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MOVING INTO MODERNISM: OUTWARD AND INTROSPECTIVE JOURNEYS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY LATVIAN WOMEN'S TRAVEL NARRATIVES



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SUMMARY. The advancement of women as writers in Latvia during the early 20th century was directly attributed to increased education and freedom. Travelling literary women in the early twentieth century were also part of a larger pattern –the increased ability to travel for pleasure. At the beginning of the 20th century Latvian upper middle class women went to Western Europe – Italy, France, Switzerland – for enjoyment and educational purposes. Anna Rūmane-Ķeniņa's (1877–1950) cycle of sketches *From the South (Iz Dienvidiem)* (1902) and Angelika Gailīte's (1884–1975) travel narrative *Observations and Dreams (Vērojumi un sapņojumi)* (1920) described travel to Italy. Travelogues, positioned between autobiography and fiction, represented subjective experiences and gave women writers an acceptable medium for expressing their thoughts and ideas publicly. As women writers shared their impressions of foreign spaces and peoples with their audience at home, they also articulated themselves. Inscribing their own lives into a text they reinforced their new social position as modern women and writers, thus travel narratives also served as important instances of female agency at the beginning of 20th century Latvia.

KEYWORDS: women writers, travelogue, autobiographic writing, female agency, Latvian literature.

INTRODUCTION

“On November 29, 1879, I climbed again in the wagon, to start a travel. My mind was joyful, like a bird that forgets everything, rising up singing in the clouds. I wished that I could keep in good memory and properly report to my fatherland all that I will see,” (Freimane 1884: 64) writes Minna Freimane (1853–?), the author of the first travelogue published by a Latvian women writer – “In Memory” (*Par piemiņu*, 1884). It is known that Freimane was a baroness's servant and accompanied the baroness on her European trips (Zelče 2002: 61). In 1877 Freimane served as a teacher in the family of a Russian colonel and went to the Caucasus during the outbreak of the Russian-Turkish war. She saw with her own eyes the arrival of the Russian army in Turkey and reported this experience to her compatriots in the homeland. Her travel description “From Caucasus” was published in 1878 in the newspaper “Baltijas Vēstnesis”.

In her travelogue “In Memory” Freimane insistently and with a sense of mission reported what she saw and experienced abroad, vividly writing about her travel impressions in the Caucasus, Algeria, Italy, France, Germany, and Egypt, describing nature, historical monuments, religion, and the character of the peoples. She was the first known Latvian woman to explore not only Western Europe but also more remote parts of the world such as South Africa. In Egypt, she ascended to the higher pyramids; in the Libyan deserts she rode at the forefront of a camel caravan; she went on a hunt for hyenas and jackals. At the same time Freimane in her travelogue gave a woman’s perspective. Wherever she went, she paid particular attention to women’s lives – family life, male-female relationships, attitudes towards children, domesticity, etc. Līgotņu Jēkabs in the article “Traveler Minna Freimane,” emphasizing Freimane’s woman’s perspective, wrote:

As a woman, Minna Freimane sees many objects in her journey that go unnoticed by male eyes. (Līgotņu 1928: 4)

As Carl Thompson writes, all travel writing has a two-fold aspect. It is most obviously a report on the wider world, an account of an unfamiliar people or place; yet, it also reveals to a greater or lesser degree the traveller herself who produced that report, her values, her preoccupations, and her assumptions (Thompson 2011: 10). More than half a century after they were published, Freimane’s travel descriptions were still recognized as lively and engaging, written in a language that goes beyond the average level of her time (Rītiņš 1942: 2).

If we take into account the social status of women in Latvian society during the second half of the 19th century, it is undeniable that Freimane is an extraordinary personality in Latvian literary and cultural life. We are unlikely to find many Latvian women who, in the 1870s and 1880s, could stand next to her in terms of intellectual prominence – she was educated, fluent in several Western European languages, highly intellectual, brave, and adventurous. Her name appeared in the Latvian press from 1878 to 1884 – besides publishing her travel writings, she was also mentioned as a theater director and playwright. In the 1880s, with the support of the Charity Society, she founded and ran a Latvian school in Liepāja; she participated in various committees of the Charity Society; she donated items, brought home from her travels, to the Ethnographic Museum and gave public speeches about her travels (Pamše 1971). In 1882 Freimane, as historian Vita Zelce notes, was also one of the few women who publicly expressed her opinion concerning the “women’s question” – giving a speech at Liepāja Latvian Charity Society (Zelče 2002: 30). In her speech, which was later published in “Latvian newspapers,” she emphasized the importance of education for women:

The more women advance, the sooner our dear nation will thrive; the more women use their minds, the quicker complacency and consensus will be reached; the more women get educated, the more profit for the nation. (Freimane 1882: 2)

However, despite her remarkable personality, the biographical information about Freimane is scarce, as is usually the case for 19th century Latvian women's biographies. Almost nothing is known about her life after the 1880s, even the year of her death is not known. Freimane belongs to the first generation of Latvian women writers – women who entered literature in the 1870s and 1880s. The lives of this first generation of women writers are poorly documented or not documented at all. For many of them even the exact life data are not known. More marginal authors of the 1870s and 1880s have not been mentioned in any of the histories of Latvian literature and culture, despite the fact that some of them have published a considerable body of prose in the press (Kusiņa 2013: 58). These early Latvian women writers can be characterized by limited education and limited experience, as many of them spent their whole lives in their hometowns in the countryside; they had a degree of anonymity and pursued writing as a hobby.

In the second half of the 1880s, to a greater or lesser extent, the press in Latvia began to recognize, that women's lives were changing. For example, in 1887 Reinis Kaudzīte in an article "Female Human" admitted that if earlier the place of a woman in society could be expressed by the old proverb "Wife and stove always at home," now a woman's life also began to take place outside the home (Vidzemnieks 1887: 3). Still the home was recognized as the main field of activity for women, and Freimane's travel accounts were a highly extraordinary exception.

LATVIAN WOMEN WRITERS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

During the 1890s women's emancipation became a much-discussed topic in the Latvian press. Articles about women's emancipation, its progress in other countries, and the harm it has inflicted on women, their families, and society in general, began to circulate more widely. Simultaneously, the descriptions of outstanding women's lives – such as Sofya Kovalevskaya, Marie Bashkirtseff, Eleonora Duse, and others – were published in support of the argument that women's intellectual abilities equal those of men's (Zelče 2002: 37). The first publications about prominent Latvian women also started to appear in the press – in 1893 an article about the first Latvian woman prose writer Marija Medinska was published in "Saimniecū un Zelteņu kalendārs." In 1895 an article about the young poetess Aspazija was published in the same calendar. At the end of the 19th century it was not easy for

Latvian women to openly start their literary activities and publish their writings. It took courage to dare to ignore the biases of society, as writing was considered to be the domain of men. However, attitudes toward women's abilities in literature were slowly changing, especially starting with the literary work of Aspazija, who also marks the start of a new generation featuring the first professional Latvian women writers who made their living from writing.

There is a close relationship between the dissemination of emancipation ideas, woman's education, and artistic identity. At the turn of the century the traditional idea about women and women's role in society was about to collapse:

The woman was no longer fully integrated into the male / father / brother identity and the woman was no longer required to find a husband as the guarantee of a full life. (Eglāja-Kritsona 2017: 205)

The turn of the century was characterized by a revision and an active struggle against the normative rules for female activity, sexuality, and intelligence, historically defined by the dominant masculine culture. The ideal of the "New Woman" emerged – she had a mind and wishes of her own, she transgressed traditional gender roles by seeking education equal to that available to men as well as an occupation in which she could earn an independent income – and because of economic independence she was free to marry for love rather than economic security, or she was free not to marry at all if she wished.

Changes in women's economic, legal, and cultural status have also led to the belief that women embodied the changeability of modern life and the spirit of the new age. Increasingly, also in literature, the image of emancipated woman was presented. However, as Eva Eglāja-Kristsona, researching femininity construction and typology in Latvian literature written by male authors from the late 1880s till the first decade of the 20th century, concludes, in works by Latvian male authors education of women was still predominately perceived as an acquisition of practical skills and the women were not expected to pursue their way to higher education, science, and research. Likewise, describing various types of women in literature, Latvian male authors used hierarchy to emphasize the standards for women that were the most acceptable to the normative masculine logic at that time. Hegemonic femininity included such characteristics as innocence, maternal instinct, and family spirit. On the opposite side there was the modern woman who was perceived as provocative, sexually attractive and threatening the masculine order (Eglāja-Kristsona 2014: 79).

Women writers self-evidently belonged to the second type, as they were speaking publicly through their writing. Entering Latvian literature at the beginning of the 20th century, women writers started to explore women's experiences that had

not been described in Latvian literature before – such as loss of virginity, female desire, marriage experience, childbirth, abortion, child death, etc. An important theme in women's writing was the conflict between woman's outer and inner world as they were trying to answer the question: How to find, create, and preserve yourself? In contrast to previous generations of women writers, particularly in the case of Aspazija, whose theoretical beliefs suggested that a change in public order would resolve a woman's fate, this generation of women writers believed that there was a significant contradiction in the very nature of a woman herself that needed to be resolved (Kusiņa 2013: 95).

The advancement of women as writers in Latvia during the early 20th century was directly attributed to the increased education and freedom for women. In the beginning of the 20th century Latvian upper middle class women went to Western Europe – Italy, France, Switzerland – to study and to expand their physical and intellectual borders, to acquire cultural know-how visiting museums and significant cultural and historical sites. Traveling literary women in the early 20th century were also a part of a larger pattern – the increased ability to travel for pleasure. Traveling and travel descriptions were also significant in the process of women's emancipation, as through the act of traveling they gained new experiences and knowledge and thus also reinforced their new social position in the society. As Thompson writes:

Travel is often undertaken to enhance social status and to accumulate what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has termed 'cultural capital'. When this is the case, any subsequent travelogue is an important part of the traveler's larger bid for authority and social advancement. (Thompson 2011: 119)

Anna Rūmane-Ķeniņa and Angelika Gailīte belonged to the generation of Latvian women who not only had an increased ability to study, but also opportunities to get their education abroad and to travel for pleasure. Both of them traveled to Italy at the beginning of the 20th century. They wrote about their travel experiences and published their travelogues: Anna Rūmane-Ķeniņa "From the South" (*Iz Dienvidiem*) (1902) and Angelika Gailīte "Observations and Dreams" (*Vērojumi un sapņojumi*) (1920). Both authors obviously believed that their individual experiences were meaningful enough to be preserved and to be published.

ANNA RŪMANE-ĶENIŅA'S INTROSPECTIVE JOURNEY: OSPADALETTI, ITALY

Anna Rūmane was born in 1877 in Jelgava. She finished Jelgava Girls' Gymnasium, as one of the few Latvian girls among the daughters of German noblemen

and Russian officials. Studies were conducted in German and Russian, and Anna was fascinated by German, Russian, and French literature. In 1898 she published a series of articles about French literature in the newspaper “Tēvija.” She also gave lectures at Jelgava Latvian Society about prehistoric man, about the mathematician Sophia Kovalevsky, and about a new woman who is not raised for her husband, but who fully develops her own intellectual abilities (Rūmane 1935: 3). In 1898 Rūmane was married to the Latvian poet and politician Atis Ķeniņš (1874–1961). Their marriage was a marriage of companionship, coinciding with the modern marriage model that included mutual respect and cooperation between the spouses. Zelče points out that the early modern Latvian marriage model at the end on the 19th century was formed in separate, so-called privileged groups of society such as entrepreneurs, graduates of higher education, and public officials, and it allowed the woman to openly be a partner to her husband; a supporter of his work, plans and desires; in other words, a companion. In the 1890s in Latvian society several well-known families were formed, where husband and wife were united by common professional interests, political views, and an understanding of the meaning of life (Zelče 2002: 54).

In 1899 the first of Rūmane-Ķeniņa’s 6 children was born. In 1900 Rūmane-Ķeniņa together with her husband opened a four-year girl’s pro-grammar school in Riga that later was converted into a gymnasium. Ķeniņu Gymnasium and the home of the couple – Atis and Anna Ķeniņi – became a center for creative Latvians. It was the most prominent meeting place for Latvian artists, writers, and musicians, many of whom also worked as teachers in Ķeniņu Gymnasium. Rūmane-Ķeniņa also gave lectures at the Latvian Education Society on the upbringing of girls. At the Knowledge Commission summer meetings, Rūmane-Ķeniņa and Aspazija were the only women who participated in the discussion with their speeches about education. At this time, girls’ education not only needed to be developed but also to be justified. This time period is depicted in another woman writer’s, Ivande Kaija’s novel “Innate Sin” (*Iedzimtais grēks*, 1913) where Kaija describes the first female high school graduates striving for higher ideals – to be school superintendents, to study, to work, and to write. The woman characters in the novel also give public speeches, and the mere fact that women are speaking in public causes the civil society to worry a bit (Balode 1935: 4).

During the winters Rūmane-Ķeniņa traveled to the Italian Riviera to rest and to improve her health. In November 1901, while residing in Ospedaletti, Italy, she wrote her first literary texts. The cycle “From the South” (*Iz dienvidiem*) was published in the literary supplement of the newspaper *Pēterburgas Avīzes* in 1902, signed by her pen name Aina Rasmer. The cycle “From the South” consists of seven short, lyrical texts published in the newspaper *Pēterburgas Avīzes* and journals

Austrums and *Jaunības Draugs*. The first story of the cycle, “Desire to Live” (*Dzīvot gribas*) is the key story. It describes the resort’s healing center – the glorious, beautiful nature of Italy and the sick people, hungry for life. The French, Russian, and German dialogues in the text show the resort’s multinational public and the education of the writer who was fluent in those languages. The contrast between life, the southern sun and beautiful nature, and death, especially the death of young people, is common to all the texts in this cycle.

The narrator of the stories is an observer and the outer impulses give way to her inner reflections. Characterized by the intensity of perception that can be achieved when entering an unfamiliar environment – travelling away from home, getting away from the ordinary and accustomed – Rūmane-Ķeniņa’s sketches also demonstrate that seemingly insignificant everyday life has enough material for creating. For example, in the story “How the southern pine tree died” (*Kā dienvidu priedīte mira*, 1902) the narrator goes for a walk and picks up a little twig from a cut-down pine tree. That little twig is an impulse for the story concerning the narrator’s contemplation about life and death:

I took one little twig with me, three bouquets of needles with a pine cone in the middle. In the evening, in my bed, when the darkness revived in my eyes and I thought of my homeland, I caressed the pine twig’s fine, long needles for a long time and then I put the twig under my pillow, allowing needles to tickle my cheeks and my neck. And so I fell asleep with the smell of resin, which evaporated from the broken branch. And in a dream the little twig told me the fate of its life. (Rūmane 1902: 117)

In these stories, written in Italy, the author’s voice is clearly present – the reader senses the smell of a cut-down pine tree and the touch of pine twigs to the skin, hears the quiet music coming from the sanatorium’s dance hall, and the singing in the church; the reader together with the author watches people in the sanatorium, listens to snippets of conversation, and follows with the author the Easter procession leading through the dark, narrow Italian streets, and witnesses the transformation of people when they enter the lighted church. Rūmane-Ķeniņa’s texts are sensory, filled with detail, and evoke a strong, expressive mood.

In another story – “Procession” – the narrator randomly follows the Easter procession. Rūmane-Ķeniņa describes the emotions so vividly and engagingly that a seemingly casual observation becomes a work of literature:

Searching for the exit, sorrowful, monotonous noises climb heavily up the damp walls of the houses, where women and men at the rare windows are looking down. < . . . > When all the streets have been walked, the procession finally flows into the church, a small, dark, poor church. On the black walls there’s a rare, dingy picture, benches and floor are dirty, a few candles on the altar give little light – dark and gloomy! < . . . > The singing voices are often misaligned, the children chatter, a noisy, disjointed crowd in the dark. Then again all

fall to their knees in prayer. This time they pray for a very, very long time. When they get up, there is no noise, no more anxiety, there's only silent, solemn peace. And then they sing again. I stand there listening – surprised, enchanted. In a mighty, beautiful melody all the voices rise up the dark walls as one powerful voice. (Rūmane 1902: 165)

Rūmane-Ķeniņa's Italian impressions can be characterized by the feeling of being present in the scenes that the author recreates in her writing. The texts are going through the writer's own prism, tilting the narrative at a certain angle. As Bonnie Kime Scott observes:

The idea of women living “on the inside” implies not only that women inhabit a strategic position from a domestic locale, but that women, more than men, are culturally perceived to inhabit a more internal world, one more in tune with dream, fantasy, and the body. The works of the women modernists reflect this interiority as they capture the world of their protagonists who are frequently not only women but also often thinly veiled versions of the authors themselves. (Kelly 2016: 10)

Blending personal experience, perceptions, preconceptions, and fantasy, these observations at an Italian resort are lyrical texts, characterized by a personal tone and self-awareness; they are introspective as the narrator explores existential questions that disturb her, and explores the darker aspects of human experience, such as death. The literary critic Alfreds Goba notes that in these lyrical pieces “the young writer already exhibits unquestionable abilities, intelligent taste, and a well-rounded hand,” adding that the writer has an undeniable close connection with the modern poets of the time – Nietzsche, Maeterlinck, and Verlaine (Goba 1925: 256).

Rūmane-Ķeniņa was an influential woman, the headmistress of her own private school, educated, aim-driven, and hard-working with enough means to travel, fluent in German, French, Russian, and Italian and well informed about the art trends in Europe. Most likely the creative atmosphere at her home where Latvian intelligentsia gathered inspired her to try her hand at creative writing. Travel to Ospadaletti, Italy, where she stayed in order to rest and improve her health, provided Rūmane-Ķeniņa with undisturbed time for reflection and creative expression, inspired by impulses from an external, new, and alien environment.

ANGELIKA GAILĪTE: TRAVEL TO ITALY BEFORE THE WWI

Angelika Gailīte was born in 1884 in Vecpiebalga. While studying at Daugavpils Women's Gymnasium, she lived in the family household of the poet Andrejs Pumpurs, author of the Latvian epos “Lāčplēsis” (1888). In her autobiographies, as well as in her reminiscences written in exile *The Traveler* (*Ceļiniece*, 1962), Gailīte begins the narrative of her life with graduation from the gymnasium, when she as a

young teacher starts working at Ķeniņu Gymnasium (Gailīte 1962: 3), indicating the importance of entering the school and home of Ķeniņi and being impacted by the creative and mental endeavors that were present there. In 1910 she married Jānis Miķelsons, also known by his pen name Haralds Eldgasts (1882–1926), who had already published several books. They moved to Vologda, Russia, where they both worked as teachers.

One of Gailīte's first reflections on literature was the article "Types of a Free Woman in Literature" published in the newspaper *Latvija* (1911). Looking at the stories of two authors – Polish writer Władysław Stanisław Reymont's (1867–1925) stories "Comedian" and "Fermentation" and Spanish author's Blasco Ibáñez (1867–1928) story "Orange Gardens" – she writes that in these stories the emancipation of a woman in material and social terms is no longer the object, the main theme is the woman's psychological emancipation from herself:

It sounds absurd, and yet it is not absurd. For who is more constrained than a woman? And for a woman to become free means to free herself from her narrow feminine instincts, inherited over millennia of slavery, which make her the object of men. (Gailīte 1911: 2)

Gailīte herself embodied the ideal of a modern woman having a mind and wishes of her own – she defied traditional gender roles by seeking an education equal to that available to men, as well as an occupation in which she could put her education to use and earn an independent income and because of that she was free to marry for love and to divorce when mutual respect and cooperation between the spouses ceased to exist.

Gailīte started to write fiction while living in Vologda. Her first collection of short stories *Longings and Delusions (Ilgas un maldi)* was published in 1913. In her prose, Gailīte portrays the internal conflicts and experiences of the modern woman in a psychologically nuanced manner, describing a new woman's liberation from her sense of dependence on her husband and her quest for spiritual independence and ethical harmony. She was concerned with the psychological liberation of a woman and the growth of a woman, which would put an end to her sense of dependence on a man. As Kusiņa points out, the choice of topics and the solutions in Gailīte's prose are also largely determined by the writer's personal experience, reflecting her own relationships (Kusiņa 2013: 91).

In 1914, right before World War 1 Gailīte travelled to Italy. The trip to Italy was so significant that she later mentioned it in an autobiographical sketch:

In the summer of 1914, I went to Italy with a Russian teacher tour from Moscow. This trip with artistic pleasure and gorgeous nature was one of the greatest events and deepest experiences of my life. (Gailīte 1936: 81)

In 1916, as her marriage to Eldgasts collapsed, Gailīte left for Moscow to study history in Moscow's Higher Women's Courses. In 1920 she returned to Latvia and started working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her book *Observations and Dreams*, notes from travelling to Italy in 1914, was published in 1920.

This little incident not only shows that Gailīte's modernism was a part of a larger movement among Latvian intelligensia, but also demonstrates the firmness of her opinion – the strength of character to stand on her own and to oppose the view of the book's publisher. Artist Roberts Suta drew the cover of the book. Suta at that time was known for his experiments in Modernism, and writer Ivande Kaija in her diary notes:

At the moment, the war of Latvian artists is coming to an end, between the classicists and expressionists. <...> [Rapa] recommended that Suta be commissioned to do a cover drawing. What he made looked neither like a man nor a sausage. Gulbis threw away the already printed covers of A. G. [Angelika Gailīte's] book "Observations and Dreams" and replaced them with plain covers without illustrations. A. G. was not satisfied with that and insisted that at least half of the books should be printed with Suta's drawings!" (Kaija 1931: 136)

The purpose of Gailīte's trip to Italy was to visit historical sites, art monuments, and museums. She described separately each Italian city that they visit. The book includes such chapters as: Florence, Fiesole, Naples, Pompeii, Capri, Rome, and Venice. Gailīte's travel book shows the author's deep and versatile knowledge of art and cultural history; however, it is also characterized by excitement, elation, and the ecstasy generated by Italian nature and art. Gailīte endeavors to give her readers not just a report of information gathered over the course of her journey, but also her personal, lived experience during that journey. She does not simply relate retrospectively the key points of her travel; instead Gailīte recreates her feelings and emotions so that the reader can share the experience of traveling to Italy with her. In the reviews Gailīte's *Observations and Dreams* is called a "sensitive travel book" (Dāle-Ķeniņa 1938: 70). As the narrator falls in love with Florence, she writes:

There were no dates, no days of the week – there was only one continuous holiday. I went out alone. Alone in a foreign city, wandering without aim, without purpose. And here you [Florence] embraced me with your loving sunbeams, and by putting a burning kiss on my forehead and on my lips, you have taken me captive forever. <...> Here in Florence, we forgot the fatigue, even the physical pain, because of the immense elation of the spirit and the desire to absorb as much beauty as possible from the rich treasures of this



The cover of book *Observations and Dreams* (1913)

wonderful city. The day seemed far too short. Hours in museums, churches, and squares seemed like minutes. After a day that had demanded all of our attention and strength, spiritual as well as physical, in the evenings we did not want to end up indoors and asleep, but our tireless crowd roamed the streets and squares, happy to touch with our feet the stones of Florence, happy to be surrounded by her spirit. In these blessed days, we knew no evil, no meanness, no trivia, no human earthiness. (Gailīte 1920: 29–30)

In Gailīte's travelogue we encounter a mode of travel writing that is also concerned with dramatizing complex and subtle interactions that occur between self/traveler and the world in the course of travel (Thompson 2011: 110). For example, when encountering another Italian city – Fiesole – she cannot find words to express her feelings:

Fiesole, you fairy tale in a fairy tale. I don't have enough gentle words to tell about you. My words seem to be a distant, cold echo when I began to talk about your beauty and charm. (Gailīte 1920: 42)

Gailīte also depicts herself as significantly emotionally influenced, even changed, by her experiences in Italy. For example, visiting Medici Chapel at Laurentia Church and seeing Michelangelo's sculptures is a very personal, deeply emotional and transformative experience:

In the silence, looking at these images, we slowly descend on the marble steps along the walls. But the thoughts are wandering deeper into the world of Michelangelo.... the fate of living, the new insight I learned at this holy hour. I went home in religious ecstasy. I felt rich, I felt like I had acquired something very important and serious. (Gailīte 1920: 41–42)

The experience of ecstasy caused by artwork is typical for Gailīte's travel descriptions.

Rosalind Marsh, thinking about travel narratives during the Silver Age of Russian culture – a term traditionally applied to the last decade of the 19th century and first two or three decades of the 20th century – concludes that a similarity among them all is the quest “to find a self that can only be found away from home” (Marsh 2004: 26). Gailīte's travelogue constitutes a personalized, autobiographical type of travel writing, as the narrator herself and her feelings and emotions are in the foreground of the text. Gailīte describes her trip to Italy not only in retrospective remembering as one of the most significant events of her life, but also reveals to the reader her inner transformations during the trip. For Gailīte the value of the journey is not determined by what is seen during the travel, but by the extent to which the journey promotes spiritual growth and changes the traveler.

CONCLUSIONS: TRAVELING, WRITING, AND FEMALE AGENCY

Minna Freimane's travelogue "In memory" is an eyewitness testimony, a message for those who cannot see and experience the foreign lands for themselves. While personal attitude is present in the text, the author considers as her most important obligation to inform and educate her readers at home, describing with the best accuracy possible what she observes. However, traveling and travel writing for 19th century woman traveler was also an important step in the process of female emancipation (Watt 1991: 339), so it was for Freimane who virtually on her own explored corners of the world that not many of her compatriots had visited before and wrote a book about her experiences – also redefining the image of the feminine as active and self-determined.

Anna Rūmane-Ķeniņa's and Angelika Gailīte's travel to Italy in the beginning of the 20th century "painted" a new picture of modern womanhood that also included the freedom to travel. For upper-middle class women of their generation travel also fulfilled a yearning for education and for an experience of the art and culture of the Western world. Both Rūmane-Ķeniņa and Gailīte were independent, educated, and professional women supporting themselves working as teachers. Their travels expanded their worldview and provided intense personal experiences as well as gave them creative impulses that allowed them in their travelogues to vividly convey not only the objective facts about the external scenes of Italy, but also subjective and strongly emotional impressions.

"If anything unites the women authors of the modernist period, it is the desire to reach beyond masculine portrayals of women," writes Maren Tova Linett, pointing out that women's lives generally needed new imaginative expression of "their relationships to their work, to their rural or urban landscapes, to philosophy, to religion, and to politics" (Linnett 2010: 2). Traveling to Italy and writing about it at the beginning of the 20th century was about artistic and cultural experiences, self-education and self-discovery for several other Latvian women writers as well. From 1910 to 1914 the writer Ivande Kaija visited the major cultural cities of Europe – Zurich, Rome and Paris and delightfully related in her letters to Aspazija and Rainis the cultural riches she has seen (Kaija 1931: 400–406). The writer Emīlija Prūsa traveled to Italy seeing Rome, Naples, Capri, Florence, Venice in 1906 and later used her travel impressions in her novel *The Italian* (1927). While the novel is based on a love intrigue, there are also many descriptions of cultural and historical sites of Italy. The philosopher Milda Paleviča, along with her husband, Fallijs, and his students travelled to Italy to study Renaissance art in museums and

churches in Florence and Venice from 1910 to 1911. On January 19, 1911 in Florence, Paleviča in her diary wrote:

Today I bought this diary, hoping that it will be as dear to me as the old one! The diary is very important for me: it forces me to criticize myself and through that critique to love myself properly, it makes my friendship with myself more real, deeper. (Paleviča 1995: 252)

If women modernists grew from a feminine tradition of writing about the self (Podnieks 2006: 9), then, positioned between autobiography and fiction, travel narratives, expressing the subjective experiences, fit into the paradigm of modernism. Travel narratives written by Latvian women writers in the early 20th century not only gave women an acceptable medium for voicing their thoughts and ideas, but also for constructing a modern woman's artistic identity as intellectual and independent.

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MODERNIZMO LINK: XX AMŽIAUS PRADŽIOS LATVIŅU MOTERŪ KELIŅU PASAKOJIMAI

SANTRAUKA. XX amžiaus pradžioje latvių moterų virsmą rašytojoms lėmė išsilavinimas ir laisvės. Tuo metu keliaujančios literatės žymėjo bendresnį visuomenės pokytį – keliavimą savo malonumui. Jos keliavo į Vakarų Europą – Italiją, Prancūziją, Šveicariją – edukaciniais ir pažintiniais tikslais. Annos Rūmanės-Ķeniņas (1877–1950) apybraižų cikle „Iš pietų“ (*Iz Dienvidiem*, 1902) ir Angelikos Gailītės (1884–1975) kelionių pasakojime „Pastebėjimai ir sapnai“ (*Vērojumi un sapņojumi*, 1920) buvo aprašyta kelionė į Italiją. Kelionių proza, įsiterpusi tarp autobiografijos ir grožinės literatūros, atskleidė asmeninius potyrius ir buvo tinkama terpė rašytojoms viešai reikšti savo mintis. Besidalydamos išpūdžiais apie užsienio vietas ir žmones, jos tobulino saviraišką. Per tekstus pristatė savo gyvenimą ir įgijo naują socialinį statusą visuomenėje, o jų kelionių pasakojimai tapo svarbiu moterų indėliu į XX amžiaus pradžios Latvijos kultūrą.

RAKTAŽODIAI: moterys rašytojos, kelionių žurnalas, autobiografinis rašymas, moterų agentūra, latvių literatūra.