

INTRODUCTION

Before the readers is the fifteenth issue of *Knjiženstvo, a journal for studies in literature, gender and culture*, launched in 2011 as part of the research project titled *Knjiženstvo – Theory and History of Women's Writing in Serbian until 1915*, funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia

Unfortunately, as in previous years, we are greeting December 2025 with a sense of rising anxiety in the face of the “shipwreck of civilizations” that is striking the modern world. Still, we continue to believe that the diverse texts in this issue will offer our readers valuable insights and serve as a guide in these times of general uncertainty, directing us toward ways in which it is possible – and necessary – to speak, think, and act. This is testified to, in this very year, by the numerous student protests – unprecedented in Serbia to this day – aimed against every form of corruption and injustice, characterized, among other things, by outspoken speech, sharp-witted slogans, and, finally, tireless and diverse action.

Before we make an overview of the texts in issue 15, we would like to welcome a new member of the editorial team, Merima Omeragić from the University of Sarajevo, who has been diligently collaborating with *Knjiženstvo* for many years.

Our richest section, Women's Writing and Culture, consists this year of exactly ten texts in four different languages: five in Serbian, one in Macedonian, two in English, and – something that particularly delights the editor-in-chief – two contributions in French. The first of three texts in this issue that address poetic creation comes from the Polish author Marzena Maciulewicz. Her paper offers a critical reexamination of the *topos* of the walled-in woman from a gender perspective, discussing the poems of Desanka Maksimović and Vitomir Nikolić in the context of the well-known epic poem “The Building of Skadar”.

Elena Karpuzovska's contribution focuses its interpretive attention on the semantics of *topoi* and metaphorical motifs in the poetry of contemporary Macedonian poet Lidija Dimkovska, while Zorana Đukić's text – following the path of gynocritical research – repositions the poetic work of the Yugoslav poet of Romanian origin Florica Štefan within the context of the Yugoslav literary canon. Working from similar premises and positions, Merima Omeragić emphasizes the canonical and cultural reinterpretation of the literary work of Nafija Sarajlić, the first Bosnian Muslim woman writer of short stories. Next follow two papers in French: Nikola Bjelić, through an analysis of *Philippe*, a short novel by contemporary French writer Camille Laurens, highlights that author's specific *écriture* of emptiness, in which personal loss becomes a universal experience – at once personal and collective, intimate and archetypal. The article by Daniela Ćurko and Vanna Apostolovski examines memory and time in *Les Alouettes naïves* by the Francophone writer Assia Djebbar, where individual and collective memory are constantly interwoven

in the consciousness of the protagonists. After the intriguing study by Sara Lević on the hybrid identities of women on the margins of modernity – in which the author compares Jelena J. Dimitrijević’s novel *New Women* with Feng Yuanjun’s stories *Separation* and *After Separation* – we present Jasmina Ahmetagić’s paper, which investigates the role of female characters as mediators of the individual and existential development of male protagonists in the novellas of Robert Musil. Finally, the text by Milan Sredojević examines hegemonic masculinity in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by the American author Harper Lee, and we close the section with the second part of Ana Mitrovski’s documentary research, “Houses in Memory of Nadežda Petrović”, in which the author continues her meticulous analysis of archival material in an exceptional combination with Miloš Kolarž’s living memories of the Petrović house on what was formerly Ratarska 32.

In this issue we highlight two interviews, the first about the student protests: “We Were Constantly in Some Kind of Protest” (Biljana Dojčinović in conversation with Dragana Popović), and the second from the field of critical theory: “Poetry is a Practice of Critique” (Dubravka Đurić in conversation with Rachel Blau DuPlessis).

Next come reviews of four exceptional books published this year or the previous one: the poetry collection *On the Ocean and Across the Ocean* by Jelena J. Dimitrijević; *Book-Loving Women of the Serbian Middle Ages* by Svetlana Tomin; *Dobrila Glavinić Knezmilojković* by Aleksandar Nikezić; and *The Women of Goli Otok: Female Prisoners Punished over the Informbiro in Yugoslavia* by Ljubinka Škordić.

We close the issue with coverage of the event *Interdisciplinary International Summer School: Crossing Media Boundaries: Gender and Writing Across Artistic Media*, and with a remembrance of Professor Aleksandra Vraneš, who had been part of the *Knjiženstvo* project since its founding and who passed away this year.

On behalf of the editorial board of *Knjiženstvo*,
Vladimir Đurić,
Editor-in-Chief