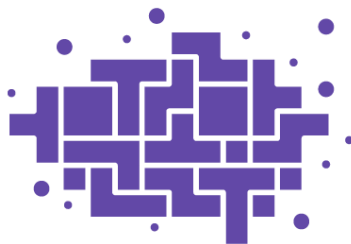


# Mention of Historical Personalities and the Attributed Meanings to them in the Poetry of Ojārs Vācietis



UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA  
FACULTY OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCES



**FLPP**  
FUNDAMENTAL AND  
APPLIED RESEARCH  
PROJECTS

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# Ojārs Vācietis (1933–1983)



# Historical Personalities in the Poetry of Ojārs Vācietis

- The **aim** of the research is to identify the historical personalities named in Ojārs Vācietis' poetry and to try to understand and interpret the meanings assigned to them
- **Research methods:**
  - quantitative content analysis
  - qualitative content analysis
  - semiotic analysis
- **Meanings** – the ideas that a person wants to express by using words, signs
  - meanings are socially constructed and historically transformed

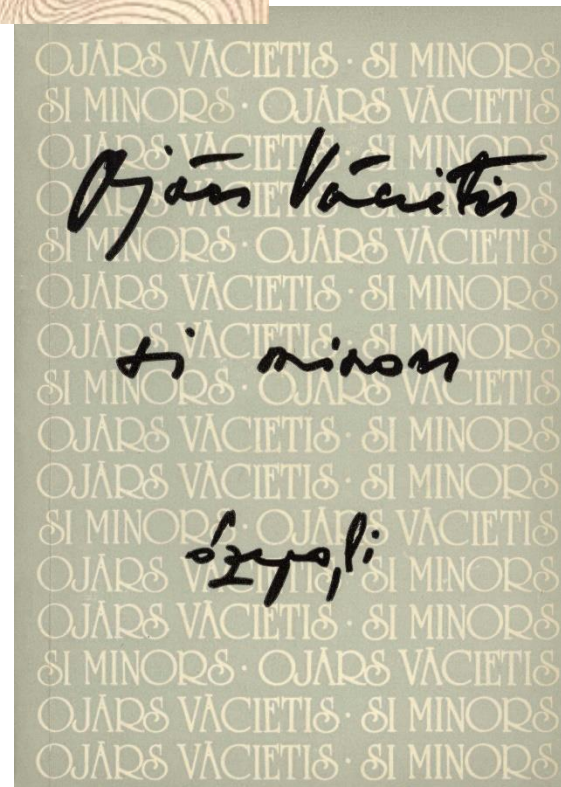
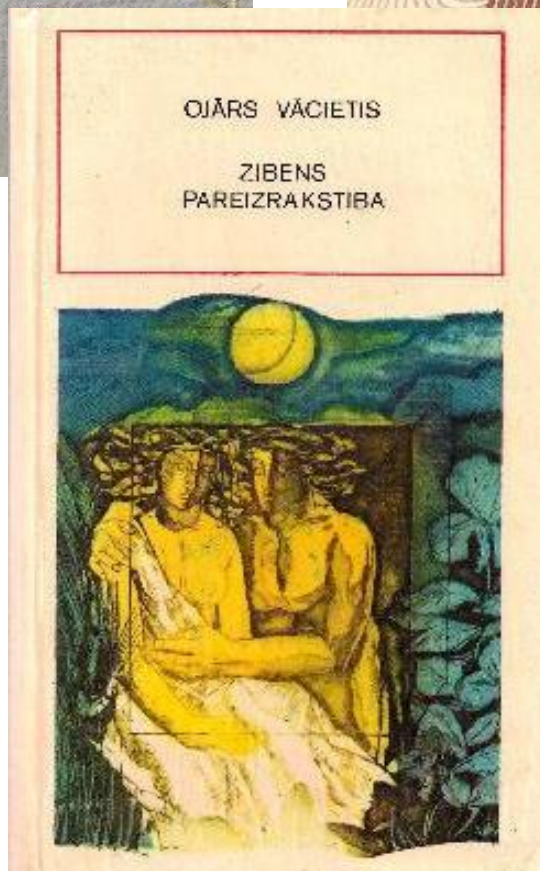
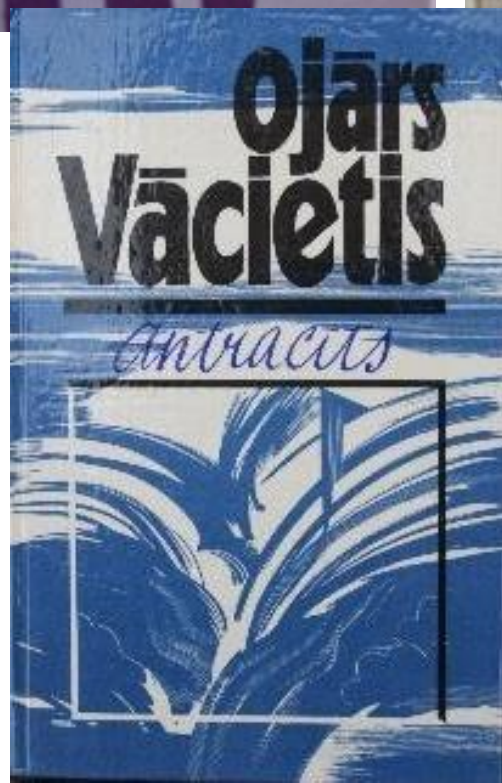
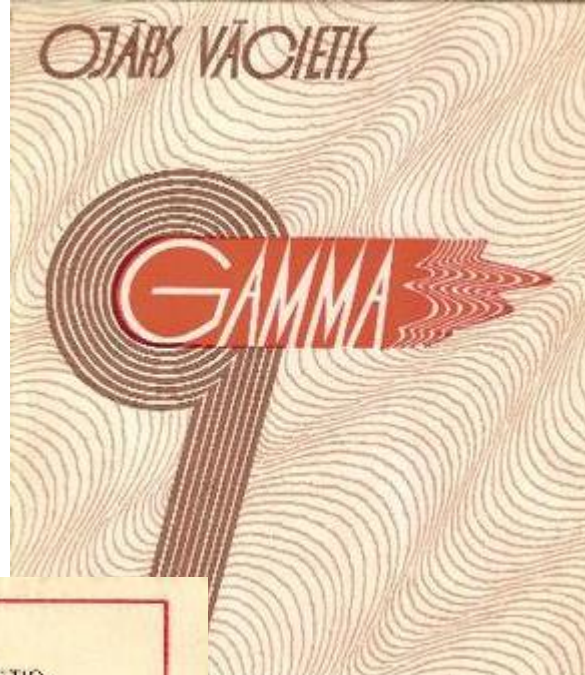
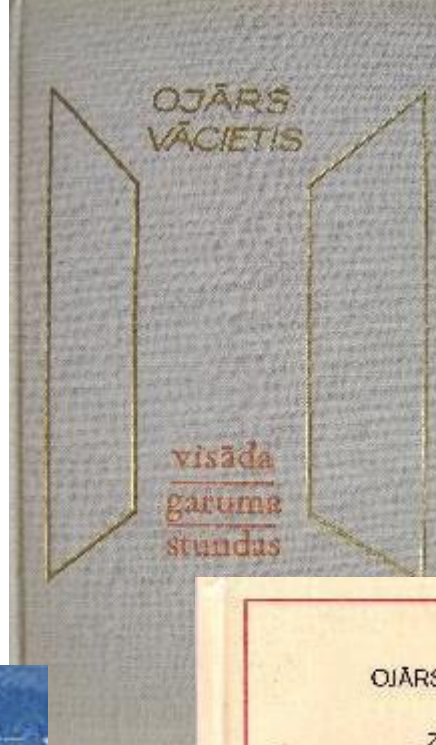


## «Time of Stagnation»

- declining economic development indicators
- cynicism of the population against Soviet ideology and power, double morality
- the aging elite of the Communist Party
- corrupt authorities and economic structures
- regular shortage of consumer goods
- relative prosperity and stability (better than before)
- an influential nuclear power in international politics

# Results of quantitative content analysis

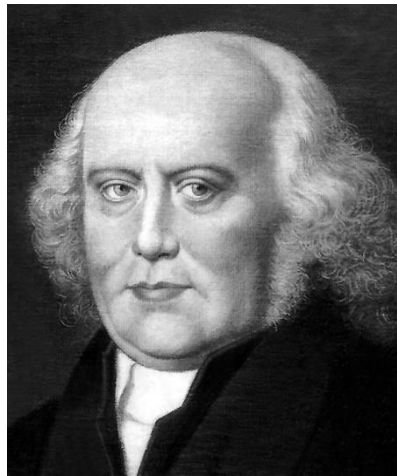
- Approximately 7% of the poems that were published during the 'time of stagnation' include the names of real individuals, as well as images from literature, religion and mythology
  - Approximately 4% of the poems include the names of historical personalities



- "Melnās ogas" (1971)
- "Visāda garuma stundas" (1974)
- "Gamma" (1976)
- "Antracīts" (1978)
- "Zibens pareizrakstība" (1980)
- "Si minors" (1982)

## Mentioned in three published poems

- Aleksandrs Čaks
- Garlieb Merkel
- Rainis
- Ojārs Vācietis (also Ojāriņš)



## Mentioned in two published poems

- Vincent van Gogh
- Nero
- Alfred Rosenberg
- David Siqueiros



# Mentioned in one published poem

- Bella Akhmadulina
- Joan of Arc
- Aleksandrs Bieziņš
- Otto von Bismarck
- Mikhail Bulgakov
- Paul Cézanne
- Frédéric Chopin
- Georgi Dimitrov
- Diogenes
- Albrecht Dürer
- Albert Einstein

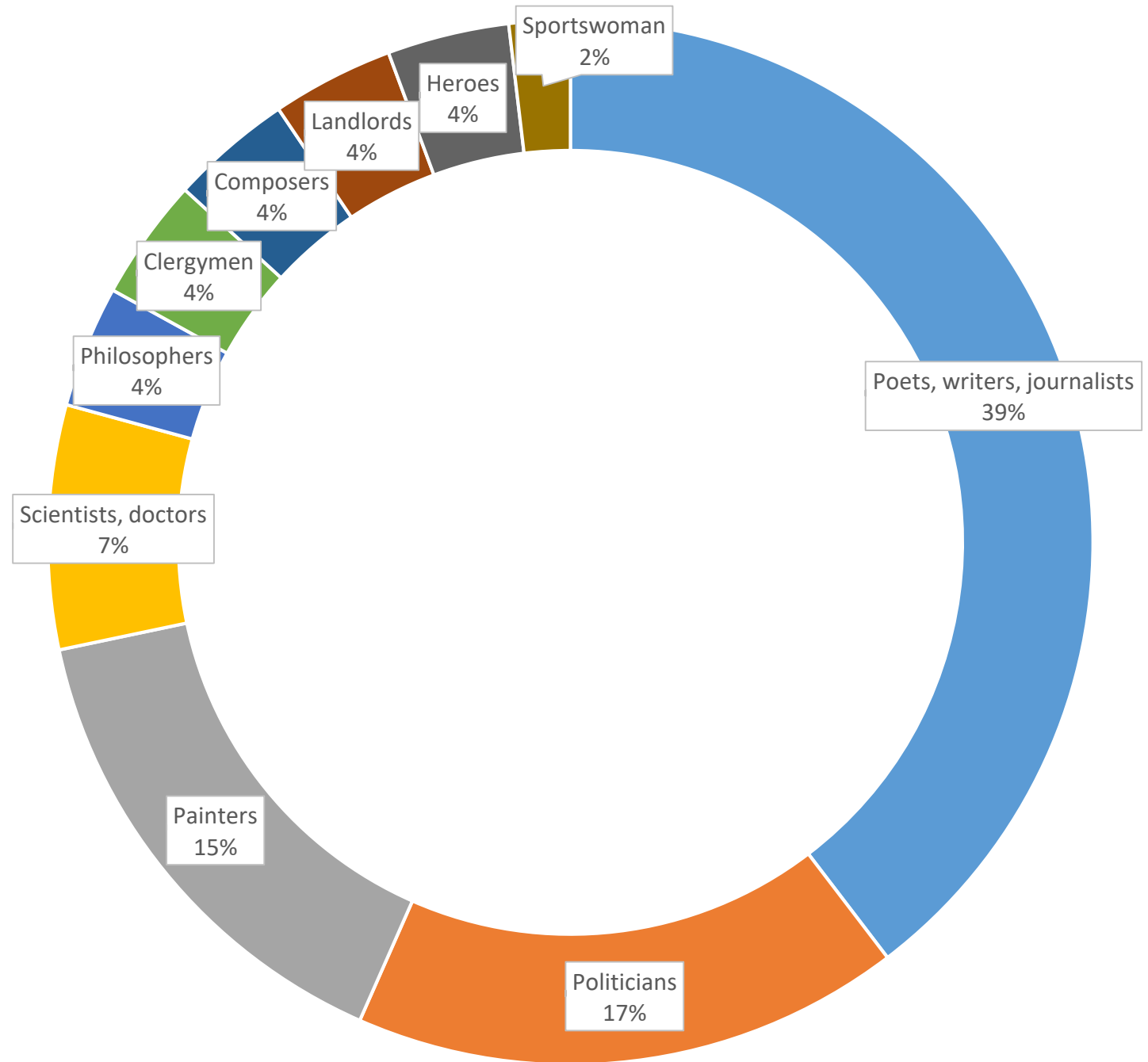
- Julius Fučík
- Galileo Galilei
- Johann Ernst Glück
- Wolfgang von Goethe
- Hermann Göring
- Otto von Habsburg
- Johann Gottfried Herder
- Jēkabs Kazāks
- Natalia Kuchinskaya
- Franz Liszt
- Dmitri Mendeleev

- Theodor Nette
- Pablo Picasso
- Pius X
- Wolter von Plettenberg
- Jānis Poruks
- Alexander Pushkin
- William Shakespeare
- Spartacus
- von Wulf
- Sergei Yesenin



# 1971–1983

## Results of content analysis



# 1956–1970

Mentioned in four published poems



Vladimir Lenin

Rainis



Mentioned in two published poems



Ludwig van Beethoven

Fidel Castro

Aleksandrs Čaks

Albert Einstein

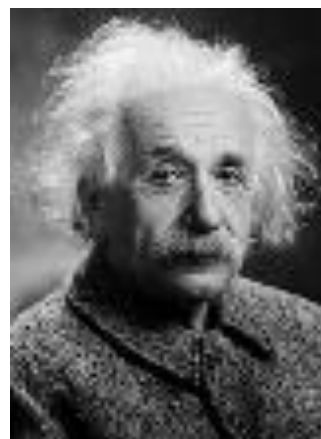
Vincent van Gogh

Nâzim Hikmet

Wolfgang Mozart

Robert Schumann

von Wulf



# 1956–1970

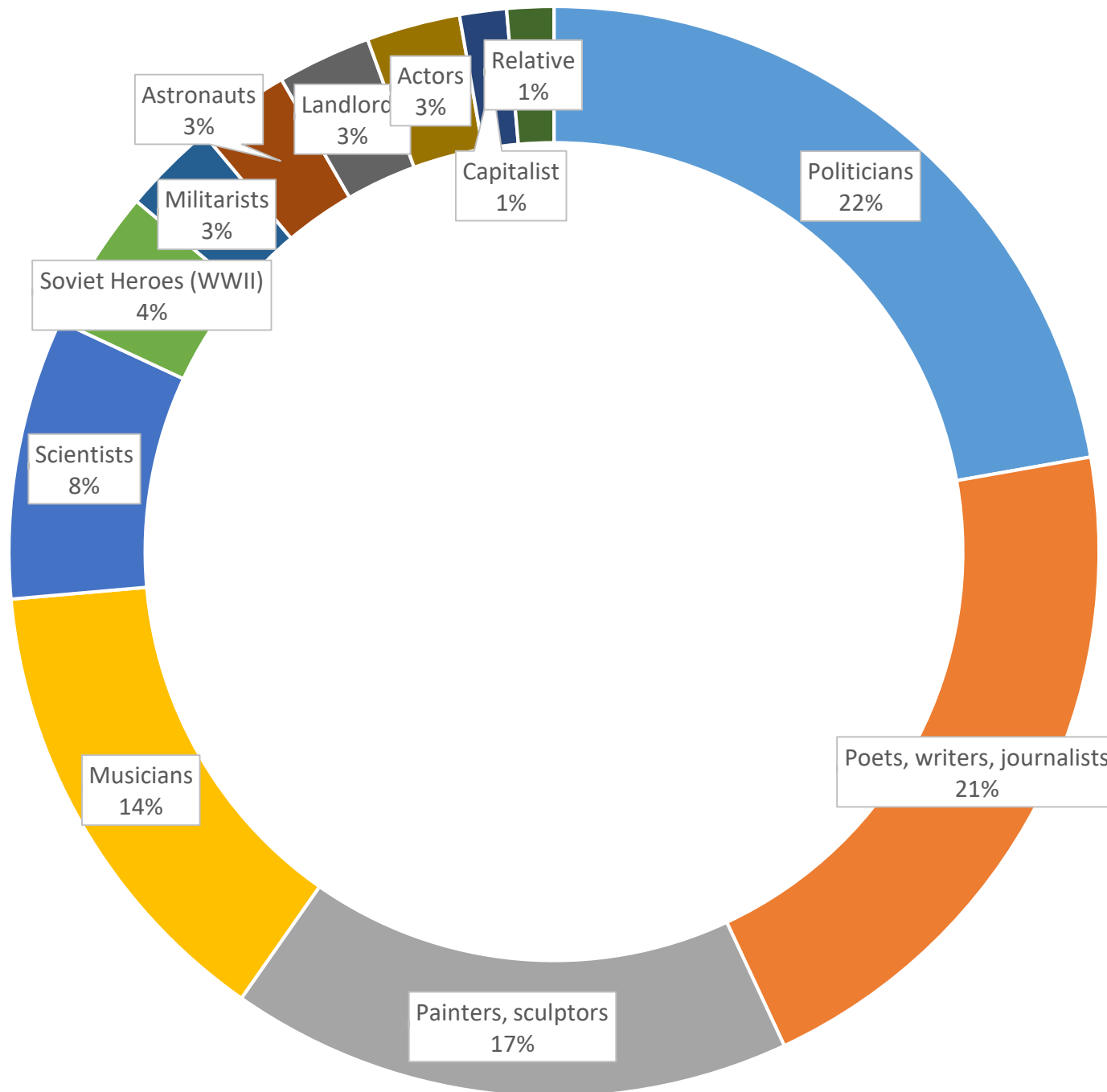
Mentioned in one published poem



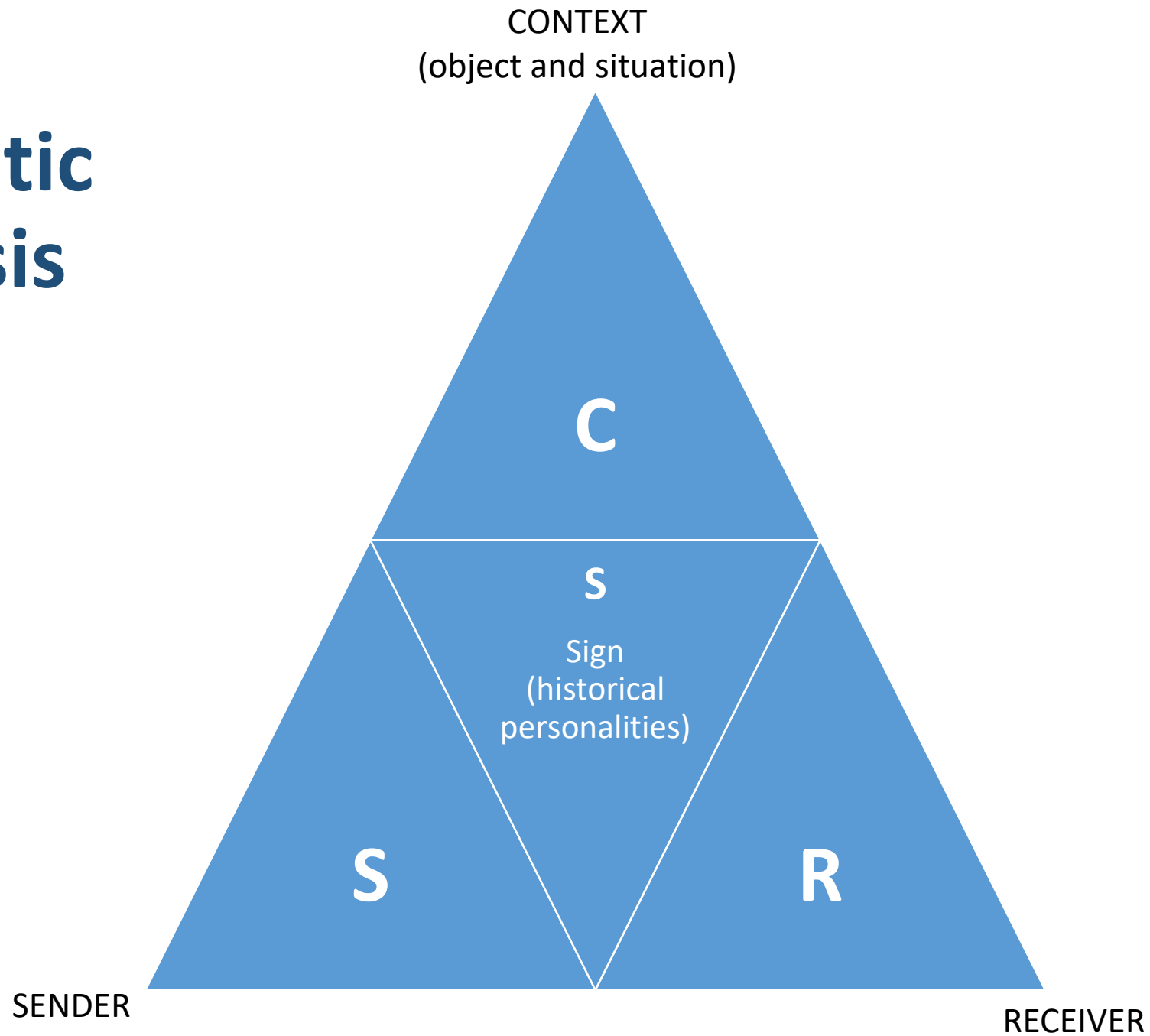
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Hans Christian Andersen | <input type="checkbox"/> Borys Hmyria          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pablo Picasso         | <input type="checkbox"/> Imants Sudmalis        |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Giordano Bruno          | <input type="checkbox"/> John Kennedy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Vilhelms Purvītis     | <input type="checkbox"/> Valentina Tereshkova   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lord Byron              | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya | <input type="checkbox"/> Raphael               | <input type="checkbox"/> Leon Trotsky           |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Charlie Chaplin         | <input type="checkbox"/> Franz Liszt           | <input type="checkbox"/> John D. Rockefeller   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mikhail Tukhachevsky   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Julius Fučík            | <input type="checkbox"/> Federico García Lorca | <input type="checkbox"/> Auguste Rodin         | <input type="checkbox"/> Pauls Vācietis         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yuri Gagarin            | <input type="checkbox"/> Karl Marx             | <input type="checkbox"/> Romain Rolland        | <input type="checkbox"/> Andris Vējāns          |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Francisco Goya          | <input type="checkbox"/> Ernst Neizvestny      | <input type="checkbox"/> David Siqueiros       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hovhannes Zardaryan    |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Niccolò Paganini      |  |   |

**1956–1970**

**Results of  
content  
analysis**

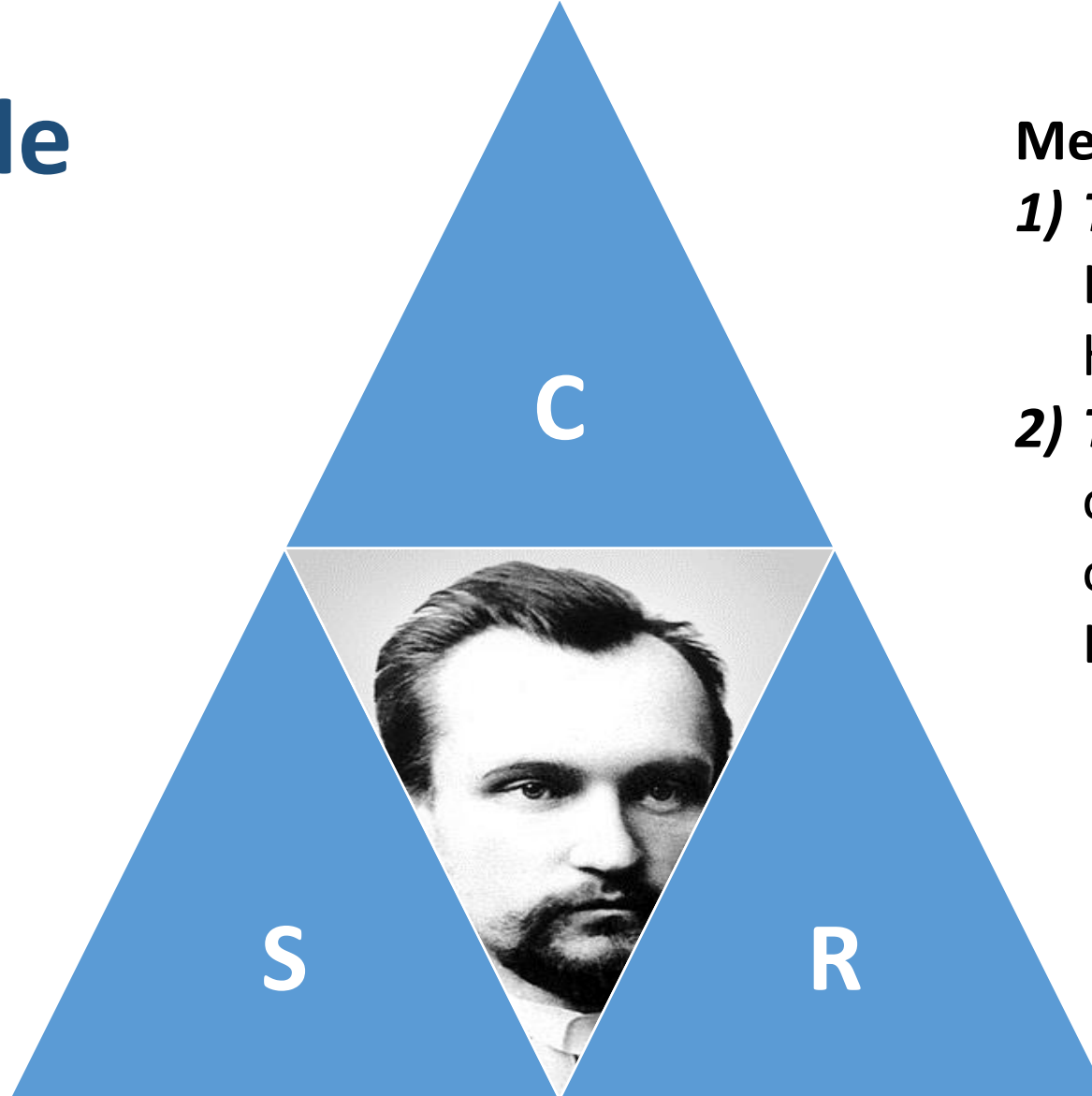


# Semiotic analysis



# Example

**CONTEXT**  
Poet. Time of Thaw and Stagnation



**SENDER**  
Ojārs Vācietis

## Meanings:

- 1) *Time of Thaw*:** outstanding Latvian poet, poet accepted and honored by the Soviet authorities
- 2) *Time of Stagnation*:** the most outstanding Latvian poet, outstanding personality, value of Latvian culture

**RECEIVER**  
Poetry readers. Soviet  
Latvians. Latvians

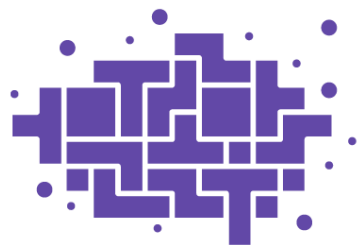
# Conclusions

- Vācietis' poems were always contextual, and the framework of the specific time period had an effect on their content
- Vācietis' poems include the names of real individuals, as well as images from literature, religion and mythology
- There is a distinct difference between the poems, which Vācietis wrote in the 1950s and 1960s in terms of real persons who were named therein, as opposed to the symbolic images that were created in culture
  - During the 1950s and 1960s, Vācietis frequently relied on symbols of revolutionaries, politicians and scientists as transformers of the world, defenders of oppressed people and inspirers of change, thus encouraging people to pursue their own ideals in life
  - Poems from the 1970s and early 1980s, by contrast, hardly ever contain the names of those seeking to transform society and the world. Instead, Vācietis was comparatively more likely to rely on the names of writers, poets, painters and composers who were highly rated in Latvian and world culture
- The poems which Vācietis wrote during the Brezhnev era make it clear that he was desperate and helpless in front of the realities of the 'time of stagnation', as well as how much he was hurt by a lack of social and national prospects

# THANK YOU!



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The pictures from author’s archives