

## Preface

This issue of *Nordlit* bases its content on a workshop arranged and financed by the Nordic Academy for Advanced Study (NorFa) in June 1998 at the Russian Department in Tromsø. The overarching theme of the workshop was Russian literature and its representation of gender and sexuality. Doctoral students from several Nordic countries, as well as our invited senior lecturers, contributed with different approaches to our subject of investigation. Several of their papers are collected here.

The workshop's guest lecturers are represented with four articles. Lillian J. Helle, associate professor at the University of Bergen, writes about Lev Tolstoy's later work and relates it to trends in Russian intellectual life at the turn of the century, especially to the flourishing sectarianism. Peter Ulf Møller, professor of Russian literature at the University of Copenhagen, gives us a picture of the same period in Russian literary history. P.U. Møller's article explores the acute interest for sexual themes in the literature of the time, an interest that, according to him, reached its peak in 1907. Taking as a point of departure the autobiographical writings of Anna Tyutcheva, a lady-in-waiting at the Russian court, Catriona Kelly (New College, Oxford) investigates behaviour regulations and the part played by gender in the Russian aristocracy in the nineteenth century. Exploring, as she says, the significance of polite culture for one individual at the court, Kelly focuses on the ideal of refinement for the constructing of an autobiographical self. Gregory Woods, professor of gay and lesbian studies at Nottingham Trent University, raises several crucial questions about the "gay literary text." His major concern is

the criteria for identifying a text as gay literature, a problem that is also of importance to gender studies in general.

Four doctoral students are represented with essays in this issue. Karin Grelz, Renata Ingbrandt and Astrid Brokke bring up topics concerning Marina Tsvetaeva's and Anna Akhmatova's female literary identity, while Tine Roesen elaborates on the representation of manhood in Fedor Dostoevsky's novel, *Poor Folk*.

Book reviews have now become an integral section of *Nordlit*. In this issue Lisbeth P. Wærp and Sissel Furueth review Terje Johansen's introductory books on Ibsen, *Om Vildanden av Henrik Ibsen* and *Om Gengangere av Henrik Ibsen*, both published in the didactical series, *Veier til verket*. Henning Howlid Wærp reviews three new Norwegian novels, *Beretninger om beskyttelse* (Erik Fosnes Hansen), *Før du sovner* (Linn Ullmann), *Kron og Mynt* (Kjartan Fløgstad), as well as Lars Saabye Christensen's collection of poetry, *Falleferdig Himmel*.

We apologize to our readers for the late arrival of this autumn issue; the spring number of *Nordlit* is just around the corner.