
IN MEMORIAM

MAYA KORENEVA (1936–2016)



Maya Koreneva, a researcher of American literature, theatre and drama, a literary critic and translator, Doctor habilitat, Chief Research Associate of A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences, passed away on November 13, 2016.

She was born in Moscow; during the war (1941–1944) her family was evacuated first to the Gorky (Nizhny Novgorod) region, and then to Mednogorsk, Chkalovsk (Orenburg) region. There and upon their return to Moscow, devastated by the war, the family had to overcome many difficulties — food shortages, misery, diseases (in Mednogorsk little Maya caught tuberculosis). She went to school, directly into the second grade, in 1944. When it was time to choose a career, she already knew for sure that she was to become an actress, and so was preparing to enter a theatre school. But things didn't work out as she expected.

In 1958 Maya Koreneva graduated from the Philological Faculty of Lomonosov Moscow State University, specializing in British and American literature. She had been recommended for graduate studies after defending her diploma paper. First, however, due to the law that had recently been passed requiring three years of work experience before one could become a graduate student, in the fall of 1958 Maya

started to work for the English language broadcast office of the All-Union Radio. Her next employment was as a laboratory assistant and translator at the Institute of Metallurgy of the Academy of Sciences. In November 1961 Maya Koreneva began her graduate studies at A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences. By the end of her graduate studies the dissertation was not ready yet — the research required some additional time and effort, and she intended to widen the basis of her dissertation by adding the latest, still uninvestigated material. As time passed, more unforeseen difficulties arose. Maya Koreneva herself described the situation as follows: “I was working on my dissertation ‘Modern American Drama, 1945–1970’, making it more and more complicated and voluminous — its chronological boundaries were extended, the number of pages was already over 500. Meanwhile the new directorate of the Institute wanted me to change my topic and to write a new dissertation (the quality of my work wasn’t under discussion). I flatly refused and preferred to stick to my topic. Some years later the directorate changed its attitude and let me defend my dissertation. It required some additional effort, however, to meet the requirements of the Higher Attestation Commission”.

Maya Koreneva defended her PhD dissertation in June, 1975, at Gorky Institute, where by that time she had already been working more than 10 years: her postgraduate studies having been finished, she was employed as a research associate in the Sector of Foreign Literature (later — Sector of Contemporary European and American Literature).

In 1993 Maya Koreneva defended her Doctor habilitat dissertation, “Eugene O’Neale and the Ways of American Drama”, based on her eponymously named book (1990). In the post-Soviet period of academic mobility Maya Koreneva, a leading specialist of Gorky Institute in American literary studies, got a Fulbright fellowship and had an opportunity to go to the USA. Her first trip was to Faulkner’s hometown, Oxford, Mississippi (1992); the second was to Yale University (1999). Maya Koreneva’s academic career included research, translation and teaching: she lectured on twentieth-century American literature at the Russian State University for the Humanities (RSUH) and gave a workshop on the translation of fiction. Having published many research articles, books, essays, forewords, book reviews, Dr. Koreneva was at the same time an excellent translator. Among her translations there is a constellation of great American and British writers: William Faulkner, D.H. Lawrence, Samuel Beckett, Oscar Wilde, Eugene O’Neale, A. Conan Doyle, Dylan Thomas. Another professional achievement was her participation in the six-volume *Literary History of the USA* (1997–2013), which has been under preparation at Gorky Institute for over 20 years. Maya Koreneva was among its editors and principal authors. The team gathered and directed by Yassen Zas-



sourski, Maya Koreneva and Ekaterina Stetsenko united all the leading Americanists both in Russia and other post-Soviet states. The result of Maya Koreneva's dedicated work was the unique fundamental scholarly edition that stands apart in the history of American literary studies in Russia and abroad. Besides that, this project fostered consolidation of the Americanist academic community in Russia, contrary to the centrifugal tendencies of the 1990s–2000s — a complicated period of change and transition.

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