus.org/1984_3/84_3_04.htm; <https://vilniusreview.com/archive/janina-degutyte/>. The first translations of Degutytė's poetry into English were published in the Moscow-based journal *Soviet Literature* (No. 5, 1969), translated by Dorrian Rottenberg, Irina Zheleznov, and Tom Botting. In an article introducing the author, Bella Zaleskaya, the main translator of Lithuanian poetry into Russian, described all of her poetry as "sincere, impulsive, throbbing". According to Zaleskaya, Degutytė's early poetry "seemed inclined to a somewhat ecstatic, elemental, spontaneous expression of feeling" (1965, 125–126).
- ¹⁶ According to Ellen Rutten, sincerity semantically implies a political dimension: "On the one hand, the term 'sincerity' is part and parcel of private conceptualizations of self: the attempt to be true to oneself is an intimate, personal process. On the other hand, inquiries into sincerity's semantic origins immediately lead us into the public, and indeed political, arena" (Rutten 2017, 40).

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