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Lithuania

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[Abstract](#)



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[metadata](#)



[How to cite item](#)



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[References](#)



[Review policy](#)



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Published Issues

Current Issue: [Volume 9, Issue 1 \(2016\)](#)

[Volume 8, Issue 2 \(2015\)](#)

[Volume 8, Issue 1 \(2015\)](#)

[Volume 7, Issue 2 \(2014\)](#)

[Volume 7, Issue 1 \(2014\)](#)

[Volume 6, Issue 1-2 \(2013\)](#)

[Volume 5, Issue 2 \(2012\)](#)

[Volume 5, Issue 1 \(2012\)](#)

[Volume 4, Issue 2 \(2011\)](#)

[Volume 4, Issue 1 \(2011\)](#)

[Volume 3, Issue 2 \(2010\)](#)

[Volume 3, Issue 1 \(2010\)](#)

[Volume 2, Issue 2 \(2009\)](#)

[Volume 2, Issue 1 \(2009\)](#)

[Volume 1, Issue 2 \(2008\)](#)

[Volume 1, Issue 1 \(2008\)](#)

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Home > Vol 9, No 1 (2016) > **Urbanavičiute**

Lithuania's literary periodicals: to go digital or get printed? (From the point of view of their antagonists)

Asta Urbanavičiute

Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyse the possibilities (and intentions) of Lithuania's literary periodicals to start publishing them only in a digital version. An assumption is made that network society, affected by fast consumption trends, is more likely to choose digital magazines and newspapers, therefore literary publications are also challenged to reconsider their publishing strategies. There are several very important reasons (small circulation, possibility to survive only with the help of support funds are included) why literary periodicals should think about the possibility to abandon traditional print editions, leaving only a digital version. The attitude of editors of literary publications to possible (or necessary) typological changes could be summarized in a few sentences: the biggest problem is getting more money from state fund. The rest is all right.^[1] In order to find out what editors of popular periodicals think about these issues the author of this paper interviewed three editors-in-chief. Why popular publications are marched with literary ones? Because they have to survive knowing that they will not get any financial support from anywhere. There was another reason for inquiring the editor-in-chief of delfi.lt, the biggest Lithuanian news portal, about this matter: delfi.lt would like to co-operate with literary publications. Opinion of the deputy editor-in-chief of internet daily bernardinai.lt which publishes many texts on literary subjects was also sought out. What is their opinion?

Keywords: Lithuania, literary periodicals, publishing

1. Introduction

The article purposes to inquire into the situation of Lithuanian literary periodicals within the context of ever-changing media; more specifically, it seeks to find out how the situation of literary periodicals is seen by their antagonists, i.e. the editors of popular publications who must survive in the market independently under dire competition without any governmental funding. This implies they know how to attract readers and advertisers. Maybe this information will encourage the editors of literary periodicals to lose the reputation of beggars? The first part of the paper introduces literary periodicals published currently in Lithuania focusing on efforts (or the absence of efforts) to adapt to the needs of networking society; the second part provides a picture of problems encountered by the editors of literary periodicals from the point of view of editors in charge of popular publications. The following tendency is rather vigorous in Lithuania: literary publications sneer at popular ones blaming them for their shallow and trite contents. While the editors of popular publications state that literary periodicals are frozen in time, doing nothing in order to improve their contents and publishing quality; instead of waiting for governmental funding they ought to use all their chances to attract readers, especially the younger generation; this would secure some chances to earn from ads. In their opinion, considering the issue of digitalisation as the only option would be senseless in this situation: more radical changes are needed. There will be no big difference between the internet and printed versions of a publication. If a good content is missing or minimal, the form becomes a matter of secondary importance. All the more so given the fact that the digitalised version is not necessarily cheaper.

The following goals are set:

- To present briefly literary periodicals currently published in Lithuania.
- Following an interview with the editors of several popular periodicals, to elicit the editors' views on possible typological changes of literary periodicals, and to offer possible solutions to encountered problems.

2. Literary publications: too prolific and frozen in time?

The multitude of periodicals on the Lithuanian market can satisfy the palate of any reader. Some of these publications are meant for entertainment and leisure; they perform the function of relaxation, mitigation or meditation. Other ones attract intellectual readers – these customers are offered literary periodicals concentrating on subjects demanding special preparation. At the present moment the situation of Lithuanian literary periodicals is awkward to say the least: as expected



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under market conditions, periodicals compete severely against each other. However not for the reader by offering him a better content or dazing him by the product of exceptional quality (it is exactly what the editors of popular periodicals do) but for governmental funding by exerting maximum effort in this particular direction. On the other hand, theoretically, the awkwardness starts as soon as we try to define a literary periodical, or to specify its place in the general context of periodical publications. In what do they differ from socio-political ones? Maybe a small national market should be absolutely satisfied with a literary column in publications of a more general character (such columns exist in the business, economics and politics monthly "IQ" whose permanent literary column is supported by the Press, Radio, and Television Fund). Or maybe even less will do: the editor-in-chief of a major Lithuanian popular magazine "Moteris" says that she was complimented for running allegedly the best literary magazine in Lithuania because in addition to other texts "Moteris" publishes exhaustive interviews with writers and art worker absolutely neglected by any other mass media[2].

A vague place occupied by literary periodical publications within the general context of periodicals is evidenced by the fact that research studies do not offer any definition of a *literary periodical*: only the notions, such as *periodical literature*, *periodical publication* or *culture* are found in them. "Encyclopaedia of Journalism" (1997, 251) defines the *literary function*, interpreting it as a kind of journalist operation performed for the purpose of developing a versatile human culture. Products created by means of this operation emit educational information of spiritual character about spiritual values and literary events, providing suggestions how to spend a meaningful weekend or spreading the news about the works of literature and art. Such publications attract readers' attention by means of their artistic representation.

In her analysis of literary and creative industries A. Glosienė (2010, 72) relates culture to creative work and economy. She states that such relations are not a novelty, however, "they acquire a new character with the appearance of literary and creative industries and the emergence of a new understanding of culture". According to A. Glosienė (2010), goods produced in the field of culture have an economic and symbolic meaning, thus, the aspect of consumption becomes important. This conception enables us to reject the belief that culture and economy are discordant phenomena because traditionally "the literary sector has never been regarded as at least minimally important segment of economy, having earned the status of a dependant" (Ibid, 71). The author argues that art or literary workers neglect the economic aspect of their operation quite often, focusing only on the symbolic capital – the artistic value of their creation. Viewed from the perspective of literary periodicals, the connection between culture and economy becomes vital because the purpose of each publication is to survive in a market economy. P. Bendixen (2008, 73) also states that all economic processes are determined by the culture condition.

Financial problems are increasingly mentioned to account for a recurrent upsurge in discussions of a necessity for literary periodicals to change, or maybe to reject their traditional printed publication format and become fully digitalised ones; or even better, to reach for the reader in various ways, having abandoned the stagnation level.

So, the situation of Lithuanian literary periodicals is problematic; this prompts several hypotheses:

H1 Funded literary publications do not use their chances in full.

H2 Existing under their own inertia, Lithuanian literary periodicals are not interested to widen the circle of their readers.

H3 Absolute or partial digitalization of literary periodicals coupled with the effort to reach for the reader in all possible manners (internet, smart phone, all types of social mass media platforms) could be a possible way out.

Nineteen (19) literary periodicals are currently published in Lithuania, in addition to regional ones.

Table 1. Lithuania literary periodicals

No	Title	Type	Periodicity	Topics	Volume of circulation	Fun
1.	7 meno dienos	paper	weekly	universal	> 1000 cp.	st
2.	Bravissimo	magazine	monthly	specialized/ theatre	< 1000 cp.	sta pri initi
3.	Dailė	magazine	halfyearly	specialized/ fine arts	> 1000 cp.	st
4.	Kinas	magazine	quarterly	cinema	< 1000 cp.	st
5.	Knygu aidai	magazine	irregular periodicity	specialized/ literature	> 1000 cp.	st
6.	Krantai	magazine	quarterly	universal	< 1000 cp.	st

7.	Kultūros barai	magazine	monthly	universal	< 1000 cp.	st
8.	Liaudies kultūra	magazine	bimonthly	universal	> 1000 cp.	st
9.	Lietuvos scena	magazine	quarterly	universal	> 1000 cp.	st
10.	Literatūra ir menas	paper	weekly	universal	< 1000 cp.	st
11.	Metai	magazine	monthly	specialized/ literature	< 1000 cp.	st
12.	Muzikos barai	magazine	bimonthly	specializedmusic	> 1000 cp.	st
13.	Naujasis židinys-Aidai	magazine	8 issues/ year	universal	> 1000 cp.	st
14.	Naujoji Romuva	magazine	quarterly	universal	> 1000 cp.	sta pri initi
15.	Nemunas	magazine	biweekly	universal	> 1000 cp.	st
16.	Santara	magazine	irregular periodicity	universal	> 1000 cp.	st
17.	Saulės arkliukai	magazine	daily	universal	-----	st
18.	Šiaurės Atėnai	magazine	weekly	universal	< 1000 cp.	st
19.	Vyzdys	magazine	halfy-early	specialized/ photography	< 1000 cp.	pri

Eighteen (18) of them are issued using a traditional printed format, only one of them – "Saulės arkliukai" – is digitalised. Originated as a quarterly in a traditional printed format in 2013, this magazine rejected its paper version from 2015, following the decision to cut down its funding. From the typological point of view, currently issued literary periodicals include 17 magazines and 2 papers. Both papers ("7 meno dienos", "Šiaurės Atėnai") are weeklies.

From the point of view of periodicity, Lithuanian literary periodicals may be divided into the following 8 groups:

1. a) weeklies ("Literatūra ir menas").
2. b) biweeklies ("Nemunas"). By the way, this journal has experienced a number of metamorphoses: having stayed a monthly very long (1967–2004 m.), in 2004 it became a weekly; finally, when its funding was cut down, it turned into a biweekly.
3. c) monthlies ("Bravissimo", "Kultūros barai", "Metai");
4. d) 8 issues per year ("Naujasis Židinys – Aidai");
5. e) bimonthlies ("Liaudies kultūra", "Muzikos barai");
6. f) quarterlies ("Kinas", "Krantai", "Lietuvos scena", "Naujoji Romuva");
7. g) halfyearlies ("Dailė", "Vyzdys");
8. h) periodicals of irregular periodicity ("Knygų aidai", "Santara").

Indeed, the number of literary periodical magazines in Lithuania significantly exceeds the number papers. Such particular publishers' choice may be connected with the idea of the lasting character of literary periodicals. Generally, the quality of a magazine, compared to a paper, is better: firstly, the preparation of a magazine, with rare exceptions, lasts longer which offers more chances to produce quality publications; secondly, the quality of magazine printing is usually higher; and lastly, more attention is given to photographs and layout. For these reasons the magazine, as a particular type of publication, might be more attractive to publishers, having in mind the fact that literary publications possess (or at least claim on) a lasting value, not a fast-consumption one. On the other hand, reader surveys evidence[3] that the most popular ones are "7 meno dienos", "Šiaurės Atėnai" and "Literatūra ir menas" weekly. We might ask to what extent the range of themes or periodicity has accounted for this result. Yet, we may presume the following: the weekly, as a particular type of literary periodical, is popular owing to its optimal speed of information provision and persistent registration of the literary life pulse; besides, periodicals issued at such a rate do not allow the readers to forget them, fostering their intimate ties with the publication.

From the point of view of purpose and readers' interests, Lithuanian literary periodicals may be divided into the following two groups:

1. a) universal periodicals ("Krantai", "Kultūros barai", "Literatūra ir menas", "Naujas židyns-Aidai", "Naujoji Romuva", "Nemunas", "Santara", "Liaudies kultūra", "Saulės arkliukai", "Šiaurės Atėnai", "7 meno dienos", "Lietuvos scena");
2. b) specialized periodicals ("Bravissimo", "Dailė", "Kinas", "Knygų aidai", "Metai", "Muzikos barai", "Vyzdys").

By the interests of their readers, specialized periodicals may be divided into 6 groups, i.e. specialized periodicals oriented to:

1. a) theatre ("Bravissimo");
2. b) fine arts ("Dailė");
3. c) photography ("Vyzdys");
4. d) cinema ("Kinas");
5. e) literature ("Knygų aidai", "Metai");
6. f) music ("Muzikos barai").

From the point of view of the digital format situation – presence or absence of the digital version of a periodical – the following is evident: editors of literary periodicals are not inclined to abandon the paper version; however, most of them combine it with some digital one:

1. a) have a website ("Literatūra ir menas", "7 meno dienos");
2. b) have a digital version ("Kinas", "Krantai", "Knygų aidai", "Naujas židyns-Aidai", "Kultūros barai", "Šiaurės Atėnai", "Metai", "Muzikos barai", "Vyzdys");
3. c) offer readers a chance to download the magazine pdf. format ("Bravissimo", "Naujoji Romuva", "Dailė", "Nemunas");
4. d) do not have a digital version ("Lietuvos scena", "Liaudies kultūra", "Santara").

On the other hand, digitalized formats have been prepared owing more to pressure than to the awareness of their necessity (editors of literary periodicals argue that it is the governmental funding institution – Fund for the Support of Press, Radio, and Television – who nudges them to have a digitalized version). Internet sites mostly contain texts transferred from paper publications. Periodicals having a web site independent of the contents of a paper or magazine are hard to find ("7 meno dienos", "Literatūra ir menas"). "However even this web site is usually more dead than alive because the most interesting texts are reserved by editors for the printed version."^[4] Web sites of literary periodicals are inconvenient; they are not adapted to browsing by means of a smart phone.

Not all Lithuanian literary periodicals have their social media accounts:

1. a) have ("Literatūra ir menas", "7 meno dienos", "Kultūros barai", "Šiaurės Atėnai", "Kinas", "Metai", "Muzikos barai", "Naujas židyns-Aidai", "Naujoji Romuva", "Nemunas", "Liaudies kultūra" (profile of a more general character).
2. b) have not ("Krantai", "Knygų aidai", "Metai", "Muzikos barai", "Vyzdys", "Bravissimo", "Dailė", "Krantai", "Knygų aidai", "Lietuvos scena", "Nemunas", "Santara", "Vyzdys").

All accounts are on Facebook, the highest number of followers belonging to "Šiaurės Atėnai" (8038), "Literatūra ir menas" (7007), "7 meno dienos" (6964), "Kultūros barai" (4409)^[5].

Many literary periodicals survive owing exclusively to the funding from the Fund for the Support of Press, Radio, and Televisions or other funds for the support of culture; in other words, publishing of these periodicals is carried out under the circumstances of increasingly reduced governmental funding. Funds coming from the state or private donors create at least minimal chances of survival for a great many of literary publications. The funding of publications is carried out following three strategies. Publications are:

1. a) funded from the state budget – the greater part of literary periodicals receive prescribed governmental funding, provided they have worked-out definite projects ("Dailė", "Kultūros barai", "Krantai", "Literatūra ir menas", "Šiaurės Atėnai", "7 meno dienos", "Kinas", "Knygų aidai", "Naujoji Romuva", "Nemunas", "Muzikos barai", "Naujas židyns-Aidai", "Metai", "Saulės arkliukai", "Liaudies kultūra", "Lietuvos scena").
2. b) not funded from the state budget – these include periodicals which have not received any governmental funding for a longer or shorter period ("Bravissimo", in 2013 "Naujoji Romuva" did not get any governmental financing^[6]);
3. c) funded by private persons – such publications do not get any funding from the state, however, they are financially supported by private organizations ("Vyzdys", "Miesto IQ", a magazine which existed formerly, or "Mūsų malūnas", a literary supplement to "Lietuvos rytas"). Compared to the publications receiving governmental funding, these are superior due to substantial budgets of their private sponsors and profits gained from ads. On the other hand, they depend on publishers – if the magazine fails to come up to their expectations, its printing is cancelled very soon. This is what has happened to "Miesto IQ" and "Mūsų malūnas", a literary supplement to "Lietuvos rytas". Situation could be much better if private sector would be more pro-active, because, according to A. Repšienė, "private funding of culture still stays offside (2011, 65). As A. Vaišnys says, "obviously, the business publications are able to prepare cultural information as professionally as they do it while preparing information on economic issues. (...) Culture can't be severed from politics and economics, from daily actualities." (Gailius 2015)

Literary publications cannot either boast a large circulation or to keep themselves alive on it. On the other hand, even popular periodicals with the largest circulation in Lithuania would not live by their sales only; however the situation of literary publications is very modest: almost half of them are just over the limit of 500 copies; the rest balance at the level of 1000 copies or a little more. "Kultūros barai" monthly has the largest circulation. This is easily explained: it is the only literary publication

distributed not only at specialized book stores (literary periodicals mostly follow this particular strategy) but also at newspaper stalls of supermarkets. What is more, the editorial board of "Kultūros barai" cooperates with delfi.lt, the largest Lithuanian news portal, which places the texts from the magazines on its „Culture" column) and belongs to the eurozine.com. international network. So, by the volume of circulation Lithuanian literary periodicals can be divided into two parts:

1. a) up to 1000 copies ("7 meno dienos", 900 copies, "Dailė", 1000 copies, "Knygų aidai", 600 copies, "Lietuvos scena", 500 copies, "Liaudies kultūra", 800 copies, "Muzikos barai", 1000 copies, "Naujoji Romuva", 600 copies, "Naujasis Židinys-Aidai", 900 copies, "Nemunas", 1000 copies, "Liaudies kultūra", 800 copies, "Santara", 1000 copies, "7 meno dienos", 1000 copies);
2. b) more than 1000 copies ("Bravissimo", 1650 copies, "Kinas", 1200 copies, "Krantai", 1100 copies, "Kultūros barai", 2800 copies, "Literatūra ir menas", 1200 copies, "Metai", 1140 copies, "Šiaurės Atėnai", 1500 copies, "Vyzdys", 1500 copies.).

In sum, it is possible to state that there are many literary periodicals in Lithuania. Their number totals 20; 19 of them are issued using a traditional printed format, one of them – a digitalized format. However, this far from exhaustive classification evidences that periodicals are multifaceted – in terms of typology, periodicity, and themes. Many of them try to adapt to the ever-changing modern realities at least minimally, seeking to widen the circle of their readers with the assistance of social media. By the way, greater progress could be achieved in the area of distribution – literary periodicals are mostly distributed only by bookstores (this does not mean that every bookstore does it). Distribution carried out in places available to wider society could increase the number of sold copies. On the other hand, there is a very close bond between literary publications and the printed format. In Lithuania, the factor of tradition is very important in issues concerning literary publications; as is the position that literary periodicals are anything but products designed to produce a short-lived effect. However editors of literary publications have got a particular conception of literary periodical in which the ephemeral quality of publication associates with the digitalized format. Because of their long-lived value literary periodicals are kind of doomed to remain fixed to *paper*. On the other hand, digitalized-only publishing is not necessarily cheaper; wishing to survive, they will have to move to internet sooner or later – to accept the reality which dictates its demands.

3. Lithuanian popular publications: lessons of survival

The author of this article carried out interviews with three editors-in-chief of Lithuanian literary publications^[7]. The editors interviewed:

Laima Kanopkienė, editor-in-chief of "Kultūros barai";

Andrius Konickis, editor-in-chief of "Naujoji Romuva",

Gytis Norvilas, editor-in-chief of "Literatūra ir menas".

The editors were asked to say their opinion about the possibility (or necessity) to abandon traditional publishing format and have only a digital version. It is not surprising, as the lion's share of the budget goes to the production of printed publications: paper, printing, language editing is expensive. But it seems that cultural periodical publications hold firm to the printed version: this point of view, to a greater or lesser extent, is supported by all editors interviewed. "I do not agree that, in order to survive, cultural publications have to move online and abandon traditional, printed, version. We are not used to reading texts on the screen", – says Laima Kanopkienė. "Paper and online publications are actually different things. We do not see any serious danger to printed publication: one can remember that, after cinema appeared, everybody talked that theatre will collapse. So what?.. Printing houses should have reacted in the first place to the "crisis" of printed production. However, we see that they only improve their quality, with and an increasing number of people visiting Book fair each year", – Andrius Konickis is also convinced that cultural periodicals are not destined to be read on the screen. According to "Literatūra ir Menas" editor-in-chief Gytis Norvilas, it would not be a positive trend for cultural periodicals to become only digital publications.

One reason is the longevity of texts printed. In spite of the fact that new generation is fully indulged in fast consumption, the texts of cultural periodicals are not a one day product, and they have enduring value. So the best solution is to keep both versions.

On the other hand, it seems that cultural periodical publications did this reluctantly, only because they had to. As Laima Kanopkienė said, "it was done according to the requirements of Press Support Fund, which sponsored only the publications with a website". Editor of the publication "Naujoji Romuva" Andrius Konickis echoes the thoughts of Laima Kanopkienė: "We are made to keep online version of by the main (and, actually, the only) state sponsor, namely, Press, Radio and Television Support Fund." But Gytis Norvilas has no doubts – it is necessary to maintain a website, as well as a printed version. The balance of these two things is a good alternative which meets the needs of both traditional press fans and the interests of digital society.

So, the attitude of editors of literary publications to possible (or necessary) typological changes could be summarized in a few sentences: the biggest problem – getting (not earning!) more money from state fund. The rest is all right. Small circulation? Well, these periodicals are targeted only on exceptional readers. Maybe a dash of modernity for a change? Don't think so – well, classical things, I mean the paper format is an eternal value. Those wishing to read literary periodicals on anything but excellent paper, e.g. on a smart phone – have brought it upon themselves; they clearly cannot understand the lasting value of literary publications.

In order to find out what editors of popular periodicals think about these issues the author of this paper interviewed three editors-in-chief. Why popular publications? Because they have to survive knowing that they will

not get any financial support from anywhere. There was another reason for inquiring the editor-in-chief of delfi.lt, the biggest Lithuanian news portal, about this matter: delfi.lt would like to co-operate with literary publications. Opinion of the deputy editor-in-chief of internet daily bernardinai.lt which publishes many texts on literary subjects was also sought out.

The editors interviewed:

Jurga Baltrukonytė, former founder and editor-in-chief of the largest circulation Lithuanian popular magazine "Panelė" and present founder and editor-in-chief of the new popular magazine "Happy 365".

Gražina Michnevičiūtė, editor-in-chief of the biggest and longest-living popular Lithuanian magazine "Moteris".

Violeta Kalikauskienė, editor-in-chief of Lithuanian edition of „Cosmopolitan“ magazine.

Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė, editor-in-chief of the biggest Lithuanian news portal delfi.lt.

Gediminas Kajėnas, deputy editor-in-chief of internet daily bernardinai.lt.

All interviews were individual. Jurga Baltrukonytė, Violeta Kalikauskienė, Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė and Gediminas Kajėnas were interviewed by e-mail. Structured questions were prepared and sent to the respondents. They had several days to answer them. Their answers were analysed and systematized. Gražina Michnevičiūtė was interviewed in live. This interview lasted about one hour and was recorded. The questions were not structured. The data of the interview was transcribed and systematized as well. Interviewees were chosen due to their long-standing experience in the publishing area, what is more, publications and portals edited (currently or formerly) by them are leaders in their own area. All interviewed editors were very severe on literary periodicals: they must change, changing is not a whim or a choice; it is a must. Because the world changes; literary periodicals, in contrast, exist more by tradition and under their own inertia, they are not interested in increasing the number of their readers, they do not pay much attention to their contents. "They just linger on, but it is only for the sake of preserving the form, I mean that the very fact of their existence is understood as a value, under such circumstances the contents gets pushed very far into the background."^[8]

To quote Jurga Baltrukonytė, "content is even more important than form. A good, vivid, and unique content can be nicely offered on internet to a younger user who is an active observer and explorer of the world, interested in many things, including culture. Such individual cannot be served either stale shrimp at a restaurant or stale stereotypes for the appraisal of arts. Culture needs a specific space and modern presentation. Many-coloured magazine with a lively contents, touching upon the areas of fashion, etiquette, architecture, discovery and innovation, offering literary peculiarities from the whole world, could satisfy perfectly the needs of the older and younger generations – for the latter literary magazines could be a means for the demonstration of style or life values. One must know how to pack up and sell culture. Literary periodicals, just like all the rest self-supporting publications, need a strong duo: an editor and a marketing professional able to evaluate the reader who has currently changed, and to work in the interests of that reader. Not in their own interests and not in the interests of other art workers although they may very much desire to work that way." In Gražina Michnevičiūtė opinion, "literary publications fail to carry out their function, which means to be interested in culture, not only whine asking for money. They must try to survive – this is what popular publications do. In other words, they must create a publication able to attract ads. Governmental funding may exist, but their current fragmented existence is a bad choice. Publications are numerous yet not a single one does everything in the way it should be done. A literary publication cannot turn into a collection of writings authored by the members of a particular clan. We have some literary publications illustrated by photos in which nothing can be seen: the quality of contents is very poor, even Soviet publications were better. These publications are absolute *samizdat* (self-published literature)."

Editors paid attention also to a faulty policy of governmental funding. Gediminas Kajėnas contends that a substantial portion of publications has its history which, in the opinion of their editorial boards, is a major argument to keep these half-dead publications connected to the artificial life-supporting equipment – governmental funding – for another while. In such a case many publications continue their deplorable existence: with awfully small funding from the state they can hardly make both ends meet, paying (if they only afford it) nanoscopic fees to authors, and virtually publishing for themselves or for a very small number of readers. Gediminas Kajėnas is sure: a clear policy of literary publishing is missing in Lithuania; modest governmental funding is provided to anybody with some kind of publishing history for the sole purpose of silencing the whiner. Such situation has obviously brought destruction: literary periodicals are lifeless, boring, and dreary, reflecting urgent topics only in part, etc. So, the problem encountered today in Lithuania is not paper *versus* internet but the number of literary periodicals. They are too numerous; funded exclusively from the governmental budget they are rivals; fed by the same hand all of them lead a poor life – not only financially but also from the point of view of contents. So, first of all, a very conscious and maybe painful blow must be dealt – cutting down the number of literary periodicals funded from the governmental budget in Lithuania. The so-called niche literary media are weak, unable to form people's tastes, to reflect urgent events, or to be a living part of culture. Lithuania must have one or several literary periodicals widely reflecting literary life. If the existing ones could be brought together to form one or two, and all the moneys distributed among numerous beneficiaries were given to them, it would be possible to have a literary periodical – not only with an interesting content an attractive exterior but also full of life. Such publication could try to live not only on the governmental funding; possessing a wide circle of readers it could earn something from its sales and ads." Monika Garbačiauskaitė states: "obviously, literary media and even their elements can hardly survive on commercial grounds in Lithuania. This means that most of them are more or less funded from the state budget. The idea is not bad – literary media must be funded.

Regrettably, the funding is distributed on the grounds of obscure criteria – because it has always been that way; or because the periodical is published by friends, or because they are simply “a fine bunch”; or because the funding is backed by some party interests. It is equally bad that the funding is not concentrated but crumbled to feed a number of organizations/publications. The most annoying thing is that beneficiaries fail to incur real responsibility for the funds, and that they are not obliged to achieve any tangible goals. Literary publications, TV and radio broadcasters usually do not bother about being attractive to the reader/viewer/listener, imagining that their only task is to produce a high quality literary product at their own discretion; the fact that it will be read by 100 people is an issue of minor importance.”

Editors suggested reacting also to the changing tendencies; in their opinion, literary periodicals are reluctant to pay attention to them. Violeta Kalikauskienė observes that “it is very easy to shut ones eyes, pretending that the world rotates in the preferable direction. However sooner or later one will have to open one's eyes and accept the reality which is far from willing to indulge you. People change. Readers change. Life changes. This tendency was implied five years ago at a conference organized by a major world publishing house „Hearst Corporation”. At the conference there were readers who owned publications in 70 countries of the world; this means they see things which we often try to ignore in our small country, being sure that all these world changes will not come very soon. Rustic we may be, only not to the degree which we often try to pretend to have retained”. In Jurga Baltrukonytė opinion, “for the purpose of developing the reader, an individual interested in arts, representatives of literary periodicals ought to bend over backwards reaching out their thoughts and feelings for the existing and future users. By all means they must take into account the fact that younger users are usually used to getting contents on internet.” Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė thinks that “it is necessary to modernize and search for new platforms and forms, and to be present in places frequented by readers. What is more, the new forms offer new chances of representation. Up till now traditional literary publications have failed to move in this direction. This is simply dangerous because we have a generation of users who use information in an absolutely different way – by means of other methods and other platforms. It would be a big mistake to ignore them.” Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė insists that literary periodicals often take an effort to attract or educate a wider circle of readers for an attempt to gain cheap popularity. They are appalled at the very idea of co-operation with news portals, imagining that they protect some outstanding quality in the interests of their scarce regular readers. (With the exception of “Kultūros barai” who having started to co-operate with DELFI noticed that the co-operation boosted their circulation instead of reducing it). In this way literary media get elitized in a distorted manner, usually unwilling to leave their vicious circle as long as it remains unconditionally funded. Gediminas Kajėnas is sure: strict restructuring measures are needed: “The cardinal issue is not their survival but their qualitative and quantitative transformation. This ought to be a strategic issue of culture policy concerning literary media in Lithuania. If publications are full of life and interesting, they will exist in any form. As long as publications enjoy the status of “a sacred cow” indicating that their existence is equivalent to a miracle, an inexcusable squandering of funds will last because nobody cares about the quality and reader of these publications.” Gražina Michnevičiūtė believes that first of all web sites run by literary periodicals should be examined. Current web sites are embarrassing; created by non-professionals, they are hardly accessible for reading through smart equipment. If only the situation could improve, literary publications would be more readily read by people living abroad. Unfortunately, the Soviet heritage is still tenacious of life in Lithuania, demanding that we should not let paper publications perish at any cost. It is a pleasure to have a paper publication. Digitalized versions are also costly, technological maintenance service is very expensive. Maybe digitalized versions are costlier but digitalization is inevitable in future. Clearly, we cannot do away with paper versions at once because there is a category of people reading only paper versions, yet a well-made modern e-version adapted to mobile technologies must emerge. Well, our literary periodicals represent elementary resistance to any slightest move towards progress. Their sitting on a convenient mole-hill with all their opportunities underused annoys me very much.”

Still, editors believe in a bright future for literary publications, more specifically, they would like to cherish its positive vision. “Good news: printed publications will survive. There have always been and there will always be people who prefer opening a magazine and feeling the texture and smell of paper to reading it *online*. However, the number of such people is decreasing. If printed publications wish to survive, they will have to affect their readers within the 360 degree range: i.e. in addition to its paper version a publication must be available through internet, smart phone, television, radio and all possible platforms of social mass media. Another piece of good news: world tendencies show that the biggest chances of survival belong to the niche publications. For example, the literary literary weekly “The New Yorker” published since 1925. The magazine is not funded from the state budget – it belongs to a most prestigious publishing house “Conde Nast”. In addition to its website, the magazine is available on Twitter and Facebook; its programme can be streamed to a smart phone. 25 per cent of its readers are 18–34 year old people whose mean annual earnings amount to more than 100 000 dollars. In other words, the magazine fosters its younger generation, retaining its prestige and investing into the future. The outcome is clear: with the diving circulation of paper versions of absolutely all popular magazines “The New Yorker” has not only retained its circulation at its usual level but even increased it a little. Dear literary periodicals, you have a chance not only to survive but also to become a symbol of prestige. On condition that you”, – says Violeta Kalikauskienė. Jurga Baltrukonytė supports her: “A paper version of a literary publication – as I imagine it – is far from dead. A thick multi-coloured review magazine created by talented people is a must in order to represent the Lithuanian culture and arts; it is necessary as an obvious object of pride in our culture, or as a handbook, or a spiritual home decoration – at least for children to list from time to time. And then go on with a search for the subject which has interested them on the internet...” According to Gediminas Kajėnas, “ideally, at least several literary publications would be indispensable to such country as Lithuania. It is equally important to make

culture a part of social life so that it could exist in mass media alongside politics, social themes, history, education, nature, health, etc. This is what bernardinai.lt tries to do – religion, culture, society are the three whales on which the daily rests. Literary procedure is a natural part of a daily, just as it is a part of anybody's life. So, the reader encounters culture as if by chance both in life and in our daily".

So, the hypotheses proved correct: funded literary publications fail to make full use of their chances; uninterested in the winning of new readers, they exist under their own inertia. Absolute or partial digitalisation of literary periodicals coupled with an effort to find the reader by all means could be a chance to turn them from beggars into prestigious multi-coloured quality publications. Suggestions and visions are plentiful – it is high time to start to implement them. But where's the money to begin?..

4. Conclusion

1. Literary periodicals in Lithuania are numerous, perhaps too numerous; although they differ principally, there are many things they share, i.e. funding from the same limited source; poor quality of contents and – sometimes – printing; and an effort to compete against rivals – yet not for readers or quality but only for the governmental funds.
2. Faulty funding of literary publications hampers the emergence of new and qualitatively different products able to be an alternative to currently existing weak, or to quote Gediminas K., "more dead than alive" publications.
3. Lithuanian market needs independent periodicals very badly; still, encrusting of more popular commercial media with literary texts would be a worthwhile contribution.
4. Not only the format of publications but also their ability to adapt to the ever-changing market and reader interests ought to be reconsidered. With the number of internet users increasing, the volume of paper publications shrinks. This by no means implies their total collapse, especially in the area of niche publications or magazines intended for a special user. If literary periodicals wish to survive, they will have to appear not only in a traditional format but also move into the WEB which means both the operation of high quality sites and the availability to readers by all possible means of technology.

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Notes

[1] This claim was cleared from the interviews with three editors-in-chief of Lithuania literary magazines. For more information see section "Lithuanian Popular Publications: Lessons of Survival".

[2] From author's conversation with Gražina Michnevičiūtė of 22.10.2015.

[3] The author of this article made a short research (it was implemented in March-April, 2015) which aimed to find out the attitude of potential readers towards periodical cultural publications. In order to achieve the goals set a questionnaire was prepared with 48 respondents questioned, from 18 to 65 years of age. Respondents had to have at least minimal contact with reading culture.

[4] From 26.10.2015-29.10.2015 interview with the deputy editor-in-chief of bernardinai.lt Gediminas Kajėnas.

[5] Data as of 01.10.2015.

[6] From author's interview with the editor-in-chief of „Naujoji Romuva“ Andrius Konickis of 05.05.2015: „The biggest problem encountered by „Naujoji Romuva“ is a sneering attitude from the Fund for the Support of Press: 2014 – absolute zero, 2015 – from the second quarter 5000 euro; in previous years (e.g. in 2013)– 2900 euro – per edition.“

[7] The interviews were carried out on May 26-28, 2015. Structured questions were sent by e-mail to Laima Kanopkienė (26.05.2015) and Andrius Konickis (27.05.2015). Their answers were received, analysed and systematized. The conversation with Gytis Norvilas (28.05.2015) was organized by the phone. It lasted about 30 minutes.

[8] From 26.10.2015-29.10.2015 interview with the deputy editor-in-chief of bernardinai.lt Gediminas Kajėnas.

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