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The Board of Directors of LITUANUS regretfully announce the retirement of Dr. Violeta Kelertas and Dr. Gražina Slavėnas from their respective positions as Chief Editor and Associate Editor of the journal. Dr. Kelertas began her contribution to LITUANUS with her first article in 1977. She joined the Editorial Board in 1990 and became Chief Editor in 2000. Dr. Slavėnas began writing for the journal in 1979 and later became a member of the Editorial Board and Associate Editor. We are very grateful for their contributions to LITUANUS and their efforts to make LITUANUS interesting and relevant to a diverse audience. We wish them success in their future endeavors and count on their continued support.

Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis,
Sonata No. 2, (Spring), Scherzo. Tempera on pasteboard, 1907.

Toward a Biography of Algirdas Julius Greimas (1917-1992)

THOMAS F. BRODEN

Algirdas Julius Greimas was a member of the Lithuanian equivalent of the "Greatest Generation," men and women called upon to exert decisive efforts during the Second World War.[1] The years were all the more challenging in Lithuania in that, along with Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus, and parts of Poland and Western Russia, the country lay in the swath of East Central Europe that Timothy Snyder has dubbed the "bloodlands," subjected to mass violence engineered by both Stalin and Hitler during the war years.[2] Whereas the spirit of the USA's "Greatest Generation" was marked by the preceding hardships of the Great Depression, the social event that made the greatest impact on its Lithuanian counterparts was perhaps the Act of February 16. Greimas and his contemporaries formed part of the first generation to grow up in an independent Lithuania since the Middle Ages—and the last such generation until the end of the Twentieth Century.

For Lithuanians of his day, A. J. Greimas was an internationally celebrated scholar and an active participant in Lithuanian public life. The renown earned by his research in French linguistics and the prestigious academic position he held in

1 Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation*, 1998.

2 Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 2010.

THOMAS F. BRODEN, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Purdue University. The author of numerous scholarly articles on semiotics and French literature and culture, he edited Greimas' previously unpublished Sorbonne dissertations in 2000 with the Presses Universitaires de France. In 1981-82 he studied with Greimas and his research group in Paris.

Paris put him in an elite category among intellectuals from his country. Greimas is one of only three individuals born in the last century to which a 2000 collective work on modern Lithuanian philosophy devotes an entire chapter.[3] His twelve monographs on semantics and semiotics investigate the foundations of meaning, especially in language and texts, and have come out in translation in many languages. To date, his landmark first book, *Sémantique structurale* (*Structural Semantics*) has been translated into Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Finnish, English, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Lithuanian. He taught for twenty years at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, the most illustrious and dynamic degree-granting institution of higher learning in France. Even Lithuanian Communist Party apparatchiks tacitly considered him and his scholarship a national treasure to be conserved and championed.[4]

Virtually unbeknownst to those of us who worked with him in French semiotics, Greimas also took an active role in Lithuanian public affairs. He held leadership positions in the anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet resistance, published extensively in the liberal émigré press throughout his life, participated in Santara-Šviesa, and produced important scholarship on Lithuanian heritage that played a prominent role in the revival of the country's culture during the latter part of the Soviet period. In the mold of Lithuanian liberalism, Greimas's fidelity to his native land did not countenance complacency, parochialism, or xenophobia, but demanded critical thinking, excellence, and goals valid for all of humankind. Upon his death, the Lithuanian embassy in France published an official announcement regretting the loss of a man "Faithful to his native country's language and actively supportive of its Renaissance,"[5] and the newly independent Lithuanian Republic commemorated the return of his ashes with an official state ceremony addressed by President Vytautas Landsbergis.

In France and other Romance countries, Greimas and his

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[3] Baranova, ed. *Lithuanian Philosophy*; the other two are Vytautas Kavolis and Arvydas Šliogeris.

[4] Tomas Venclova, letter to the author 24 August 2010.

[5] *Le Monde*, Thursday 5 March 1992, 18.

scholarship remain well known today. But younger generations of Lithuanians are not necessarily familiar with his work or his person. As one of his Lithuanian friends and contemporaries put it in 2011, "Everybody that was anybody in my generation knew Greimas personally or heard of his work. But there are not many of us left. The generation of our children or even grandchildren may not be informed."[6]

The author was fortunate enough to study with Greimas and his research group for a year in Paris and to collaborate with them ever since. The present article represents a draft of the first chapter in an intellectual biography in preparation on Greimas. To the extent feasible, the book project endeavors to communicate faithfully both events and what it was like to live through them, both *history* and *experience*. History requires an "objective" account grounded in documents recognized as authoritative. Experience demands a "subjective" contact found in personal witness, such as one may encounter in direct exchanges, interviews, and letters.

This liminal text recounts the years that Greimas lived in Lithuania, before fleeing the second Soviet occupation in 1944 and pursuing his career in the Francophone world. This part of his life remains a work in progress at the moment, since a number of important points await further confirmation and development by historical sources. The main lines already stand out clearly, however. The author, a French professor, would like to recognize the members of the Lithuanian community whose research and whose generous collaboration provided much of the information on "Lithuanian Greimas" for the project,[7]

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[6] Aleksandra Kašuba e-mail to the author 3 September 2011.

[7] Prof. Karolis Rimtautas Kašponis has researched Greimas's childhood and his parents, and Leonas Peleckis-Kaktavičius interviewed fellow Šiauliai residents who knew him in the early 1940s. For other biographical and bibliographical information used in this article and for invaluable translations, I especially thank Vytas Virkau, Julija Korostenskaja and Raymond Viskanta, as well as Asta Balkutė, Irena Kriaučiūnienė, Aldas Kriaučiūnas, Aleksandra Kašuba, Kęstutis Nastopka, Enata Skrupskelis, Julija Šukys, Henrietta Vepštas, and Purdue colleagues Rebekah Klein-Pejšová, Michael G. Smith, and Whitney Walton.

and welcomes any additional comments or information. The project would like to contribute to the task of composing and passing on the story of a significant figure from the last century for the benefit of his compatriots, kindred human spirits, and historical memory.

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Algirdas Julius Greimas was born on 9 March 1917, the second child of Julius Greimas (1882-1942), a teacher and public school inspector, and of Konstancija Mickevičiūtė-Greimienė (1886-1956), a secretary. Both of his parents were ethnic Lithuanians and spoke Lithuanian. His father came from a village near Marijampolė in Suvalkija, not far from the current border with Poland.[8] Algirdas's mother and her family had lived for a number of years in Suvalkija as well, in Kalvarija, although they were originally from sizable towns in the area south of present-day Lithuania, in the region historically under Polish control.

Algirdas came into the world in the industrial city of Tula in Russia, where his parents had fled as refugees during World War I. After the armistice, the family returned to newly independent Lithuania, to the hamlet in Aukštaitija where Julius had been teaching before the war. In 1919, they moved to the nearby village of Kupiškis, where they would live for eight years, until Algirdas was ten years old. Algirdas and his sister Gražina got a younger brother Romualdas. In addition to his classroom duties, Julius Greimas formed a local *Aušrininkai* group to foster Lithuanian identity and autonomy and was elected secretary of the town council.[9] Algirdas always harbored fond memories of growing up in the bucolic, forested Aukštaitian region and working on a farm during the summer months: "Kupiškis means a lot to me... my beautiful walks, my contact with the people in our village—and my love of folklore."[10] Algirdas began

[8] This and most of the following specifics about Greimas' parents and childhood are found in Kašponis, *Algirdas Julius Greimas ir jo semiotika*.

[9] Peleckis-Kaktavičius, "Prasmių paieškos," 10.

[10] Greimas, letter to Kupiškis elementary school classmate Povilas Zulonas, 1971, quoted in Kašponis, *Algirdo Greimo vaikystė*.

elementary school when he was seven, skipped a couple of grades, and entered secondary school (*vidurinė mokykla*) at the age of nine. He and his siblings were part of the first generation to be schooled in Lithuanian. Like other children of parents in the liberal professions, they followed a traditional humanistic curriculum taught by university-trained instructors; Algirdas recalls studying Latin, Greek, and German.

In those days, a family like the Greimases, including the children, would have been bilingual, speaking both the cultivated language Polish, and Lithuanian, traditionally the language of peasants. Algirdas recalls that "my mother forbade her daughter to speak Lithuanian," just as his mother had been forbidden to speak Lithuanian by her own mother:[11] educated women who wanted their daughters to enjoy good marriage prospects trained them to imitate the landed gentry in the area and not the rural commoners. On the other hand, Greimas had a photo, which was taken in 1905, that shows a young Konstancija Mickevičiūtė and her girlfriends dressed in the traditional national costume and standing in front of an inscription in Lithuanian that says they're going to an evening dance at a neighbor's.[12] Algirdas himself never acknowledged competence in Polish on his curricula vitae, and like many of his compatriots, considered Poland to be Lithuania's rival and adversary.[13]

Algirdas felt particularly close to his father, was thankful to him for opportunities he made available, and saw himself as following in his footsteps in significant ways. He later reminisced about moments they shared: "My father practiced instruction by silence. We would take walks in the forest, just the two of us. It was a great lesson: two people together, without having

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[11] Greimas, 5 January and 15 January 1991 letters to Žibuntas Mikšys, who translated the passages into French and quoted them in a letter to the author 23 August 2010. Cf. Balkelis, *The Making of Modern Lithuania*, 6-7.

[12] Greimas letter to Žibuntas Mikšys 15 January 1991.

[13] Žibuntas Mikšys telephone conversation with the author 12 November 2010.

to say anything."[14] Extended family members recall that, as a young man, Algirdas physically resembled Julius and wore a moustache trimmed in similar fashion.[15]

In 1927, Julius was transferred to Šiauliai, an industrial center and Lithuania's fourth largest city. Four years later, the family moved to Marijampolė, to Julius's native area. The relocation allowed Algirdas to finish his secondary education in one of the finest high schools in the country, the German-style *gymnasium* Rygiškių Jonas, celebrated for educating leaders of the Lithuanian national rebirth, including Jonas Basanavičius, Kazys Grinius, Vincas Kudirka, and Jonas Jablonskis. Greimas took a wide array of mathematics courses and studied history, religion, philosophy, and literature from teachers whose principal references were Germanic. He met and became life-long friends with schoolmate Aleksys Churginas, who would go on to publish poetry and authoritative translations. He recalls making many intellectual discoveries thanks to a reading group that he and classmates formed in order to teach themselves foreign languages and gain access to world literature unavailable in translation: Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Ilya Ehrenburg; Oscar Wilde and Edgar Allan Poe; the French poets Charles Baudelaire and Paul Verlaine.[16] In charge of German, Algirdas picked selections from the philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer. He later summarized these years, "Looking back it seems now that I was a normal youth and high school student of my Lithuanian-speaking generation. Like everyone else, I wanted to overthrow Smetona and liberate Vilnius. I dreamed about and looked for the love which does not exist."[17] Later in life, Greimas identified himself specifically as a Suvalkian, a native of Suvalkai, where he graduated high school and where his father was from.

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[14] Greimas radio interview with Francesca Piolot broadcast on "France Culture" 14 February 1989.

[15] Oškinaitė-Būtėnienė, "Dialogo monologai," 59.

[16] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" I, 12.

[17] Ibid., 11.

Greimas joined the Boys Scouts and became a group leader, opting to work with sons of workers in the sugar factory and students in the trade school. He became friends with Vytautas Kašuba, a member of the troop who would gain international recognition as a sculptor. Decades later, Vytautas remembered Algirdas "as a leader with dictatorial discipline," a characterization which Greimas accepted, allowing that at the time, "I was somewhat fascistically and socialistically inclined."[18] In the 1930s, far-right and far-left movements throughout Europe called for dramatic action and radical social reform, with the extremes meeting and overlapping in curious ways.[19] Greimas later recalled the sociopolitical atmosphere of his high school and college days:

> Today, it is impossible to grasp that intoxication, that craze which in the third decade of the Twentieth Century embraced all the youth of Europe. It was as if they were responding to an unholy need to take action, which haunted everyone and urged them to action by any means, to do something, no matter what, to break something at any price... A young person would become a Fascist or a Communist solely due to their environment or circumstances.[20]

In his eight years of middle school and high school, Algirdas achieved superior results: he took at least nineteen subjects, earning nine 4s and nine 5s, the highest, infrequently given grade in the Lithuanian system.[21] He apparently was not a gifted vocalist, for Music and Singing provided him his only 3! In

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[18] Aleksandra Kašuba letter to Greimas 25 October 1989 and Greimas letter to Kašuba 5 November 1989, in *Greimas and Kašuba, Algirdo Juliaus Greimo*, 90-91.

[19] Certain prominent activists even rapidly migrated from one pole to the other without traversing the middle, such as Jacques Doriot in France.

[20] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" I, 15.

[21] Certified 15 October 1936 French translation of Greimas's 22 June 1934 certificate from Rygiškių Jonas High School, provided to the University of Grenoble; Archives du département de l'Isère, Grenoble, Fonds du rectorat de Grenoble, sous-série 20T non coté, Greimas file.

June 1934, he passed the comprehensive national high school exams and received the recommendation to continue his studies at university. His father recognized the achievement by presenting him with the works of Nietzsche in the original.[22]

In the fall of 1934, Algirdas enrolled at the Law School of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, the capital of Lithuania between the two world wars, located only thirty miles from Marijampolė. Greimas describes Kaunas as a cosmopolitan city, where he first fraternized with a smarter, somewhat snobby crowd returned from foreign metropolitan centers, including some in England and America. He took classes from a number of professors who were distinguished scholars and prominent public figures, including university Rector Mykolas Römeris, the founder of Lithuanian constitutional law and justice of the Supreme Court; Vladas Jurgutis, former chairman of the Bank of Lithuania and Foreign Minister; and the eminent philosopher Vosylius Sezemanas.[23] However, the figure who made the greatest impression on him was Lev P. Karsavin, a historian of religious philosophy. Karsavin's lectures on medieval Christian philosophy instilled in Algirdas an enduring love for the Middle Ages and inspired him by their elegant mastery of Lithuanian: "I was fascinated by his beautiful, cultivated language. I hadn't known that it was possible to speak so finely in Lithuanian about wise matters."[24] Karsavin and the other faculty named had all studied in St. Petersburg as well as in Germany or France, and they educated Greimas in Slavic intellectual traditions.

Outside of class, lawyer-in-training Algirdas recounts a student life of nights spent drinking beer and reciting poetry with chums followed by hungover mornings devoted to reading figures such as Leon Trotsky, Oswald Spengler, and Johan Huizinga, who formed his first conceptions of history, the discipline which would provide the framework for the

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[22] Greimas radio interview with Francesca Piolot broadcasted on "France Culture" 17 February 1989.

[23] Kašponis, *Algirdas Julius Greimas*, 6.

[24] Greimas, "Karsavino aktualumas," 40.

first two decades of his research.[25] He joined Neo-Lithuania, a university student organization devoted to maintaining Lithuanian independence and protecting its interests. It and other student clubs developed leaders for the intellectual, economic, and political life of the young country.

Greimas never finished his law degree, however, and ended up studying in France, which prepared him for becoming a French citizen and pursuing his career in that country. While he allows that he was "interested in anything but law,"[26] he attributes the switch to global geo-politics: "How I then became French, the merit goes to Mr. Hitler. It's Hitler who decided to blackmail Lithuania, not to accept its exports. Lithuania thus had to reform its economy and politics and turn to France... The government decided: now we're going to create French *lycées*. But there weren't any professors of French. So three hundred guys were sent to France with scholarships to learn French and become French professors. I was a law student. I told myself: why not go to France?"[27]

Greimas was sent to the University of Grenoble in the Alps, where he enrolled in the Humanities College. He took classes from Antonin Duraffour, a respected specialist in Romance dialects, who had studied in Leipzig, the intellectual capital of historical linguistics. Greimas credits this "remarkable master" with giving him a first-rate training in Romance philology, forming him in the rigorous methods of linguistic analysis, and teaching him a respect for the text.[28] Duraffour instructed his disciples to stay away from the aberrant novel "structural" linguistics led by the Prague phonologist Nikolai Trubetzkoy, whom the erudite and dignified professor baldly labeled an "asshole" during his lectures in the amphitheater.[29]

In Grenoble, Greimas hooked up with his buddy Alexis Churginas, also a first-year student at the university. He became

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[25] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" I, 12.
[26] Greimas, "Karsavino aktualumas," 40.
[27] Greimas, "La France est gagnée par 'l'insignifiance'," 44. Translations from the French are by the author.
[28] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" I, 14.
[29] Greimas, "Entretien" in Chevalier and Encrevé, *Combats*, 122.

friends and roommates with an older compatriot and fellow new student, Jonas Kossu-Aleksandravičius (Jonas Aistis), who would go on to become a celebrated poet. After a rocky transition, Greimas adapted to his new environment. As he recalls, "The first year, I was always cursing France, for me it was a mess: 1936, the [Socialist] Popular Front, you can just imagine. Nothing worked, whereas even we Lithuanians had some sense of order. The second year, I fell in love with France."[30] Thanks to the new cultural context and to the Spanish Civil War, his political leanings shifted to far-left anarcho-syndicalism.[31]

Greimas passed exams and obtained certificates in psychology, phonetics, French philology, and French medieval studies, and was awarded the *licence ès lettres* in June 1939. The curriculum contributed a third stratum to his intellectual makeup, the Romance tradition, which would become his dominant frame of reference going forward. With Duraffour, he defined a doctoral dissertation topic in historical linguistics. The thesis would study place names in the Graisivaudan Valley near Grenoble, identifying creations and alterations effected by its successive inhabitants, from pre-Celtic tribes through the Celts, Germanic tribes, and Romans. The Graisivaudan may still await its study, however, for international political events again altered the course of Greimas's career.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Lithuania's southern neighbor Poland. Moving to establish a line of defense along the border of its zone of influence as defined in the final Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the USSR issued ultimatums to the three Baltic States and Finland and exerted its control over the countries. As Greimas recalls, "the Russians arrived, but left the country so-called 'independent.'"[32] He was mobilized in the Lithuanian army, called back home before classes started in the fall of 1939 in Grenoble, and enrolled in Officer's Training at the Pirmojo Lietuvos Prezidento Antanas Smetona Military Academy in Kaunas. A fellow member of his platoon remem-

[30] Greimas, "La France est gagnée," 44.
[31] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" I, 15.
[32] Greimas, "La France est gagnée," 44.

bered him afterwards as "a true apologist for peace, but also a good soldier."[33] In 1940, after a little over a year's training, Greimas completed the curriculum, but did not receive an officer's commission, allegedly for political reasons, and was instead assigned to the reserves.[34]

After a year of the velvet glove, the Soviets dropped pretenses, issued new demands, and engineered the takeover of the Baltic nations. Greimas remembers, "then the Red Army arrived: ultimatum, occupation. They incorporated us into the Red Army; I didn't know a word of Russian. I was given a piece of paper: I was a reserve officer in the glorious Red Army of workers and peasants. We were Bolsheviks."[35] The USSR began a systematic process of Sovietizing every aspect of the Baltic countries, from politics and finance to business and education. Its political police also began secretly identifying military, political, civic, economic, and moral leaders, whose removal would enhance the stability and security of the new Soviet Republics and foster their development toward Bolshevik socialism.

In October 1940, Greimas began teaching French and Lithuanian Language and Literature and other humanities subjects at schools located in Šiauliai. Although he had lived there a dozen years earlier, he no longer had family or friends in town. He taught at the Trade Institute and got hired to give additional classes at the adult high school (*gymnasium*) and the girls high school, which the Soviets made coeducational at the start of classes in the fall of 1940.[36] He met and became friends with one of his students in the evening adult classes, Julius Juzeliūnas, later a well-known composer and organist. The thirteen-year-olds in the former girls school recall their first impression of Greimas: "young, very young and blond, hair evenly combed back, blue eyes, lips compressed, head tilted

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[33] Nainys, "A. A. Algirdas Julius Greimas."

[34] Kašponis, *Algirdas Julius Greimas*, 7.

[35] Greimas, "La France est gagnée," 44.

[36] This and most of the information about Greimas in Šiauliai come from two sources: Greimas, "Tada, kai bauriškas kraujas virto mėlynu" and Peleckis-Kaktavičius, "Prasmių paieškos."

somewhat to one side, agreeable. He entered in full stride."[37] In the course of the year, the students developed a nurturing "special psychological connection" with their instructor such that they still remembered him in great detail six decades later. Greimas emphasized literature, of which he evinced a deep knowledge, and delivered interesting lessons. He "spoke very beautiful Lithuanian, with a light Suvalkian accent." He stressed that, as Lithuanians, their national identity and their roots in the country were important and that the Lithuanian language possessed a poetic quality. He also underlined the worth and richness of French literature and encouraged everyone to see Paris at some point in their lives in order to experience an international intellectual center. In his second year at the school, Greimas struck up a friendship with his late-life correspondent Aleksandra Fledžinskaitė, then a student completing her last year, later an environmental artist in the United States and the wife of Greimas's friend Vytautas Kašuba.[38] He also became close friends with a Lithuanian language teacher at the school, Tomas Stonis, who remembered that "there wasn't a better conversationalist than A. J. Greimas... he never lied, never minced his words."[39]

Contemporaries in town recall the twenty-three year old Algirdas: "In Šiauliai, A. J. Greimas was a free spirit, a willing show-off, and a frequent guest at the homes of the most prominent Šiauliai citizens."[40] Thanks to his knowledge of French and German, he got involved with the theater in town: he translated a play, recited a poem by Baudelaire during the performance, and provided actors with background information.[41] He also had his first serious romantic relationship, with Šiauliai native

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[37] This quotation and the following sentences are from Greimas's former student Julija Bartašiūtė-Adamkevičienė as recorded in Peleckis-Kaktavičius, "Prasmių paieškos," 12-13 and 15-16.

[38] Aleksandra Kašuba, "Pažintis," in Greimas and Kašuba, *Algirdo Juliaus Greimo*, 5.

[39] Quoted in Peleckis-Kaktavičius, "Prasmių paieškos," 17.

[40] Peleckis-Kaktavičius, "Prasmių paieškos," 18.

[41] Greimas, "Tada, kai bauriškas kraujas virto mėlynu," 5-6.

Hania Lukauskaitė.[42] The daughter of a well-known lawyer, ten years older than Algirdas, Hania had studied in Vienna and Kaunas, married, borne two children, divorced, taught school, and published two collections of poetry.[43] She had recently returned to Šiauliai to direct its public library. An activist in leftist politics, Hania temporarily drew Greimas close to the ideology of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the Lithuanian offshoot of Alexander Kerensky's unsuccessful rival to Lenin's Bolshevik Party.[44] Later during the war years, Algirdas and Hania would go their separate ways, but Greimas always harbored enormous respect for Lukauskaitė. She worked tirelessly to give Šiauliai a dynamic cultural life, became active in the anti-Nazi resistance, survived nearly a decade in the dreaded Vorkuta Gulag during the Soviet era, and afterwards became one of five founding members of the Lithuanian Human Rights Committee of Helsinki. Greimas's obituary of her paints her as a principled woman "leading by peace and dignity," bearing the "glow of human nobility," and showing unflinching courage: "She did not know what fear is."[45]

Writing about Šiauliai some forty years later, Greimas describes the metropolis as unique within Lithuania. He argues that "the epic that was the city of Šiauliai" must be preserved "for the memory of the nation" because, alone among urban areas of the country in the 1940s, it successfully embodied "the revival of the independence idea."[46] Šiauliai managed to knit together into a positive dynamic three constituencies that defined separate, often antagonistic agendas elsewhere: workers who had arrived to man the recently established manufacturing sites, reformist-minded city dwellers, and the traditional landed gentry in the surrounding countryside. "Šiauliai was a distinctive Lithuanian symbiosis of the Twentieth Century, constructed by

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[42] Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė (1906-83); Greimas letter to Kašuba 4 January 1990 in Greimas and Kašuba, *Algirdo Juliaus Greimo*, 102.

[43] Dikšaitis, "Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė."

[44] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" I, 15.

[45] Greimas, "...Apklojo ūkanos, apgaubė voratinkliai."

[46] Ibid.

new labor in the factories, with progressive townspeople and 'Lithuanian-style' district landowners."[47]

In March 1941, Greimas was recruited by an acquaintance and former scout leader into a nationalist movement, the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF).[48] He recalls being told, "We have a secret activist organization here. You're a member," to which he replied, "OK, let's do it."[49] But lacking local contacts, he initially had only infrequent interactions, when he would visit Churginas in Kaunas.

Algirdas's parents had moved to Prienai in Suvalkija, astride the Neman River about twenty-five miles from both Kaunas and Marijampolė. Education inspector Julius was elected mayor in 1934, a position he held until the Soviets took over in 1940. On 14 June 1941, Soviet authorities detained Julius and Konstancija in Prienai by force, separated them, locked them in cattle cars on trains, and shipped them out to different camps in Siberia.[50] They were two out of 18,500 Lithuanians[51] and 45,000 Balts deported during the week of 14-18 June. In Šiauliai, the Soviets mobilized reserve lieutenant Algirdas Greimas and ordered him to inventory the possessions of individuals who had been deported during the night, even as his parents waited in their freight cars in Prienai.[52] The deportations represented the first major wave in the Soviet plan to relocate or eliminate notables throughout the region.

Julius Greimas was sent with the other Baltic men to prison camps and then transferred with the majority of the Lithuanian men to *Kraslag*, the complex of Gulag "Corrective Labor Camps" clustered around the town of Reshoty, a stop on the Transsiberian railway in Krasnoyarsk.[53] He died in Reshoty

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Greimas, "Apie 1941 metus," 6.

[49] Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų apie rezistenciją," 45.

[50] Burauskaitė, *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas*, 306.

[51] Anušauskas, "Deportations."

[52] Greimas, "Tada, kai bauriškas kraujas virto mėlynu," 4.

[53] Burauskaitė, *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas*, 306. On Kraslag, see the Krasnoyarsk "Memorial" Society website.

on 23 January 1942.[54] When the NKVD special tribunal examined his case later in absentia, it dropped the charges brought against him. Algirdas recounts:

> it's the image of his death that haunts me continuously... he only stayed alive three months in the minus forty degrees Celsius cold. What my sister told me afterwards from those who survived is that his friends removed his last pair of pants in order to bury him in the absolutely frozen ground. And that's the last image of my father.[55]

Like the other Baltic women and children detainees, Konstancija was sent to an exile settlement in a remote area of the Soviet Union. She was ordered to work on a stud farm in the village of Yabogan in rural Altai territory,[56] about fifty miles from the border with Kazakhstan. She returned semilegally to Lithuania in 1948, but was arrested in 1949. After five months in the Kaunas prison, she was brought back to Yabogan, where she remained another five years. In 1954, after Stalin's death, she was allowed to go home, along with most of the other deportees in Soviet territories. She rejoined her daughter Gražina and family in Kaunas and lived the last two years of her life with them.

Algirdas would maintain leftist political views and intellectually consider himself a Marxist throughout his life, but the experience with Soviet rule turned him into an emphatic anti-Communist.

On 22 June 1941, a week into the mass deportations in the Baltic States, Hitler launched the largest military operation in the history of the world, the invasion of the Soviet Union, including

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[54] Out of 2,500 Lithuanian prisoners taken to Kraslag, only 400 survived the winter of 1941-42, a time when the USSR was at peace with its neighbors. Throughout Russia, the majority of the Baltic summer deportees died that winter from hunger, exhaustion, and exposure (Eidintas, "Aleksandras Stulginskis" and Anušauskas, "Deportations").

[55] Greimas, interview with Piolot, 14 February 1989.

[56] Burauskaitė, *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas*, 306. I thank Giedrius Subačius for the transliteration and translation from the Russian, kindly obtained and sent by Vytas Virkau.

the Lithuanian SSR. Over four and a half million Axis personnel participated in the attack. On the very first day of Operation Barbarossa, the Luftwaffe bombed military targets in strategic Lithuanian cities, including Šiauliai, and the Wehrmacht flung over 900,000 troops against some 600,000 Soviet defenders in the country. Aleksandra Fledžinskaitė recalls hiding all night in the cellar with the family where she rented a room while the artillery shells exploded, then being rousted out at gunpoint by German soldiers in the morning. She recounts that "Later that morning, Greimas came over and together we went to town to see what was going on. On the main street, joining the people standing on the sidewalk, we watched the German tanks roll in, cannons pointed, the steady rattle of their treads shaking the ground. In silence we stood there witnessing yet another invasion."[57]

Whereas in the capital city, Kaunas, the LAF took advantage of the invasion to commandeer public buildings and communication centers and declare independence before the Germans arrived, hoping that the invader would recognize the new government, Greimas saw no such uprising in Šiauliai.[58] Just as the Soviets had told Lithuanians that they were "liberating" them from blood-sucking capitalists, so too the Germans now assured them that they were "liberating" them from the Bolshevik menace.

Greimas recalls that the following morning, he heard that LAF partisans were gathering in the former Girls Teachers College, and ran over.[59] As a former reserve officer, he was appointed to lead the company comprising some two hundred unarmed men. He began signing orders to get the city running again and gave permission to open a bakery so that the inhabitants could buy bread. The German command sent over the order to round up and deliver at least one hundred Jews to sweep the streets. Greimas was surprised and remembers feeling "that something was not right. I conveyed the order,

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[57] Aleksandra [Fledžinskaitė-] Kašuba e-mails to the author 23 and 24 December 2010.

[58] Greimas, "Apie 1941 metus," 6.

[59] Ibid.

but the next morning, I didn't return to further 'liberate' the homeland."[60] "It smelled bad," he recalled afterwards.[61] He became the editor of the Šiauliai weekly *Tėviškė* for a time. In cities and small rural settlements, Lithuanians themselves carried out pogroms that burned synagogues and killed almost 4,000 Jews in Kaunas alone in June 1941[62] and eight to ten thousand total throughout the country between 23 June and 3 July.[63] Although Greimas says that he himself witnessed no such Lithuanian violence against Jews in June in Šiauliai, history records that Lithuanians murdered about a thousand Jews in the city on 30 June and 1 July.[64]

Whereas the *Wehrmacht* mainly advanced through Lithuania with little resistance, a fierce battle took place near Raseiniai, forty miles from Šiauliai, halfway along the road to Kaunas. For four days, 23-27 June, German Panzers fought the Soviet armor, including new KV heavy tanks, in a conflict involving over one thousand tanks. Greimas recalls a vivid scene he witnessed at the time in Gubernija, a suburb of Šiauliai: "I'm lying in a ditch next to a Gubernija highway, and in the middle of the road a Russian tank is burning. On both sides of the highway, young German soldiers wearing glasses hurriedly lay telephone lines. The hatch of the tank flies open and a Red Army soldier jumps out of it, on fire. A German stops, approaches him, and we surround the two heroes. Excited, the German starts cursing the Russian. 'See where it got you, wanting war and revolution!' And the Russian, as if he had understood, answers in his own language: 'Stupid! He thinks we wanted war,' and dies."[65]

During the first months after the invasion, many Balts, ecstatic to be rid of the Soviets and hopeful for independence, welcomed the new invaders. Greimas recalls that "in the beginning,

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Paul Perron, conversation with the author 12 July 2011.

[62] Gaidis, *A History*, 74 and Ona Šimaitė letters to Icchokas Meras 17 May 1961 and 31 January 1964, quoted in Šukys, "Ona Šimaitė."

[63] Arad, "The 'Final Solution'," 742–743.

[64] Ibid., 743.

[65] Greimas, "Tada, kai bauriškas kraujas virto mėlynu," 4.

when the Germans would pass by, villagers would tie a cow to their cannon and give them the cow. Take it, thank you for having liberated us."[66] Soon, however, the Gestapo and the SS showed up and set up camp. "When the Gestapo arrived, we learned what a real occupation was like."[67] Greimas was aware of few atrocities committed by the initial *Wehrmacht* units, "but the *Sicherheitsdienst* ('Security Service') and the *Einsatztruppen* under its control started actively liquidating the Jews."[68] Some 250,000 Lithuanian Jews were executed or deported under the Nazis, most of the latter never to be seen again.[69]

In addition, rather than undoing the Soviets' radical economic revolution or compensating the dispossessed as the Baltic States had hoped, the new occupiers maintained and even extended the Soviet nationalizations and collectivizations.[70] Institutions of higher learning and many schools were closed. Germans arrived to run the farms, factories, businesses, and financial institutions, like modern Baltic Barons, while the locals were hired at low wages paid in a paper currency possessing little market value.[71] As under the Soviets, locals saw massive quotas of domestic output get shipped away to the center of the empire with little compensation, while virtually nothing useful came back in return.[72] Legal food and fuel were rationed and access to public transportation curtailed. Hitler, Himmler, and the SS officials who drafted the Master Plan for the eastern territories annexed by Germany (the *Generalplan Ost*) decided that 85 percent of Lithuanians would be deported or eliminated in order to create the desired "elbow room" to be enjoyed by the German *Übermensch* colonizers.

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[66] Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų," 45.

[67] Greimas conversation with the author 20 January 1982.

[68] Greimas, "Apie 1941 metus," 7.

[69] Porat, "The Holocaust in Lithuania," 160, and Gaidis, *A History*, 80–81.

[70] Foreign Delegation of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, Memorandum, 220-222; cf. Oras, *Baltic Eclipse*, 227, 249.

[71] Foreign Delegation of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, Memorandum, 220.

[72] Ibid., 220-221; cf. Oras, *Baltic Eclipse*, 228-229.

The teaching positions in Šiauliai represented dependable income, but the provincial industrial center did not offer the most stimulating environment for a young man under the age of 25.[73] In the fall of 1942, Greimas moved back to the lively capital, Kaunas. He landed a job as a library expert in the Department of Cultural Affairs within the Internal Affairs Office. Once in Kaunas, Greimas became active in the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (*Lietuvos laisvės kovotojų sąjuga*, LLKS), an independent underground group that had previously had intermittent association with the LAF and with the Lithuanian Nationalist Union.[74] Attracting activists from different political orientations, the LLKS counted among its leaders chemist Jurgis Valiulis (later Karolis Drunga), engineer Klemensas Brunius, chemist Jonas Deksnys, and Stasys Žakevičius (later Žymantas), who was a Vilnius University professor and mayor of Vilnius during the German period. From 1941 to 1944, about three thousand individuals joined the LLKS and took the vow:

> I swear by all that is holy and honorable that, with all my efforts and my life, I shall fight for the restoration of Lithuania's Independence, without any hesitation whatsoever shall execute all directives of my intermediaries and all commands received through them, shall never reveal anything that could betray the LLKS, and shall not abandon the LLKS until Lithuania's independence has been restored. This oath I guarantee with my life.[75]

The organization's bylaws further specified that "LLKS members breaking the oath will be punished by death."

Greimas helped produce the group's major publication, its four-page bimonthly newspaper *Freedom Fighter* (*Laisvės kovotojas*), one of the three principal underground periodicals edited in Lithuania during the war.[76] Through radio contact with its

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[73] Žibuntas Mikšys telephone conversation with the author 10 December 2010.

[74] Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų," 45. On the LLKS, see Bubnys, *Nazi Resistance*, 60-80.

[75] *Lietuvos laisvės kovotojų sąjungos įstatai.*

[76] For information on *Laisvės kovotojas* see Bubnys, *Nazi Resistance*, 65-67, 74-80, and Kaszeta, "Lithuanian Resistance."

representative Algirdas Vokietaitis stationed in Stockholm, the LLKS enjoyed regular communication with the British Intelligence Service. Through its own domestic sources and through the conduit to Britain, the *Freedom Fighter* disseminated uncensored information, as well as perspectives aligned with Lithuanian rather than Nazi interests, to the populace. The paper also demonstrated to the outside world that Lithuanians as a whole did not support the Third Reich's program of a "New Europe" as did the puppets installed by the occupiers in nominal positions of authority. It is difficult to overestimate the significance of such publications in times of war and relentless propaganda. Around the time that Greimas joined it, the paper was producing 3,500 copies of each issue, and soon increased its circulation to 5,000. Greimas got to know one of the directors of the newspaper, Jurgis Valiulis, who became one of his closest friends for life.[77] On 4 August 1943, the Gestapo discovered the main printing offices in Kaunas, confiscated all of the equipment and papers, and arrested and jailed eleven LLKS members, some of whom were sent to Dachau.[78]

In the course of 1943, the fortunes of the armies at war shifted significantly: after halting Axis forces at Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad, Soviet forces went on the offensive and began to advance along much of the Eastern Front. The Germans beat a continuous westward retreat toward their homeland, hoping only for eventual stalemate and a negotiated settlement.[79] The picture was similar in the West, where the Allies advanced steadily, clearing the *Wehrmacht* from North Africa in May 1943, from Sicily in July 1943, and from the southern part of mainland Italy by October 1943. The enormous buildup of Allied troops, aircraft, ships, and materiel on the English Channel in 1943 pointed to a massive invasion of France.

Part of the Third Reich's response was to ratchet up its efforts to impress civilian workers and recruit military units throughout its occupied territories. It set quotas for Lithuania

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[77] Greimas, "Kad Jurgis nemirtų."
[78] Bubnys, *Nazi Resistance*, 75.
[79] Müller and Ueberschär, *Hitler's War*, 127.

to provide tens of thousands of additional laborers for German factories. In February 1943, it launched an initiative to create a Lithuanian SS Legion.[80] *Freedom Fighter* led the struggle against the endeavor, which proved to be the principal focus of Greimas's anti-Nazi underground activities.[81] As he remembered the paper's message:

> The Germans are asking you to participate in the Work Brigade? The answer is: don't go, don't join! The Germans are talking up the SS Legion? Answer: Don't go, don't join.[82]

The protests bore positive results: Lithuania fell far short of its workforce target and managed to emerge from the war as one of only two countries (with Poland) occupied by Germany that never formed a native SS Legion.

Publishing and printing were among the many sectors that were highly controlled during the occupation. Greimas believed strongly that there should be a forum in which the writers of the day could express themselves and be read by a broad public. He conceived the idea of a cultural journal. The occupiers would never issue a permit for such a work in the capital, but he was able to obtain approval to produce it in Šiauliai.[83] Having no experience in the publishing world, he recruited partners and went through Hania Lukauskaitė's brother-in-law, a prominent doctor, to get a recognized writer to serve as editor-in-chief. Kazys Jankauskas, Šiauliai native and author of well-received novels and short stories, recalls that Greimas somewhat bluntly explained to him:

> In peace time you could not be an editor, you're not a fighter, you could not struggle against other editors, but during the war, when there are so few periodicals, you are the perfect fit to represent not just one literary opinion, but the whole.[84]

In spite of wartime logistical hurdles, thirty nationally or internationally known Lithuanian authors contributed original

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[80] Bubnys, *Nazi Resistance*, 162-170.
[81] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" II, 28.
[82] Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų," 45.
[83] Greimas, "Tada, kai bauriškas kraujas virto mėlynu," 6.
[84] Peleckis-Kaktavičius, "Prasmių paieškos," 18.

articles to the 1943 and 1944 book-length installments of *Varpai: literaturinis visuomeninis almanachas* (*The Bells: A Public Literary Almanac*), printed in ten thousand copies. The title recalls that of the celebrated nineteenth-century nationalist cultural magazine *Varpas* 'The Bell.' The almanac established the reputation for putting out a quality product, and also for never printing pro-Nazi or anti-Semitic pieces, in spite of watchful censors.[85] Bringing together talented contributors of all generations from youthful to established authors, offering perspectives on every aspect of art and culture, and containing samples of almost all of the writers from the time who enjoy recognition today, *Varpai* represents the most important record of Lithuanian letters of the period.

More than half of the first issue of 328 pages was devoted to literature, including a complete five-act play, a contribution by Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius, and poems by Henrikas Radauskas, Jonas Aistis, Bernardas Brazdžionis, Kazys Bradūnas, Antanas Miškinis, and Jankauskas himself. Churginas, Radauskas, and others also provided translations of classic world authors such as Shakespeare, Goethe, and Dante. The texts were interspersed with full-page reproductions of artwork by M. K. Čiurlionis, Adomas Galdikas, and other contemporary artists. The 1943 issue also offered essays on music, painting, science, theater, and society by director Juozas Miltinis, Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas, Greimas, and others. It concluded with obituaries, reviews, and a calendar of events.

The 400-page 1944 issue adopted a different structure and format, but provided a similar comprehensive sampling of literature, ideas, and the arts, and included many of the same contributors. It also incorporated work by senior figures in their field, including poems by Jurgis Baltrušaitis senior and essays by Jonas Grinius and Vaclovas Biržiška. Art again held a place of choice, notably works by Vytautas Jonynas, Juozas Kėdainis, and Aleksandras Marčiulionis.

The literary criticisms Greimas contributed to *Varpai*, were among his first publications. The 1943 volume included

[85] Tomas Venclova letter to the author 24 August 2010.

his obituary of the poet Kazys Binkis,[86] futurist and leader of the literary movement The Four Winds (*Keturi vėjai*) and someone who, with his wife, had hidden Jews in their home from the Nazis. Greimas's longest article, the 1944 "Verlaine, the Man and the Poet,"[87] presents the nineteenth-century French Symbolist Paul Verlaine. At the time, Lithuania's intelligentsia was largely unfamiliar with French literature, and Greimas was keen to introduce the modernist lyric poets Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud. Immediately following the article are four Verlaine poems selected by Greimas and translated by Radauskas. The same issue also includes a largely unfavorable review of Gražina Tulauskaitė's second collection of poetry, a piece that foreshadows Greimas's considerable polemical production.[88]

The *Varpai* article by Greimas that has since attracted the most attention is his 1943 essay "Cervantes and his Don Quixote" (*"Servantesas ir jo Don Kichotas"*). The piece was occasioned by the publication of the first complete Lithuanian translation of Cervantes' masterpiece, on which Aleksys Churginas collaborated. In what would prove to be Greimas's typical fashion, the article engages the specifics of the work then uses that discussion as a springboard for a broader, deeper reflection. Articulating the goals of his Rygiškių Jonas reading group, Greimas writes:

> We must truly recognize with some shame that we don't know the classics, that we don't even intuit the possibilities enclosed in the works of the great masters which are offered to travelers of this earth as a common treasure of humanity.

The Humanism articulated in the article is one in which each nation is called to participate actively. As Spain has done through the "genius" Cervantes, "each nation must bring its seed to the granary of humanity." The article explicitly ties the importance of the translation to historical circumstances:

> It comes at the moment when we are in the greatest need of help. In this terrible encounter between the powerful of the world,

[86] Greimas, "Binkis—vėliauninkas."
[87] Greimas, "Verlaine'as—žmogus ir poetas."
[88] Greimas, "Gražina Tulauskaitė."

> this beloved country is so lacking that naive faith in its own human mission.

Neither the style nor the structure of the work engages Greimas in the article, but rather its emblematic hero, "the great optimist." Don Quixote "will teach us how to battle windmills without fearing ridicule." The man from La Mancha also demonstrates that hedonism is not the answer: "Happiness is not important to him: he seeks the complete realization of his life, its meaning." Wartime Lithuanian readers recognized obvious antitotalitarian and anti-Nazi overtones,[89] and Greimas himself later declared the piece a political allegory:

> In this absurd situation, we had to organize the resistance against the Germans, right? But to what end? So that the Russians could move in? The resistance was an absurd resistance. That's when I wrote my first article in Lithuanian, on Don Quixote.[90]

The essay on Cervantes' work sketches a transcendentalism that draws from both Romanticism and Platonism to formulate a stirring call to heroism for a higher purpose, one which readers tacitly grasped:

> Understand that above and beyond this world of distorted and paltry images, there is another fairer, truer reality: the world of ideas and forms created by man himself in accord with his divine image. And Don Quixote tells you: think great things, for thought is the only reality in the world. Raise nature to your level, and may the entire world be a reflection of your heroic soul. Struggle for honor; this alone is truly worthy of man. And if they wound you, let your blood flow like healing dew, and smile.

In later years, Jonas Mackus used the code name Don Quixote for his anti-Soviet resistance work.[91]

In January-February 1944, Lieutenant General Markian Popov finally relieved the siege of Leningrad and began driving the German forces back toward the Baltic States. In early February, Soviet troops crossed the border into Estonia

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[89] Tomas Venclova letter to the author 24 August 2010.

[90] Greimas, "La France est gagnée," 44.

[91] Caro, "Don Quijote."

and fought multiple engagements. Straight to the east, in Belarus, Red Army Marshals Zhukov and Vassilevskiy controlled the skies, massed a force four times larger than the enemy's, and prepared for a decisive assault.[92] In February 1944, General Commissar von Renteln announced a new initiative to recruit military units in Lithuania. After intense negotiations, General Povilas Plechavičius, hero of the wars of Independence, agreed to form and lead the Lithuanian Local Special Units, provided that they operate solely under Lithuanian command and be deployed only to defend the homeland.[93]

The nationalist call for volunteers brought in twice as many men as the Germans could or would arm. Lacking commanders, however, the units ordered officers of the Lithuanian army to register, including Greimas. As he recalls,

> When I registered, the Germans took the list with the names and addresses where people lived along with other documents. They started looking through them and were thinking of sending some of the men on the list as officers to serve in active reserve units. So I moved, I changed apartments. I started living with a friend. I changed my job, too.[94]

Aleksys Churginas suggested that he join him as a translator in the National Publishing House in Kaunas. They went to see the editor-in-chief, Henrikas Radauskas, who hired Greimas. It turned out that he was not actually competent to do the work, but the situation did not prove to be insurmountable:

> I corrected translations of Hauff's tales. The translation was very bad and I was a poor editor, I didn't know how to correct it. So Churginas taught me, gave me private lessons in how to translate. In a word, the work was a pretext. Nobody there worked seriously.[95]

Greimas's friend the artist Adolfas Vaičaitis held a position as a book designer at the same publishing house, and remembered Greimas as a brilliant conversationalist.[96]

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92 Mitcham, *Crumbling Empire*, 16.
93 Bubnys, *Nazi Resistance*, 184-203.
94 Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų," 46.
95 Ibid.
96 Peleckis-Kaktavičius, "Prasmių paieškos," 11.

As of fall 1943, resistance efforts in Lithuania were coordinated by an umbrella organization VLIK (*Vyriausiasis Lietuvos išlaisvinimo komitetas*, Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania). On 30 April-1 May 1944, the Nazis captured a VLIK agent, Colonel Kazimieras Ambraziejus, with compromising documents on him.[97] Using the information obtained, the Germans arrested fifty-seven members of the LLKS in the following days, along with many other resisters. Half of the LLKS taken were leaders, including Jurgis Valiulis and the other principals of the *Freedom Fighters*; nine of them died during their incarceration in prisons or concentration camps, or shortly thereafter. The Germans confiscated the publishing offices of the paper as well. Greimas endeavored to take Valiulis's place as best he could by directing the publishing operations and the propaganda section of the paper.[98] He contacted the editor of the Šiauliai weekly *Tėviškė*, who arranged for his workers to produce *Freedom Fighter*. Greimas made Šiaulai resident and LLKS member Bronys Raila the editor. Two more issues of the paper came out in this fashion, ten thousand copies each, which had to be shipped in suitcases from Šiaulai on trains surveilled by the Nazis.

New members had to be recruited in order to rebuild the underground network. Greimas brought in teacher and poet Antanas Miškinis and novelist Liudas Dovydėnas. He recalls having them take the LLKS oath on the tomb of Kazys Binkis in the Kaunas cemetery, just for added effect.[99]

The Lithuanian Local Special Units headed by General Plechavičius dissolved in late spring 1944, when the Nazis attempted to exert their control over the troops. Plechavičius and other leaders were arrested in May and shipped to concentration camps. Other regular Lithuanian army battalions remained active, units which the Germans had formed initially for Lithuanian self-defense and internal security, but which they had progressively co-opted for duties on the Eastern Front. In the

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[97] See Bubnys, *Nazi Resistance*, 77-79 and 136-141.

[98] Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų," 45.

[99] Ibid.

spring and summer of 1944, these battalions began coming back from Minsk, and their commanders looked to the Resistance movement for instructions. Greimas recalls, "the battalion chiefs came to me and asked what they should do. And I was only a newspaperman. I'm sitting there by myself and I'm discussing with these officers. It was a bit scary for me. And they say, 'Give us orders.'"[100]

Around the same time, Greimas was approached by a German officer who commanded an *Abwehr* military intelligence unit that was withdrawing from Lithuania. The men wanted to leave their weapons and ammunition with the Lithuanian Resistance: they could arm an entire regiment.[101] Greimas arranged for the officer to meet with a colonel in the active Lithuanian army who commanded a military sector, and the massive munitions transfer did indeed occur. His friend Bronys Raila always enjoyed telling the story of how the transaction earned Greimas, the "impractical philologist, connoisseur of French literature and poetry," a record in the NKVD files in Vilnius as an arms merchant.[102]

In early March 1944, Soviet air raids severely damaged the historic Estonian town of Narva and heavily bombed the capital Tallinn. Ground battles in northern Estonia intensified throughout the spring. The Allies finally invaded France in early June 1944. Greimas became aware that informed Lithuanian military personnel such as General Raštikis and other commanders were only willing to direct anti-Soviet operations from outside the country, from Germany.[103] In June, VLIK decided to transfer its operations to Germany.[104] The LLKS demanded that a national manifesto be drawn up and proclaimed, but VLIK officials could not convene a meeting since its leaders had dispersed.[105] Greimas later recalled,

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[100] Ibid., 46.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Raila, *Versmės ir verpetai*, 119-120.
[103] Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų," 45-46.
[104] Bubnys, *Nazi Resistance*, 142.
[105] Greimas, "Apie 1941 metus," 7.

> I had no doubt how the war was going to end. The Russians were going all the way to Berlin. What kind of an underground are you going to organize?... When there was nothing else that could be done, I left the country.[106]

With the Soviet reoccupation of Lithuania fast approaching, surely he also realized that his profile and resistance activities would put his name on the NKVD lists and earn him the same fate as befell his parents. Perhaps he also wondered whether it might just be possible to return to a free France at some point in the not too distant future.

Greimas recounts that he left Lithuania, travelled to Mülheim in the Ruhr Valley, then in July 1944 settled in Mulhouse in southern Alsace, annexed to Germany during the war.[107] There he met with Raila and other resistance members at various times. In February 1945, Alsace was liberated by the Allies, and in April Greimas made his way to Paris.

Greimas was among the fortunate individuals who survived the war unscathed, but the years were intense, turbulent, and determining for him. The twenty-two year old who had planned to write a dissertation in a tranquil French Alpine town instead trained in Lithuania to be an army officer, officially served under three different flags in succession, suffered the separation and deportation of his parents and the death of his father, and participated in the resistance and the underground press. Greimas says that his wartime experiences spawned two notions that proved to be important to him throughout his life. First, his Candide-like successive integration into warring German and Russian forces inspired in him a transnational European identity: "I had the feeling of being a European. Two armies were struggling against each other, and I was right for both of them."[108] Secondly, the conflict inspired him to devote his career to the search for the fundamental conditions of signification and values:

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[106] Greimas, "Iš Algirdo J. Greimo atsiminimų," 47.

[107] Greimas conversation with the author 20 January 1982 and Raila, "Atsisveikinant su Greimu," 272.

[108] Greimas, "La France est gagnée," 44.

> I looked at everything that was happening with consternation… I felt very intensely the feeling of the absurd, of non-sense, which impelled me toward a quest for meaning.[109]

Greimas's friend and Lacanian psychoanalyst Mustapha Safouan once described Greimas as sincere, single-minded, engaging, generous, and also as "a very combative man, all the more so that he had to deal with dark forces of death, perhaps connected to Lithuania."[110] Knowing nothing about Greimas's father, when Safouan heard the story of his death, he felt strongly that it supplied the impetus in question. On the other hand, a good friend emphasized the importance that the occupations and the deportation of his parents had on Greimas, but judged that on balance, "the entire experience of the war years was a character builder for Greimas."[111] The longtime reader of Nietzsche could apply the notion of *amor fati* to his own circumstances and embrace what chance and destiny thrust his way. Another close collaborator noted that Greimas always consented to "the accidents of History that he had lived through"[112] and indeed told him and another member of the Paris research group, only partly tongue in cheek, "What you and Françoise Bastide need is a good little war."[113] Greimas either already possessed or quickly acquired humor as well as a certain fatalism to negotiate cataclysms.

After the war, Greimas continued his activities in the underground, now targeting the Soviets. He also published articles that reflect on what such struggles entail, especially the 1953 "The Concept of Resistance" ("*Rezistencijos sąvoka*"). A first irony: they necessitate new political leaders. The existing legitimate principals selected by the traditional legal procedures cease to be effective or valid, ceding the stage to "unprepared and unqualified volunteers… who will dare to make

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[109] Ibid.

[110] Mustapha Safouan telephone conversation with the author 9 June 2010.

[111] Paul Perron conversation with the author 12 July 2011.

[112] Landowski, "Honoris causa."

[113] Ibid.

themselves a laughingstock of 'serious' people and renounce their quiet work and life."[114] Far from underlining the ambient moral and material degradation or the toll exacted by the conflict, the essay emphasizes that underground struggles force the collective body to think, to confront the changed context, and to renew its purpose:

> Resistance... is the original, tense moral climate in which, shaken by history, a nation finds its new opportunities, the consciousness of its new destiny.[115]

Similarly, at the level of the individual, rather than foreground such emotions as fear or despair, uncertainty or regret, the article argues that the elaboration of a novel axiology engenders in participants a vivid aesthetic experience and unique awareness, "a specific sensuous atmosphere, in which new human values are created, in which one's world view is experienced and comes into being."[116] In an existentialist mode, the underground activities oblige each subject to reflect, make choices and declare their positions in the face of limit situations:

> Resistance is primarily the act of self-determination of a free individual, an authentic commitment of the individual, speaking against outdated or imposed values and in favor of a certain system of values implicated in the act of self-determination itself. Before it becomes an action, Resistance is a choice and a pronouncement.[117]

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Vytautas Kavolis once asked Greimas, "What did you bring with you from Lithuania that later proved particularly important to the development of your academic thinking? Did Lithuania prepare you well for your destiny?" Greimas responded, in part:

> Probably I brought nearly everything from Lithuania: the country smell of my childhood in the region of Aukštaitija, my ambition and obstinacy grounded in the region of Suvalkija, elements of German culture in philosophy and history; an under-

[114] Greimas, "Rezistencijos sąvoka," 1.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., 2.
[117] Ibid., 1.

> standing of the Scandinavians' and Slavs' 'spirit'; all of these things remained incomprehensible to the nations of the former Roman Empire.[118]

Arrived at the end of our narrative, one may extend Kavolis's query to probe the relation between Greimas's formative years and his subsequent life and career. Three points suggest themselves. Growing up in the new Lithuanian Republic and being raised by a civic-minded parent seems to have inculcated in Algirdas an unusually strong commitment to his native land and a singular interest in using and nurturing the Lithuanian language. Many are the exile scholars who publish only in their adopted international idiom. Secondly, in contrast to newer Western trends, Greimas retained the Old World tradition of long-term close friendships: throughout his life, he maintained an active exchange with a number of family members and friends from youth, and after leaving Lithuania, established a number of new bonds and close collaborations that lasted three decades or more. Lastly, Greimas was steeped in the historical perspectives of the nineteenth century, which informed not only his academic thinking, but also his political beliefs and outlook on life. In order to become a major figure in continental structuralism and semiotics, he had to break with what he knew best and held most dear and strike out in new directions—in his late 30s!

Beyond sure conclusions such as these, one can entertain two further reflections. First, Greimas's semantics and semiotics appear unusual in that their wide purview embraces language, discourse, and society, spheres typically segregated into distinct disciplines in the postwar era. In today's highly specialized research cartography, linguistics concentrates on constituent sounds and language structures up to the sentence, literary criticism explores works beyond the sentence, while sociology and anthropology study societies. Greimas's "revolutionary" extensive, multidisciplinary project in fact continues the venerable comprehensive perspective of the philology that he learned from Duraffour, which comprises an inseparable triad of language, culture, and texts. More broadly, his wide scope is in

[118] Greimas, "Intelektualinės autobiografijos bandymas" I, 3.

harmony with traditional East European inquiry that resisted hyper-specialization and retained a more holistic approach.

Second, it is hard not to be struck by parallels between Greimas's participation in resistance movements and his later work with semiotics. As he constructed the latter project, it too required a deep commitment to a collective effort focused on daunting long-range objectives pursued in the face of tenacious, entrenched adversaries. The semiotic enterprise entailed an almost impossible goal: to develop a new scientific project and to get it established alongside such disciplines as linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy. And whereas most productive intellectuals focus their energies on their individual research, particularly in the humanities, right from the start, Greimas actively sought to build a group in Paris and devoted great time and energy throughout the rest of his career to recruiting promising students and colleagues, mentoring them, collaborating with them, and brainstorming ideas for projects and responses to attacks. The underground struggle proved to be excellent training for the academic battles of the Latin Quarter, France, and the globe.

Lithuanian students celebrating February 16 in Grenoble, France, in 1938 or 1939. Algirdas Julius Greimas is the second to last seated on the right side of the table and Professor Antonin Duraffour is directly across from him. Photograph courtesy of Ramutė Ieśmantaitė Ramunienė.

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Poems by Sonata Paliulytė

Birth of an Angel
I'm searching for the person
who can sketch
the guardian Angel.

I would like to cut it out
of paper, hang it around my neck,
walk boldly down the streets—
afraid of nothing.

I would like to think about
important things, not sink into trifles.
To know this friend made out of paper
doesn't play false with me.

I should become transparent
like wax paper—
and it wouldn't cause me discomfort.

When it becomes unbearably cold,
I would strike a match,
light a candle,
set fire to my skirt,
to the angel hanging around my neck…

…both our paper bodies should burst
into flame—become for somebody,
really and truly,
a distant and irradiant
Angel.

SONATA PALIULYTĖ graduated from the Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy, specializing in acting. Her collection of poems, *P.S.*, received the prestigious "Young Jotvingis" prize as the best debut poetry collection of 2005. Her most recent book of poetry, *Still Life*, was published in 2011. She lives in Vilnius.

Waiting for a Miracle

Everything is done
I performed all my duties:
The flower is watered, the bed sheets are washed
I shovel the crumbs off the table...
And pour some milk for the cat,
Counting hours,
I sip a glass of beer,
and later on—another…
I'm waiting for morning.

I take another cigarette.
I wish the key would creak turning in the lock—
but instead—just silence.
The calm of hoping in suspense
That the miracle happens—this time—
tomorrow morning.

To my Aunt Adelė

On clean sheets
As white as snow
My beloved
Granny sleeps.

A morning breeze blows
Through the barely opened window.
Tears on roller skates roll
Down to the windowsill.

My dream brings to mind
Summer's flowering,
And my silhouette scuds
Back to my childhood

Where I buried my face
In her warm breast,
And felt speechless—almost,
To be so blest.

Tricky Games of Angels

The angels perched on the tops of the pines
are playing the game "Target."
One cone, a second, a third…
strike against the shins, the thighs, the backside—
sexual, unpretentious, covert.
Me—just a visitor in this glade,
in this flowering. For no good reason trampling
/the moss,
so what, no time left to lay down a fresh carpet.
And the angels, wings outspread,
already preparing to escort a new soul to heaven
snapped from these fondled thighs
that were kicked and finally
stoned with cones by the darling angels.

Potato Meditation

Squatting near the garbage,
I peel potatoes.
The ritual's simple.
Just slitting off the buds.
Just gouging out the eyes,
throwing the peels in a pile.
Thump... thump... the potatoes
clonk the sink.
I'll grate a big bowl
and cook potato pancakes—
you loved them most of all.
One pancake for the mom,
Another—for the dad,
the third—for aunty,
for the grannies
gone now in memories,
for the little one,
for myself,
for all the days and nights,
for all the spilled tears
to be swallowed today with pancakes—
salty pancakes they'll be.
If someone salts too much it means she loves, folks say,
but there's no mercy today.

Just the frying pan,
just the well-aimed pop
of the oil;
the bare face
the bare hands
in the center of the target,
the raw potatoes going grey,
and the awkwardly grated
pancakes
slightly burnt
like you liked,
steeped
in oil,
steeped
in remembrance.

Translated by Kerry Shawn Keys

Rolandas Pavilionis's Introduction to Thoreau's *Walden*

Five years have passed since the death of Rolandas Pavilionis, the philosopher and professor who played a major role in Lithuania's transition from Soviet to Western influence in the decade and a half following independence. Beginning in 1990, Pavilionis shaped national educational policy as Rector of Vilnius University. He was elected to the Lithuanian Seimas in 2000 then served in the Parliament of the European Union for two years before succumbing to cancer in May 2006.

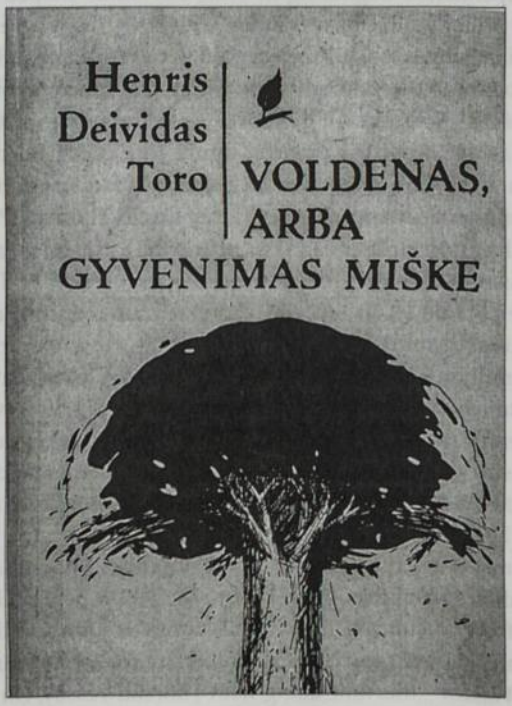
Pavilionis, who ran for president of Lithuania in 2004, is remembered as an important political figure in Eastern Europe. Less well-known is the cultural impact he made as a literary translator. A devoted admirer of American writer Henry David Thoreau, Pavilionis completed the first translation of *Walden* into the Lithuanian language. When it was published in 1985, the Lithuanian version of Thoreau's masterpiece became a cult favorite, especially among university students. Its initial printing of 20,000 copies—a large number in a country of three million—sold out within a few weeks. Clearly, Pavilionis's translation touched a nerve in Lithuania. In those days, however, print runs for literary works were controlled not by the market but by the Soviet Ministry of Culture, which responded to the demand for this American classic by not authorizing a second printing and allowing the book to become unavailable in bookstores.

Circumstances changed in March 1990, when Lithuania achieved its independence from the Soviet Union. In 1997, a new political use was found for Thoreau when Pavilionis received joint funding from the American Embassy and Vilnius University for a reprinting of his Lithuanian *Walden*—this time along with Thoreau's essay, *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience.*

For the new edition, which also sold out quickly, Pavilionis wrote a bold introduction that told the fascinating story of Thoreau's

influence in pre-glasnost Lithuania. Pavilionis noted that *Walden* provoked a powerful reaction under Soviet rule, that the book "ignited the consciousness" of the Lithuanian nation, where Thoreau's ideas "quite painfully pierced the collective intellect of all of us who thirsted for the recovery of freedom." Pavilionis not only explained the meaning of *Walden* in Soviet Lithuania, he also underscored the urgency of Thoreau's message for the newly independent nation. In terms that are still relevant, he described the spiritual dilemmas of Lithuania's painful transition to democracy and to a market-based, consumer society.

Rolandas Pavilionis's introduction to *Walden—'To Be' Means to Resist the Absurd*—is translated here for the first time.



The 1985 Lithuanian edition of Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, translated by Rolandas Pavilionis.

"To Be" Means to Resist the Absurd
(„Būti" reiškia nepaklusti absurdui)

Twelve years ago, Vaga Press published the remarkable book, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, American writer Henry David Thoreau's confessional memoir about the meaning of his life and his special life experience. This work, the philosophical journal of a Harvard graduate who severs relations with civilized society and withdraws to the woods, provoked a powerful and interesting reaction in Lithuania.

Walden, recognized worldwide and translated into numerous languages, a simple and accessible narrative about the meaning and value of existence, strongly ignited the consciousness of especially the younger generation of the then-imprisoned Lithuanian nation. What have we become, that we live so contemptibly, so unworthy of our divine natures? This question, fundamental to *Walden*, quite painfully pierced the collective intellect of all of us who thirsted for the recovery of freedom.

But the preservation of human dignity and spiritual liberty is by no means a problem only of one's political and ideological conditions. For Thoreau, it was primarily a question of the relation between mankind and the world of things created by man. Why does a man live? To surround himself with things and become their slave? To create a so-called civilized society and then become a cog in the machine? Or to comprehend the mystery of his existence in the world amid Nature and the wonders of the universe? Perhaps, man lives to understand that he has not only a physical existence but a soul—vast, boundless and indefinable, beyond space, time, the body, and every limit of the material world.

Thoreau's realization that Western civilization, especially in its American phase, though exceptionally materially impressive, was by no means the wisest way, and perhaps even one of the most destructive forms of man's objectification and dehumanization, seemed strangely attractive to our young people—even as they were in the process of passionately and hopefully self-actualizing according to the American model.

The century and a half that has passed since the publication of *Walden* has not contradicted the feelings of danger that Thoreau sensed. It is amazing that we, who have recovered our freedom and in our own way are attempting to imitate this civilization, rarely consider a similar danger, even though the risk of losing our souls, it seems, is no less apparent.

For this reason, I did not see any need to change the introduction to *Walden* that I wrote twelve years ago. Everything in it applies to today as well, perhaps more so: Thoreau's thoughts are more urgent now than then. As we in our own way repeat the American experiment one hundred and fifty years later, we walk a similar path, experience similar trials, but in more bizarre, more civilized forms in an increasingly technologically advanced world.

For us, as for the Americans of Thoreau's time, a universal truth applies: material, technological progress alone does not necessarily entail corresponding spiritual progress. Improved possessions themselves do not inspire improved humanity. The variety of man-made objects in itself does nothing to further variety in the human character. As Thoreau knew and our own experience shows, the opposite is often the case: things advance while man regresses.

The charm of material things narcotizes the human spirit even before it has time to fully awaken. The personality disappears, and people themselves, like the possessions that surround them, become truly uniform and banal. The independent self is caught in a process of social regression and imbecility that is often called the march of civilization. He conforms to the state, the tools and institutions created by man: governments, political power in general, law-makers and law-enforcers, politicians, and the many shapers of "public opinion."

This openly confrontational point of view, directed against the degenerate forms of civilization, against the "unquestionably sacred" norms and traditions of social life, was put forth by Thoreau in his 1849 essay, *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience.* Originally titled *Resistance to Civil Government,* the essay is now read in the United States and the world more widely than *Walden,* though it has often been published alongside *Walden.*

Twelve years ago, in Lithuania as it then existed, this essay could not have been made public. Though it is recognized as among the greatest in American literary history, it was, paradoxically, much too morally subversive for the country in that period. Another paradox is that the essay sounds even more revolutionary in the world of today.

It is, however, just this type of healthy subversion that we lack in Lithuania now that we have regained our freedom, but are still searching for ourselves and establishing a civil society. The fact that a civil society does not appear automatically upon the restoration of national sovereignty and that the state, like its government, is not in itself a positive good, compelled me to pursue a re-publication of *Walden*—this time together with the revolutionary essay, *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. This is especially appropriate because, to a degree, Thoreau directed both *Walden* and *Civil Disobedience* toward young people—students, those beginning their life experiments and critically disposed toward all authority, traditions, social norms, and especially society's icons.

In the history of the twentieth century, Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* has been used to reinforce some of the most far-reaching and meaningful citizens' movements and their ideologies—Mahatma Gandhi's campaign of civil resistance in India, European resistance to Nazi occupation, opposition to the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan, the movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Prague "Velvet Revolution" among them.

Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*, however, is not only aimed at political or ideological regimes and systems, and not only in cases when they cause violence and oppression. The notion of disobedience not only applies when a certain social group or an entire people become united in conflict against an outside historical force—an opposed army or ideology or another hostile, alien, coercive power.

No, the concept of disobedience or resistance comprises a somewhat broader meaning that is related to the status of man and his agency within his world. The notion is no less important in a democratic society based on agreement and harmony, for it is first of all a measure of the individual's metaphysical

identity within the world, society, the state. It is a measure of how far his dignity, consciousness and self-consciousness have developed, a measure of his ability "not to lose himself" in society, and a sign of his full-fledged perception of himself as "I."

In other words, even in a society based on democratic principles and providing the means of achieving nearly seamless accord and eliminating discord, there may be just as much cause for civil disobedience as under the tyranny of a totalitarian regime.

But to oppose norms and values, to "disobey" in a civilized, democratically established, environment is in some ways more difficult. Society is extremely intolerant toward this type of disobedience. Here, disobedience is often viewed as anarchism, undermining the very foundations of the democratic order. To justify it is not only more difficult, but against it stands the full weight and force of "public opinion," the final and most threatening arbiter of modern societies. Justifying disobedience in this context is a more complicated task because its reasons and its roots are hidden by the democratic society itself, in its ostensible progress, its seeming reduction of forces hostile to itself and to its people. Disobedience, however, is still extremely important and absolutely essential to safeguard humanity and the individual.

The practical pretext for writing *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* was the imprisonment of Thoreau—a free citizen then living in the woods—for one night in the Concord jail for refusal to pay a tax to the state. This was a seemingly meaningless incident. He was, however, a free man, not interfering with society, the state, or the operation of government—and he was arrested! This latter action comprises in itself a merciless censure.

Truly, when do the means which man has created in order to organize his and his society's affairs according to civilized democratic principles—a constitution, laws, legislatures, the state, the government, the military, the courts, the church, the press, the tax system, business and the many other inventions of civilization—help safeguard the liberty and dignity of man?

And when do these inventions, to the contrary, make of man himself a slave, a victim, an object of derision?

When are these inventions, in the hands of an unquestioningly accepting majority, actually just supports to prop up civil society? When are they only something that must frequently be endured? And when are they something that must be resisted in the defense of man's liberty and self-worth?

Were there not hidden, from the very beginning, in that model of civil society that was born in the West and which the United States so enthusiastically adopted, imperfections—peculiar original sins and evils sufficient to arouse not simply displays of individual disobedience, but a moral and civil *duty* to disobey?

These questions are not easily answered. They were even more difficult for the young, aspiring, America, the New World of New Hope, seeking to forget the shame of its slave past and continental conquest, believing in itself alone more than anything else, but not yet comprehending the dangers and curses of its own ways. Many mid-nineteenth century Americans did not consider or trouble themselves with these questions. But at the end of the twentieth century, wouldn't just as many of us, not only in America but in the entire civilized world, consider them still unanswered?

In the best case, the answer to these queries would be as follows: Yes, the system is not perfect, but is a better one possible, considering we have nowhere yet managed to institute anything more reasonable. . . ?

Such a response would only confirm that Thoreau's thinking was correct for his time and even more so now that 150 years have passed. Thoreau raised these extraordinary questions and understood them, but his responses rejected all possible justifications and self-justifications because he sought something deeper: to touch the very core of the problem, to measure the value of modern civilization not by its material, technological, commercial or, as we might say today, "informational" evolution, but first and foremost by the amount of human freedom—human self-actualization and self-worth—actually gained or lost.

Thoreau consistently contrasted the real needs of human beings with those that man voluntarily burdens himself with—among them government and the state. He viewed artificial, man-made needs themselves as an inevitable evil that the individual must be prepared to resist, or at least reduce to the lowest possible level, for purposes of self-preservation. Attempting to awaken the consciousness of his fellow man and citizens, to awaken the human in humankind, Thoreau confronted his fellow men with a paradoxical, but for us revelatory, axiomatic assertion which is the basic truth of social life: "That government is best which governs least." And he immediately added that the people must be *worthy* of such a government. People must be not only bodies, machines, things that are manipulated by the government, the church, or the press. They must possess—recover, acquire, awaken—consciousness. Only then will they order their affairs deliberately, intelligently and responsibly, as a free people.

We must be men first and subjects afterward, not the other way around. The unthinking citizen, the citizen without a consciousness, the citizen as machine, the citizen as lifeless object—this is at once the most horrible attainment of civilization and its greatest failure. And the person who assumes that not he, but someone behind him, above him or without him should order his life while he simply obeys the established order or adjusts himself to it, enacting its requirements despite their absurdity and stupidity while he is propped up by institutions, traditions and the authority of written and unwritten laws—such a citizen is not a man but a puppet, unworthy of the gift of existence in this world.

Why should I, a free man, be required to deny my conscience, a vital possession conferred not by society but by nature? Why should I have to conform to the dictates of those who would use me? Why should I be required to follow the system as if it were fate's decree, when actually it is forced upon me and I upon it, in contradiction to my intelligence, dignity, liberty and conscience? Why should I have to sacrifice any part of the brief and precious time allotted me in this world to participate in absurdity or to become involved in the performance of falsehood?

The person who comprehends his existence amid the meaning and wonder of nature in the world will, in his lifetime, inevitably come into conflict with a society whose peaceful continuation is based on prioritized regulation by the arithmetical majority—the group that is the so-called foundation of civil society. The obedient majority, comprised of those who do not even understand themselves, is the best tool in the hands of those who value above all the interests of politics and business—the origin of this world's totally material, corporal existence.

A large number of "inhabitants," however, is not the same thing as a large number of thinking men and women. ("How many men are there to a thousand square miles. . . ? Hardly one.") Rather, the established order of things—forever and increasingly in the name of those who are sound asleep or put to sleep in the name of the majority and the state that uses it to prop itself up and enact its power—is immoral. Obeying it and recognizing its authority is, therefore, also immoral. Accordingly, the violation of such an order and its laws is not only moral, but necessary—it is the reasoned duty of every fully conscious individual.

This challenge to the sacred icons of society—government, the state, "public opinion," traditions—has never been and never will be accepted by the obedient majority, comprised of some of the sacred icons themselves. A more dangerous function of the icons, however, is simply their role in legitimizing the obedient majority. Through them, the majority begins to act against itself, against its own interests. Ever more hypnotized and anaesthetized, it becomes a faceless mass—bodies, things, continually denying itself, ever more convinced that the interests pushed upon it, forced upon it are actually its own, the majority's interests, and that the desires forced upon it are its true desires.

This is why the prison, one of the more imposing inventions of civilization, something Thoreau experienced, may at times turn out to be at once the most appropriate place for a free soul and the best proof of the state's imbecility: it believes that in locking up or imprisoning the body, it has also imprisoned

the spirit. Fortunately, that which is most dangerous to society's icons—the disobedient soul, the disobedient intellect—is not imprisoned when the body is locked away.

Thoreau draws the inevitable conclusion: the state never consciously concerns itself with a man's understanding—intellectual or moral—but only with his body, his physical self. It is armed not with greater wisdom or goodness, but only with greater physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I desire to breathe as I see fit. Shall we see which one of us is stronger, which has more force? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I.

But where are those legislators, the representatives of power in nineteenth-century America and end-of-twentieth century Lithuania who, according to Thoreau, are wise enough to be enlightened by the law written eighteen hundred years ago? (Today we can update Thoreau and say, two thousand years ago).

A society that serves the god of materialism, that recognizes this as its highest value, that with its laws and systems protects and worships this god more than the free human being and the unbound spirit, inevitably becomes a mockery of an open and democratic civil society.

The social order, basing its existence first of all on the creation and use of material things rather than on inner culture, on the opinion of the masses rather than the individual, is not a society of free human beings, but of slaves, however modern it may seem, no matter what attributes of civil society it adorns itself with, not matter how much it sparkles with material splendor.

A society in which the spiritual serves the material and not the reverse, was not a society in which Henry Thoreau wished to live. For a free and just people, Thoreau believed, material wealth was not an end, but only a means to express the inner self, a way to transform the negative aspects of man and society into positives. He did not squander his precious time in the accumulation of wealth; he knew of better uses for his time.

Any type of activity intended primarily for purposes of accumulation, for the cultivation of things in the broadest

sense, for material consolidation in the world for its own sake, is meaningless and futile. A man's activities in general are only meaningful to the extent that they enable the development and enrichment of the soul—and the richer his soul, the more he is able to awaken and enrich the *oversoul*. The more he enriches the *oversoul*, the more his individual soul unites and merges with the eternal origin of both. No matter what terms we use to describe the conflict or perpetual struggle to triumph over evil by turning it into good—whether we call it good versus evil, truth versus untruth, moral versus immoral—to *overcome* is to transcend the material and make it serve the spiritual.

Viewed this way, the acts of all men and women are meaningful to the extent that they are applied to this effort, and the material results of their acts are significant to the extent that they have climbed the ladder to heights from which new, transcendent horizons are visible—and then the ladder can be cast away.

Things and the body, though they are in some way very imposing these days, disappear in the end—they are only temporary. The soul, when connected to the greater, permanent soul, becomes indestructible and everlasting.

A person is permitted to feel the greatest intensity and wakefulness in his being when he encounters a manifestation of the eternal. Then, the many and varied quotidian worries are suddenly erased. In confrontation with that which is everlasting, the meaning of existence reveals itself. In these moments, our self-identification with the mundane existence that has trapped us and ruled us by force, which had automatically transformed our consciousness, passes away.

From this standpoint, it matters not what form of material or social progress we have in mind. The ancient world, the Middle Ages, the modern or postmodern age, America or Lithuania. Different times, different places, yet their physical manifestations are only forms, means by which the spirit is expressed. And again, from this standpoint, neither traditionally understood social advancement nor—especially—material human progress reflects a corresponding advancement of humanity. In fact, there are grounds for believing that the relation is just the opposite.

From this and from no other standpoint, Thoreau asserts that possessions, wealth and virtue rarely go together: "absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue." It is therefore logical that where the true meaning of life is concerned, moral and metaphysical faculties are reduced in proportion as the material needs increase. It follows that "the best thing a man can do for his self-improvement when he is rich is to carry out the plans he made when he was poor." And this is why, measuring the progress of civil society, it is essential to note the inevitable contradictions between riches and moral life, between individual freedom and social obligations, and between higher laws and man-made laws.

The compromise that is made in striving to resolve these contradictions is called "democracy" or "civil society"—names concealing completely synonymous realities, but reflecting the very paradox of life, the true price of existence in the world. In coming to his conclusions, Thoreau frequently asks, "Is the democracy that we know the final possible improvement in government? Is it not possible to go another step further in recognizing and protecting man's rights?" And he himself answers, "There will never be a truly free and enlightened state until the state recognizes the individual as a higher and independent power and authority from which all of its own powers are derived, and acts accordingly."

One hundred and fifty years later, we can affirm that Thoreau was correct, not only in fact, but in principle. Thoreau refused loyalty to any state which contradicted his enlightened conscience not in fact, but in principle. Thoreau was neither a reformer nor an anarchist, nor a guru who would recruit the masses to follow behind him. He did not have faith in the masses, the majority, whether of a small community or of all humanity, when it was made up of conformists. In every way possible this was offensive to him.

He believed in the separate and self-reliant man, the single virtuous man. For he, such a man, formed a divine majority. Thoreau dreamed of a community made up not of the anonymous masses, but of independent, cultivated thinkers. He was not necessarily against all material progress or his own country's American form of progress. Like a true American,

he loved and was proud of his country, especially its spirit of freedom, its intellect, its ingenuity and the manifestations of its energy. Like other Americans, he was fascinated by the genius of the country's enterprise. But he also passionately refused the effects of material tyranny on the soul, the service to Mammon of man and community, the formation of society into a horde in service to things, or to a combination of the government and "public opinion"—along with any attempts to manipulate the conscience of the free individual.

When Thoreau wrote, he was certain that the masses would not follow him. He would be even more sure of this today. Not because, in leaving for the woods and refusing to pay a tax to the state, he behaved especially strangely in the understanding of those times or today, but mainly because there have always been more "inhabitants" than men in every square mile. And there can be no better state among a people that leave so much to be desired, among the obedient majority, among bodies, things and not fully conscious citizens.

To resist the absurd, stupidity and injustice, for the benefit of the sanctioned state or its obedient majority, is the right and duty of every person living—whether in America or in Lithuania. The possibility of putting into practice this right and duty is determined more than anything else by society's freedoms and its level of civilization, by the degree of personal liberty and dignity that it tolerates. This right and duty is the most striking manifestation of the eternal, never-to-be-resolved conflict between the individual and society. This right and duty is the most basic reminder that we are a free people.

To be means to resist the absurd.

Rolandas Pavilionis
July 1997

Translated by Patrick Chura

Poems by Kerry Shawn Keys

By The Blue House

On foot, I turned off the street
at the blue house with the white cat,
perched like a bird almost,
on the windowsill behind the glass.
Not a fixture or a still life,
but composed and nearly always there
as the Cheshire smile of our riddle.
A dilapidated, mossy brewery
scans the top of the knoll
in the direction of the Cathedral,
and the great river, out of sight, graces
the muscling wreckage of the opposing landscape.
This is not a natura morta
though in the composition
so far it might seem so.
No, it is the grounds of the terra firma
where you were conceived
on an Easter not so long ago.
Nine months later, your magi were made of snow.

KERRY SHAWN KEYS' roots are in the Appalachian Mountains. From 1998 to 2000, he taught as a Fulbright Associate Professor at Vilnius University. He has dozens of books to his credit, the most recent of which is *Transporting, a Cloak of Rhapsodies* (2010). Currently, he is Poet-in-Residence for the Summer Literary Seminars Lithuania program.

Here, you milked at your mother's breasts
for a while, were weaned, lay on my lap
crying at midnight until I gently placed
a bottle into the pink pump of your mouth
and sang you a lullaby about longing or death.
A London air rock-a-bying over the rainbow
all in one summertime's breath
here in the heartland of Vilnius
miles and miles to go to where
my native tongue's birthplace rests.
I came by here only on a whim,
happening to be nearby on another mission.
But I took out my notebook and noted down
the sweet birch and apple tree outside the window
and the sour quince next to the walkway.
And I looked a long time
at the half-broken swing on the tiny playground.
It was daytime, and so I had to imagine
the moon glazing the glass of the bedroom,
glazing your overwhelmingly melancholy
and slaked mother with its chaste kiss.
I don't miss any of this, the whinchats, the symmetry,
nor the cramped one-room flat of your lifeblood's font,
but I do want to remember and consecrate
the tough give-and-take of the then flawless bliss.

The Partisan Like All Creatures Drops Dead
As Chaste In Ignorance As The Morning Dew

to stagger
in the woods
like a deer
in the snow

not an arrow
in the throat
but a bullet

not knowing
whether to bleat
or weep
not knowing
how why when where
what
it was all about
when you started out

with God's blood
on your hands
and now your blood
in his

The Finest Artwork

The finest artwork on display in Vilnius
or maybe just the most interesting
is the work by the schoolchildren
in the hallway to the British Library
just below the prestigious private gallery
known as "the gate" to some, and "the goal" to others.
When I visit there, looking at all
the lilacs and purple and pink houses,
the smoke from brick chimneys
rising to greet the morning sun,
dead birds with splayed feet
in the air—sometimes wearing shoes—
thick-limbed trees with green fish in them,
the fish with apples or rowanberries for eyes,
or a fire-spitting dragon sharing the sky
with a moon the color of Noa Noa,
I often wonder why the up-and-coming artists
from the "the gate" or "the goal" don't go
down—it's only one flight—more often.
Maybe they are embarrassed because the children
paint the chaotic soul of earth and sky
with such relish and freedom of spirit,
and will give even without asking
a masterpiece to a stranger for free.
Maybe they are ashamed because the abstract terror
and the conceptual contortions of their lust for fame
or fortune or transcendence look so conceptually banal
—a grey mishmash of spotlights and afterimages—
after one has gazed directly at the sun of the children
and seen fish with people for eyes,
apple trees with azure fish for leaves,
or witnessed the miracle of a pitchforked-winged
angel hatching a pineapple, or maybe it's a
/grenade
or a painted Easter egg smiling at the camera
and saying sushi, Ignalina, Hiroshima, cheese.

Like Childe Harold Before Him

Patiently, he tumbled all their combinations
inside out—svelte, enchanting women, that is.
Smitten now with cataracts and catarrh
and a compulsively broken heart,
he lumbers through the cobblestone and terra-cotta
forest of Vilnius, eyeing the sleek granite statues
of postmodern women and goddesses as best he can,
and squinting through a pea soup of smog and skyline
/lights
at an inaccessible moon ringed in by a chastity belt of
/lurid stars.
Drifter, deserter from the vicious Empire, his own
/doppelganger,
vilified as a Peer Gynt spider, a lifetime has lapsed away
in what at present are truly burnt-out dugouts.
Now midnight's envoy, bivouacking in the hay of
/an AWOL past,
he hangs out under an archway with ulcerous cats and
/ himself
in derivative, burlesque villas of Villon's imagination.
Look. A disembodied hand reaches out to paw or pick
another lock, and then stops short when his daemon
shoves a bottle of moonshine in his mouth.

M. K. Čiurlionis and the East

ANTANAS ANDRIJAUSKAS

Introduction

Mikalojus Kontantinas Čiurlionis lived only thirty-five years, but he left behind four hundred musical compositions, over two hundred paintings, as well as seven hundred fifty sketches, etchings, photographs, and prints. All of this represents the creative output of ten years, six of which were devoted mainly to painting. A century after his death, his legacy at last has reached Western Europe, Japan, and the United States. During the twenty years of its restored independence, Lithuania has organized twenty international exhibits of Čiurlionis's work in Paris, Tokyo, Frankfurt am Main, Köln, Grenoble, Bellinzona, Warsaw, Kiev, Berlin, Milan, and elsewhere. Also, included in the exhibit "Visual Music" (2005) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), and at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., were three of Čiurlionis's paintings—his cycle "Sparks" and, in Washington, Sonata No. 6, also known as "Sonata of the Stars" [1908]. This was the first time that Čiurlionis was shown in the United States on an equal footing with eighty other artists of international repute.

Lituanus, in its fifty-seven years of existence, has published many special issues and essays on Čiurlionis. Perhaps the most significant addition to the scholarship on his art and music that has come from the United States is a bibliography in English. Furthermore, every year at least one book or catalogue on his

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music, painting or literature is published internationally, most recently in Italian for an exhibit in Milan.

However, one area that has escaped closer scrutiny is Čiurlionis's connection with the Far East, and with China and Japan in particular. This essay provides the opportunity to gain a deeper insight into the painter's art in terms of its relationship with Eastern philosophy and art. In the past, *Lituanus* has focused on analyzing the Lithuanian painter, musician, and writer within the context of the West. As we commemorate the centenary of his death, it is fitting that we open still another door that may lead to a better understanding of Čiurlionis, this time with a view to the Far East.

As a final note, the translator of this essay is Birutė Vaičjurgis Šležas, known in the Lithuanian community for her work in culture and the arts. She has performed as an actor, was co-founder of the Peabody-award-winning radio program "Garso Bangos", has produced films and plays, and has translated articles published in *Lituanus* and *Lithuanian Heritage* magazine. She was one of the editors of Čiurlionis: Painter and Composer (1994).

Stasys Goštautas

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In order to understand Čiurlionis's mature painting style, one needs to examine its obvious connections with the great civilizations of the East in terms of their mythological symbolism, painting aesthetic, and fine arts traditions. The comparative method applied in this abbreviated study, which primarily focuses on landscape painting, supports the conclusion that Čiurlionis's worldview and oeuvre reflect the influence of East Asian culture. His knowledge of Eastern art determined the development of the "musical painting" of his "sonata" period and the characteristic features of his art, including his spatial perception, his aerial view of the world, his concept of man as being one with nature, the subtle color palette of his later paintings, and the significance of the fluid line in his compositions.

Čiurlionis, as a painter, was drawn toward genuine creativity and was receptive to a broader range of influences than

research studies have touched on. During his childhood, he became interested in Eastern civilizations and in his teenage years, when he played in Prince Ogiński's orchestra, he saw Asian art in the prince's palace. Later on, the images, symbols, and art traditions of the East became an inseparable part of his worldview, spiritual interests, and creative oeuvre.

The art forms of the great civilizations of the East and the West, crystalized over the centuries, are often dissimilar, being based on different ways of experiencing the world, as determined by geography, the surrounding landscape, age-old cultural traditions, the relationship of man with nature, and many other factors. However, their differences have not precluded the exchange and diffusion of their various art forms and symbols over vast distances. Throughout history, one finds many examples of the East influencing the West.

In the present study, however, we turn our attention to a later wave of Orientalism, or more precisely "Japanism," that appeared in the West during the second half of the nineteenth century and reached its culmination as the crisis in traditional Western cultural values deepened. Starting with the Impressionist era, we find individual Western artists who, having experienced the authenticity and charm of Japanese prints, fell under their extraordinary spell and went on to effectively integrate the new creative principles that they discovered there. In doing so, they freed themselves from Eurocentric conventions, stepping over the boundaries of their own cultural tradition. Their motives were various: revolt against the decadence that dominated Western art; the search for new wellsprings of ideals, inspiration, and means of artistic expression; a spiritual attraction to other philosophies of life and to a different way of seeing art and the world; individual personal aims, and so on.

The various neo-Romantic movements gaining strength (Symbolism, Art Nouveau, Style Moderne, Jugendstil, Sezessionstil, Arts and Crafts, Stile Liberty, Stile Floreale) were not satisfied merely with restating Eastern themes in a literary manner, as had been the case during the Romantic period. In

Postimpressionism there was a clear attempt to comprehend the essence of the East Asian painting aesthetic. The musicality of Japanese and Chinese art fascinated many noted artists of the time, including František Kupka, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Kokoschka, Alfred Kubin, Paul Klee, James Ensor, Félicien Rops, Evgeny Lansere, and Mstistlav Dobuzhinsky. Gustav Klimt, the leader of the Vienna Secession, was an avid collector of Asian art and owned some fine Japanese prints and Chinese paintings, as did Aubrey Beardsley, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Maurice Denis, Odilon Redon, James Whistler, Aleksandr Benois, and others.

The neo-Romantics were attracted not only to the metaphysical but also to the formal decorative aspects of Japanese and Chinese art that they found in the visual as well as in the applied arts, such as ceramics, lacquerware, and painted screens. In their attempt to uncover the hidden symbolic essence of depicted phenomena, they borrowed concepts and techniques from East Asian painting: freedom of artistic ideas, improvisation as the seed of creativity, the illusion of boundless space, the tendency toward refined ornamentation. In *ukiyo-e* prints, then popular in the West, painters discovered unusual approaches to composition, musical linear designs, dynamic sinuous lines, a succinct style. From decorative screens, they borrowed features typical of Japanese painting: asymmetrical composition, arabesque shapes, the magnification of individual details, the repetition of forms, the concept of unfinishedness (i.e., the *non finito* principle), blank surfaces in paintings that correspond to pauses in music.

The Symbolists had a fondness for the line drawing *(ligne symbolique, ligne sezession, Schallwelle der linie*) and the drawing *en négative*, which evolved under the influence of the Japanese *katagami* school and became popular in printmaking, book illustrations, and the vignette genre. Linear elements and musicality grew abundant in painting as well. There was a proliferation of stylized animals, birds, butterflies, dragonflies, insects, and floral images that reinforced the concept of constant movement, change, and growth. Decorative motifs from nature that

first originated in Japanese visual arts gradually made inroads into other art forms. Unfortunately, many of the features that were introduced into Western art were copied in a mechanical way that often did not convey the refined quality typical of the East Asian painting aesthetic.

As he searched for his own unique language of artistic expression, Čiurlionis could not have remained unaffected by the European fin-de-siècle obsession with Orientalism and with Japanism, which bore the imprint of the great Chinese art traditions. There were a number of factors that conditioned the role that East Asian art played in the development of Čiurlionis's mature style. First of all, the civilizations of the East were considered the cradle of Western civilization in the prevailing Romantic view. Čiurlionis was familiar with popular theories that regarded the East as the source of Western languages, mythology, religion, art forms, and as the spiritual home of Romantic ideals.

Second, the intellectual climate of the first decade of the twentieth century simmered with a multitude of conflicting spiritual and artistic movements connected with the advent of modernist ideology and art practice. Academic Orientalism underwent essential changes. The ideas of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer that emphasized the importance of Eastern philosophy, religions, and mythology influenced a great many followers, as well as members of the Theosophical movement, to "turn toward the East." Such views enjoyed great vitality in Čiurlionis's milieu.

Third, many influential Russians, Poles, and, later on, Lithuanians disseminated lofty ideas that regarded their native cultures as "bridges" between the worlds of Eastern and Western civilization. This consummate mission of Lithuanian culture excited Čiurlionis, especially since the Lithuanian language was connected with Sanskrit, the source of Indo-European languages, and, therefore, with Eastern civilizations. According to Liudas Gira, Čiurlionis envisioned the future *Tautos*

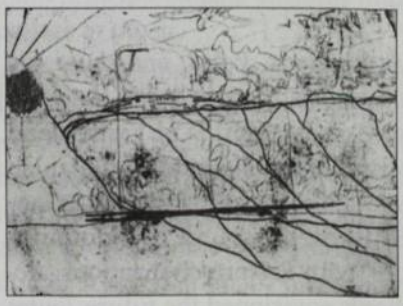
namai [National Cultural Center] prominently adorned with Far Eastern stylistic features.

> You yourself, sir, have seen our barns and sheds. Their ridges and roofs are so similar to those of Chinese and Indian temples that, it seems, they could have been lifted and transported here from the most distant Asian lands. (Gira, 1911, No. 1, p.6.)

Finally, and probably most importantly, the uniquely sensitive Čiurlionis felt a spiritual affinity with the art traditions of the East in which he discerned a great many concepts and formal techniques that enabled him to realize his idea of "musical painting." In Čiurlionis's letters, statements, paintings and in the attestations of his contemporaries we find many references to the East. In *Bičiulystė* (*Friendship*, 1906-1907), a mysterious figure from the East, depicted in profile and carrying the sun in his hands, seems to symbolize the artist's reverential attitude toward the cultural values of non-European civilizations. After visiting the Hermitage and the Alexander III museum in St. Petersburg, Čiurlionis wrote in a letter to Sofija:

> I saw ancient Assyrian bricks with terrible winged gods, which (I don't know from where) I seem to know well and feel that they are my gods. There were Egyptian sculptures that I liked immensely. (Čiurlionis, M. K., *Laiškai Sofijai*, V, 1973, p. 49.)

Influenced by the Romantic ideas of the time, Čiurlionis regarded European culture as a component of one shared universal world culture. He extricated himself from the narrow confines of the Northern European viewpoint and turned his attention to the cultures of the ancient Hebrews, Assyria, Persia, Egypt, Babylonia, India, China, and Japan. He delved into their cosmology, mythology, epics, legends, philosophy, systems of religion,



"Worship of the Sun." Pencil sketch, 1908.

astrology, and art. The artist's vocabulary of images, symbols, and metaphors that he assimilated from these Eastern civilizations, and his emphasis on their common roots as well as their interrelationship is evidence of his universalist worldview.

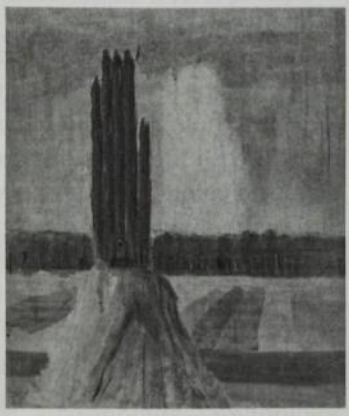
Thus, in Čiurlionis's early "literary-psychological symbolism" period, we find images of the sun, the cosmic serpent, the mighty bird, the fish, the boat, the bridge, and the cosmic tree, which, through various permutations, become a sacred mountain, an altar, the Trees of Life, Knowledge, and Fertility, the pillar of the universe, the cosmic axis—symbolizing the internal *axis mundi*, the connectedness of the elements of Sky, Earth, Water, and Hell. The slowly growing vertical tree, apart from the *axis mundi* symbolism, is an expression of strength, majesty, dynamic life force, and the antithesis of the static existence of a rock. The tree and the rock together symbolize the microcosm, the constant metamorphosis of life. The uplifted tree branches and vertical lines of other plants represent ascent toward the heavens, eternity, the flow of life. Just as the evergreen stands for eternal life and immortality, the leafy tree is the constant renewal of the world, the cycle of resurrection and rebirth. Čiurlionis often imbued natural phenomena with human traits to emphasize man's intimate connection with nature. In many of his pictures, the represented elements of nature, living creatures, and objects acquire an anthropomorphic, i.e., human shape (even mountains are like living beings). This pictorial, mythological, and religious iconography is depicted side by side with the abstract symbolism of geometric signs, numbers, and colors of Eastern mythology—the circular sign of the Sun, symbolizing the fullness of life and perfection; the triangle as the epitome of knowledge; the rectangle as stability. In the early pictures we also see various ornamentation of an Eastern derivation, the imitation of archaic script, naturalistic motifs, loud colors and a sensuous treatment of painted forms, such as *Funeral Symphony* (1903), *Capricorn* (1904), *Morning* (1904), *The Flood* (1904–1905), *Creation of the World* (1905–1906). Symbols associated with Old Testament culture dominate these paintings. Although we do find Eastern elements in Čiurlionis's paintings

(albeit typically disguised within a generalized symbolic form or within a color scheme), they are much more prevalent in his drawings as architectural silhouettes, ornamental structures, and symbols.

B. Leman, the author of the first monograph on Čiurlionis's oeuvre, led researchers toward a scholarly view, which later became the standard reference, that linked his symbols and representations with images from Near Eastern and Indian civilizations.

Landscapes of the Four Seasons atributed to Shuban. Ink and colors on paper. About mid-fifteenth century.

Sonata No. 4 (Summer), *Allegro*. Tempera on pasteboard. 1908.



Summer II. Tempera on pasteboard, 1907–1908.

> The cult of the sun, this center of fire that entices us to unknown reaches of the Universe, and the wondrous idea of one beginning, uniting and spiritualizing a system that he governs, encouraged Čiurlionis to study ancient Persia and Egypt, and pulled him even farther—toward the very wellspring of ideas—toward the six systems of Indian religion and philosophy." (Леман, Б. *Чюрлянис*, 1912, с. 12)

Another influential Russian art theorist, Vyacheslav Ivanov, in analyzing the Lithuanian artist's work, speaks of the Lithuanian people's innate or inherited animism, which "by its typical pattern, apparently corresponds to the humble apathy of Indian contemplativeness and to the melancholic Indian lack of belief in any sort of 'reality'." (Иванов, В."Чюрлянис и проблема синтеза искусств," *Аполлон*,1914, №. 3, с. 20.)

This traditional view was adopted and was later reinforced within Lithuanian research studies on Čiurlionis by S. Šalkauskis, who further developed V. Solovjov's messianic ideas and asserted that the mission of Lithuanian culture, which straddles two worlds, the East and the West, is to serve as their synthesis. "Vydūnas, who grew up in a climate of German Western activism, felt a strong attraction to the passive Eastern ideal, so distant in terms of time and space. Čiurlionis, confronted in Poland by the individualism of Western culture, felt a great empathy for the cosmic universalism of the Eastern philosophical spirit." (Šalkauskis, S., "Dviejų pasaulių takoskyroje," *Raštai*, 1995, vol. IV, p. 173.)

These Čiurlionis scholars as well as others (I. Šlapelis, A. Rannit, V. Landsbergis, I. Kato, G. Kazokienė, N. Tumėnienė, R. Andriušytė) have examined the symbols and iconographic elements of the Hebrew, Near Eastern and Indian civilizations that are clearly evident in his works. However, except for discussions of a general nature regarding the undeniable influence of the Japanese master Hokusai, the far more significant problem of connecting Čiurlionis's landscape painting with that of East Asia still remains outside the purview of scholarly art research.

East Asian Influences in Čiurlionis's Works

The only Čiurlionis scholar who has made any supported allusions to Čiurlionis's connection with traditional Chinese art is Aleksis Rannit, though he, too, limits himself to fragmentary musings about an analogous "spiritual resonance" with the creative energy of the Universe, its dynamic expression in both traditional Chinese art and in Čiurlionis's art. The art scholar accurately observes:

> Creative dynamism was for the Chinese an absolute principle, an immanent activity of the *tao*, which was itself placed at the origin of all things as a force regulating universal spontaneity. In Čiurlionis, too, the impersonal and unchanging spirit beyond the presence of the self is felt as the fountainhead of his painting and as the goal towards which the artist cuts through chaos, regulating and organizing existence." (Rannit, A., *Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis Lithuanian Visionary Painter,* Chicago, 1984, p. 77.)

Rannit quotes the noted Ch'ing dynasty era theoretician and artist Lu Chi (261-303) who asserts that "I can contain infinity in the space of a square foot of paper" and who muses that the thoughts and creative work of the true artist meld with absolute Thought and flow completely unfettered. Rannit states:

> Similarly, Čiurlionis' individual psyche seems to be reabsorbed through his art into the great cosmic Soul, as the flow of creative action springs forth from him like water. In this moment of grace, creation becomes for him a perfectly spontaneous act, and the harmony of his painting becomes sufficient unto itself as the expression of interior fullness. (Ibid., p. 77.)

We do not have any precise information as to when Čiurlionis first saw the work of East Asian artists and how he developed his knowledge of this distinct artistic tradition. As previously noted, East Asian art enjoyed great popularity in the West at the turn of the century. Čiurlionis may have been introduced to the masters of traditional Chinese and Japanese painting while studying at the conservatory of Leipzig or at the Warsaw art school. Quite possibly he saw Japanese art exhibited in Warsaw, in art shows he frequented at the *Zachęta*

Sonata No. 5 (Sea), *Finale*.
Tempera on pasteboard, 1908.

Hokusai. *The Great Wave of Kanagawa* (from a Series of "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji"), 1831.

gallery, A. Kriwult's art salon, and elsewhere. While pursuing his interest in non-European cultures, Čiurlionis would have come across art magazines and general art histories in French, German, and Russian with examples of Japanese art. The fine reproductions he found there would have allowed Čiurlionis to appreciate the rich color palette, the boundless space, the allure of the sinuous fluid line, and the succinctness of artistic expression characteristic of Japanese art. The uniqueness and the unusual solutions to problems of perspective, composition, and color that this art offered were subjects widely discussed by contemporary art critics and by various groups of young painters. Later on, in St. Petersburg, Čiurlionis associated with members of the *Мир искусства (Mir iskusstva, World of Art)* group, who were ardent admirers of East Asian art, actively promoting it in their work and in various periodicals. Čiurlionis also saw works of Japanese art in the home of Dobuzhinsky.

East Asian works of art, with their exaltation of nature, dizzying spaces, and ineffable poetry, could not have failed to affect a sensitive artist like Čiurlionis, who must have felt the spiritual affinity, the internal artistry, and powerful potential of the pantheistic visions expressed within them. He delved into them and understood their spirit intuitively, unlike many of his predecessors and contemporaries, who primarily looked only at the external and superficially impressive aspects of East Asian art.

The earliest conclusive and clearly documented evidence of Čiurlionis's exposure to East Asian art is found in an account of his trip to Western and Central European centers of culture. In a letter from Prague to his benefactor and close friend, B. Wohlmann, dated 1 September 1906, the painter lists the works he has seen in that city's museums and mentions Japanese *panneaux*, robes, and textiles. (Čiurlionis, M. K., *Apie muziką ir dailę*, Vilnius, 1960, p. 195.)

This reference to Japanese panels provides a significant clue to the artistic influences in Čiurlionis's work, because the

most popular genre in Japanese painted folding and sliding screens was the landscape, which was heir to the great Chinese art tradition. Though the latter underwent some modification after being exported to Japan, it remained viable until the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, there can be no doubt that Čiurlionis was familiar with the art traditions of East Asia. The question of how deep and multifaceted this knowledge was can be answered by comparing the stylistic and formal aspects of Čiurlionis's art with those of the East Asian art that inspired him.

During the winter of 1906-1907, Čiurlionis entered the second stage of his creative development, which was marked by a pursuit of new and complex means of artistic expression. We see greater spontaneity and decorativeness. He makes more frequent and noticeable use of the curving ornamental line, as, for example, in the cycles *Sparks* (1906), *Winter* (1906–1907), *Spring* (1907–1908), *Summer* (1907–1908), and in the paintings *Night* (1906), and *Mountains in the Mist* (1906). Incidentally, the seasons and nature motifs were the favorite themes of the painted Japanese screens that he saw in Prague.

Čiurlionis, like the painters of East Asia, seemingly sought to convey the inner "breath of the spirit," the most profound flights of the soul, and did not spurn natural splashes of paint. Individual paintings within the above-mentioned list share a similarity with the paintings of Koetsu and Sotatsu, the masters of the Kyoto school, in terms of their spontaneity, color palette, and motifs. This impression is reinforced in the paintings *Flowers* (1907–1908) and *Spring* (1908). In close communion with nature, in a trance-like state, Čiurlionis created compositions filled with waterfalls, streams, delicate slender branches, butterflies, decorative insects, blades of grass, and muted color washes. Their decorative quality is primarily achieved through formal expressive means, through a stylized drawing containing elements of calligraphy, through musical arabesque forms,

sinuous lines charged with vitality, and the emotional power of color tones and half-tones. His color palette, concept of space, abstract flowing shapes, and the musical lines represent important organizing principles within the compositional structure of his paintings.

One may suggest an explanation for the changes that are evident in his creative output during this period. As Čiurlionis visited the museums and galleries of Europe, he had the opportunity to critically evaluate Western contemporary works that predicted the dawn of modernism and to compare their achievements with those of East Asian art. The first-hand knowledge he gained from the experience pointed him toward solutions that enabled him to realize his creative goals. And, indeed, the important turning point that would come later in his creative evolution was coming into view. The plastic language Čiurlionis was beginning to acquire prefigured some aspects of the abstractionism and poetic surrealism that would later spread throughout Western culture. The link with East Asian art became a sort of key that opened the door for Čiurlionis into the qualitatively new mature musical period of his "sonata" painting style. The insights Čiurlionis gained from the masters of Japanese printmaking enabled him to recognize the core elements of Japanese painting that are connected with some of the finest examples of painting to be found in the history of world art.

Translated and edited by Birutė Vaičjurgis Šležas

Photographs by Krescencijus Stoškus
National Museum of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis

Poems by Laurynas Katkus

Žvėrynas in Winter

Darkness strikes suddenly
like lightning strikes the chosen ones,
and whispers: don't fight; give up; calm down...
Shadows sneak into the house across the street,
melting into the bluish blaze of the TV screens.

A blind cyclone tosses between
the roof and the dream.
The sun's fingers reach out stronger and stronger,
draw open the curtains, and the newborn,
fleecy snow astonishes my eyes.

This sparkle, tearing the body apart,
speechless, and me... for a moment.

LAURYNAS KATKUS is a Lithuanian poet, essayist, and translator from the German. His most recent book is *Bootleg Copy*, poems, published in summer 2011 by Virtual Artists Collective, Chicago.

Aunt Janė

Aunt Janė came out of the photo of a volleyball team.
She would never err when counting.
Aunt Janė learned German by heart.

She would often type something on the typewriter.
Aunt Janė escaped the soldiers by running over
/the roofs.
Her lonely husband ran through the woods in a
/burning shirt.
They found him by the Bible she had given him.

Aunt Janė came back, lived on. Nothing else to do.
Aunt Janė liked riddles, and inscriptions on tombstones,
according to her cousin.

When perfumed oils were running down my forehead,
a shiny ruble fell from her hand into my pocket.
Later, relatives stole Aunt Janė's memory.
In revenge, she began to rave, and disappeared.

Now there she lies, returned to her motherland.
We don't know what to do, and are crying.

ХЛЕБ, 1972

It smells of gas and yeast.
Diagonally across the pavement,
Vans: diagonal letters,
red teats on the underbelly.

Smoldering people
unload
one more generation of the newborn,
curse solemnly.

Black, blind bricks
don't give away
when the blockade will be over—
abruptly, like an odor.

It's half past five. In the gardens
in the outskirts, it's drizzling,
and along the avenue, caraway seeds
scattering.

Half past five. Half-gods,
we're deep in the bread,
not yet risen, as yet untouched
by the palms of steel and sun.

October Holidays

The piano is silent, drop-leaf covering the keys.
Somebody closed the textbooks with their questions.
Mother, finding me in my hide-out under the porch,
Doesn't scold, and when asked, makes a cup of cocoa.

Rectangular windows twinkle with colorful lamps.
To stare at them, and stare, and forget
The defeat of the Dakotas of the Great Plains,
And the neighbor dead-drunk in his drinking-glass
/prison.

One windowlight melts slowly into the air,
Like a sweet bonbon disappearing in the mouth.
Almost like sitting and waiting for the war to begin
On the screen in the movie house.

Attached so much to what is cramped, what smells,
What weighs one down, and conceals,
Only when compelled, did you learn how
To defend, to side step, to fall on the ground.

In your hideout behind the hedged-in barricade
You watch the neighbor's chandelier burst into darkness,
And mutter over and over with lips nearly numb:
For sure, for sure, I won't be a guardsman.

Then from the porch the voice of mother: time to
/come home!
Tomorrow to awaken to the rumble of tanks and
/brass bands.
So it goes, such are the holidays, in our ageing,
October-born State.

City of Mercury

The road happened to be boggy.
Cars drove by, splashing mud and light.
Below us loomed the blue city of mercury.
Tin and water rusted in its twilight.
We sat down to rest, shook dust
from our sandals, ate bacon and bread.

Me perched on a roadside post.
Tomas on his suitcase.
Marija—reclining sideways (it is not yet begun, Lord—
she's curled like a snail).
From the squares and taverns
the rumble of demons.

Refreshed we rose, spread the banner,
and singing our first hymns, started to descend
into the valley.

Sunday the 13th

AURIDAS JOCAS

Though my first child, a daughter, had been born in Šiauliai just three weeks earlier on December 20, I was stuck in Vilnius—a sophomore at Vilnius Pedagogical University, away from home, studying for semester exams. The Political Science class was the most vexing, with many new forms and bodies of government, regimes, and names of different politicians to confuse me. All I had known before was Socialism. The Party secretary was king and decisions were going to be made no matter what citizens thought. It had all been rather easy. Now I had to know about senators, representatives, parliamentarians, governors, dukes, kings, dictators, presidents and prime ministers, all of which seemed to make little sense. I had no idea, however, that I was about to get a real-life lesson—in my own country—about governmental change.

When the "Poli Sci" exam was postponed because of real political unrest, I was relieved. Unrest was quite welcome after years of monotony in the foul, stagnant water that passed for life in the good old SSR of L. The dam was leaking, the pressure building behind it, the river of change about to flow again, and a sense of adventure stirred the spirits of the students in Vilnius and the rest of the nation. We didn't know that the barely creeping current would soon become whitewater rapids and some of us would be crushed by its power before it emptied into an ocean of freedom. We just didn't know.

Auridas Jocas grew up in Šiauliai, Lithuania. He graduated from Vilnius Pedagogical University and received a master's degree from the University of Akron in 1995. He has taught ESL for ten years in Canton, Ohio, and has trained teachers in Nantong University in China.

Lithuania had announced the intent of leaving the Soviet Union and reclaiming the independence lost to the Soviets in the early 1940s. Understandably, the Communist party leaders in Moscow were nervous. We were the first of the fourteen republics to attempt this. So they devised a plan to stop our secession. But we didn't know this either.

The Soviet Army flew in Special Forces from the neighboring republics to "maintain order." Really they just took control of the media networks and the police academy, basically paralyzing the nation. And not without violence. We were enraged and humiliated. But those feelings lasted only a few hours, at least within our hedonistic student body. We kids didn't know a thing about politics and just followed the crowd.

We solemnly, yet jubilantly, hung around bonfires burning all around the Supreme Council (later known as the Parliament Building), enjoying the patriotic solidarity of Lithuanian fellowship, getting freebies of coffee and hotdogs from local cafés, sharing smokes and folk songs with other picketers, and feeling rather elated.

By the time the protest reached its fourth or fifth day, the novelty of controlled chaos was wearing thin. Some of us retreated back into the modest comfort of our dorms to while away the time playing cards, watching soap operas, and of course drinking.

Every day, calls from the loudspeakers urged us to gather at a particular spot in the capital where the next strike from the Soviet Special Forces would supposedly land. This was really just a guessing game on our part. People went to those spots, waited, and nothing happened. One day, it was the Radio Building. The Soviets would return there and start shooting, so we have to meet them, show our presence. Nothing. Then, it was the TV Building. Nothing. When the call came for everyone to go to the TV Tower, people were skeptical. The weather was getting cold, the temperature below freezing at night. Saturday was approaching, and many of us had carousing on our minds. No classes, no government—do whatever you want! Why go

to the TV Tower and waste another perfectly good Saturday night? We didn't know.

I had nothing to do that night. The following Monday, the Political Science exam was probably going to be administered after all. I took a free trolley (they were running all night free of charge) to the TV Tower. Again, bonfires, songs, hotdogs, coffee, and solidarity. Beautiful. The organizers arranged our bodies in a ring around the circular base of the tower, about five people deep, elbows interlocked, chanting, "Lietuva! Lietuva!" Just in case they show up. I remember standing there realizing that my feet were getting cold and wondering how long exactly we'd be there. We didn't know.

Shortly after midnight, in the early hours of Sunday, reports started to come in of tanks and armored transports moving in the direction of the tower. The mood of the crowd changed perceptibly, becoming more subdued and somber. I began to shiver a little, unsure whether it was the dropping temperature or my fear that was making me shudder. Soon we saw them—far off, crawling like giant beetles down the grassy median of the street, driving along and then right over the dividing chain-link fence, flattening it and crushing an occasional parked car. They looked like they meant business.

When they reached the bottom of the hill at the TV Tower base, we could no longer see them. There were noises, screams, and the firing of cannons that shattered the windows of the nearby nine- and twelve-story apartment buildings. All we saw was a flash, followed by a boom milliseconds later. The boom caused pain to our eardrums. I had read somewhere, that if one screams with the mouth wide open, the sound pressure from the inside of the skull will counteract the incoming pressure of decibels from the outside, thus easing this suffering. I screamed a lot that night, sometimes it was "BASTARDS!" or "Lietuva!" or just a prolonged "AAAAAAHHHH!"

The thunderous shots continued. The crowd wasn't sure what was happening down there, so we just waited until someone yelled, "They're coming here!"

I continued shaking and yelling, immediately following the flashes, to reduce the eardrum pressure.

What went through my mind? I remember thinking that I needed my ears to hear my daughter say "tėtė" for the first time. I also needed my life—to finish school and become a philologist in the new Lithuania. The hopes of what was possible if we escaped the Soviets were too great and incredible to comprehend. We could travel abroad (not just to Poland), read books banned by the government, read anything, buy albums by The Doors and Bob Dylan without hiding in an alley. Or buy any music! Speak our minds, vote and voice dissent. I was studying English and reading the occasional U.S. and British magazines that made their way into our hands by ways unknown to me. I was aware of the world out there that I was dying to know. I felt the window crack open—and the fresh breeze was intoxicating. Now we wanted to open the door—on the other side of which stood Soviet tanks.

What stopped my dreaming was the sight of tanks cresting the hill forty feet away, barrels pointing at us.

The crowd was nervous. The sounds of "Lietuva! Lietuva!" now acquired hysterical desperation. Then it was quiet for a moment. Surely, this is where they will stop. We were standing between the tanks and the glass walls of the tower, where the apprehensive news anchors inside were trying to relay events to the world. The noises emanating from the crowd sounded like "They can't touch us. We're unarmed. Nobody move! Stand your ground! They're shooting blanks." And then it happened.

Much has been written about that night, even in English, and I cannot guarantee everything was as I believe it was, since adrenaline tends to cloud the mind and twenty years have passed. All I know is that I got lucky.

I believe I scurried about ten feet to my left and stood where the organizers moved a few of us to fill in a thin spot in our human "ring." We moved reluctantly to the new spot not knowing whether it would be safe there—or to our detriment.

But we did it nonetheless. When the tanks appeared, time slowed to a crawl and everything was in slow motion.

When loud orders, given in Russian, opened the hatches of the tanks, wild-eyed zombies emerged armed with AK47s, bayonets fixed. "Lietuva, Lietuva" had been reduced to a few whimpers. The bayonets and rifle butts crashed on the people to my right, where I had been standing just minutes ago. Then we heard shots. Those "blanks" they had mentioned earlier were felling people like trees in a hurricane. A feeling of helplessness overtook me. When someone is breaking the law, you call the police. But when unarmed people are attacked by military forces, whom do you call? There was no help from anywhere. There was no law, and this idea terrified me. For now, we were on our own. Perhaps in a year a court somewhere in The Hague or the UN could bring someone to justice or an international panel could one day sort it all out. Right now, there was nothing we could do but run.

So we ran. I heard the glass of the tower walls shatter, saw soldiers enter the tower, saw people falling, and I abandoned all the lofty notions of bravery I had read about in the novels of Hemingway and Remarque. We had failed utterly to protect the tower—there was no reason to show bravado or the façade of patriotism. I didn't think of those things then; only now can I make such excuses for my rapid descent down a steep hill.

Running down a hill seems easy, but with fear adding velocity and gravity pulling you, you have to work extra hard not to stumble. Factor in limited visibility and grassy terrain, and getting down in one piece becomes a difficult task. If the tracer bullets don't get you, you might just stumble and break your neck.

Nonetheless, I ducked the tracers while people continued to fall around me, some hit by the "blanks," some tumbling on the grassy knolls, some deciding it was a good moment to drop to their knees and pray. I put my trust in my legs.

Once I had made it to the bottom of the hill, I hitched a ride to the Supreme Council Building, the supposed next target. Now my brain was shooting "blanks." Later, I heard the

accounts of people who stayed up there. I saw the horrible photos of tanks crushing grandmothers, girls stabbed with bayonets, men lying on the ground bleeding.

Processing it all in my mind took some time. To this day, I'm not sure I have worked through it all. All I have are the facts. This night did, however, get the attention of the world. A Swedish station had picked up the press corps signal from an alternative broadcasting spot in Kaunas. The next day, tanks did come to the Supreme Council building, but they did not dare repeat the script of the night before. The atrocities stopped, albeit at a high human price, and Gorbachev, the star of perestroika, was pleading ignorance. The event was supposed to go unnoticed, with all of the world's attention focused on the Gulf War. The Soviets promised us a St. Bartholomew's Night and delivered. Our Bloody Sunday remains etched in collective memory.

Any tragedy has effects perverse and grotesque, yet sometimes positive. No one wishes for them, but once they are present, one cannot avoid them; and once embraced, they do serve a purpose. January 13, much like 9/11 in the U.S., united people, strengthened their resolve, made them one. It was engineered to break our hope and resolve, but it only fueled our struggle. The casualties were on our side, but we emerged the victor. Twenty years later, I'd be hard pressed to find a soul that would argue otherwise or regret the actions taken on that dark and cold and cruel night.

BOOK REVIEWS

Emily Dickinson: The Banks of Noon (*Pusiaudienio Krantai*). *Selected Poems*. Translated by Sonata Paliulytė. Lietuvos Rašytojų Sąjungos leidykla, 2009.

A colleague and I have an ongoing friendly disagreement about how to read Emily Dickinson's Poem 303. The point of contention is in the first four lines:

> *The Soul selects her own Society—*
> *Then—shuts the Door—*
> *To her divine Majority—*
> *Present no more—*

I think the stanza means that the Soul chooses the self as its only companion, shuts out all others, and is therefore "present no more." The four lines comprise one sentence about self-imposed isolation. My colleague says that there are two statements here and a major shift between them. The first pair of lines tells about the act of isolation; then the poet directly addresses someone, warning this outsider to no longer "present" themselves before the Soul.

Dickinson scholar Helen Vendler reads the stanza as my colleague does, paraphrasing lines 3-4 as "do not present any more candidates before the Soul."* Vendler is a brilliant reader, but there's still room for debate: Lithuanian translator Sonata Paliulytė reads the poem my way. Her version of the stanza ends with the idea that the soul *nuo šiol nesimatys*, meaning that the soul is not—and no longer will be—visible, accessible, "present." Nothing here about presenting candidates.

And this is why poetry in translation is fascinating and tricky. When I discuss "The Soul selects her own Society" with students, I can accept the readings of both Vendler and Paliulytė—my colleague's take and my own—and use the ambiguity to start a conversation about reader response. But translators often don't have the luxury of preserving or exploiting

* Helen Vendler, *Dickinson: Selected Poems and Commentaries*. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 188.

dual meanings; they have to pick one. While this is sometimes viewed as a serious problem—there are those who define poetry as "that which cannot be translated or expressed in any language other than its own"—it hasn't stopped translators from plying their vital craft. In *The Banks of Noon*, Paliulytė makes binding choices about how to read Dickinson's poetry. In doing so, she stakes out interesting interpretive ground and transplants a giant of world poetry from one cultural context to another. Her book is a substantial gesture of appreciation for Dickinson's art and a testament to the skill of both poet and translator.

Paliulytė presents sixty poems, beautifully rendered side-by-side, first in English and then in Lithuanian. These contents go beyond the standard set of Dickinson works found in the *Norton Anthology* and most academic texts. The translator explains that she "made a qualitative selection as much as possible according to the criterion of variety." Her assortment includes a handful of Dickinson's shorter lyrics, along with several of the more famous poems that offer stiff interpretive challenges.

The book's introduction, also given in both languages, outlines Dickinson's critical reception and describes the translator's methodology. "Sometimes I couldn't avoid improvisation," Paliulytė explains. She shows her ingenuity in Poem 632, "The Brain—is wider than the Sky." This verse proposes that the Brain and God are equal in weight, that the difference between them is language, and that the purpose of a poet is to voice the normally unintelligible "sound" given to nature by the divine—thereby becoming, in a way, superior to God. Paliulytė does very well here to discern and preserve an important aspect of Dickinson's thinking. The key final lines, "And they will differ—if they do— / As Syllable from Sound—" become *"O jei skirsis kiek—tai tiek, / Kiek žodis nuo garsų."* Rather than use the Lithuanian for syllable—*skiemuo*—which is literally, but not interpretively correct, Paliulytė chooses *"žodis"* (word)—making the last line read "as word from sound." This is a translator's change, but not a mistranslation. It conveys

Dickinson's iconoclastic veneration of lexicon over and above an inscrutable divinity.

As an example of her priorities, Paliulytė recounts in her introduction her thought process regarding the translation of Poem 712, which personifies Death using a masculine pronoun. "Death"—*mirtis*—is feminine in Lithuanian, but Paliulytė does not see a need "to change the gender as used in Lithuanian and thus artificially emphasize what is not the essence of the poem." Though this move sacrifices the gender-based notion of Death as gentleman caller that informs readings of the work in English, it is sensible because, as Paliulytė understands, the impact of the poem is elsewhere—namely in the poet's exploration of the connotative difference between immortality and eternity.

The text also includes a brief foreword by Irena Praitis, an American scholar who has noticed how much Lithuanian university students enjoy reading Dickinson and is "delighted" at the "access to a great poet" that Paliulytė provides. I was teaching Dickinson at Šiauliai University when this book came out, and I immediately incorporated it into classes, finding that it added depth to our work on the poet. As the English skills of Lithuanian students continue their rapid development, *The Banks of Noon*—the title of which comes from an enigmatic line in Dickinson's Poem 328—will be a valuable resource for teachers and for all who appreciate poetry.

Finally, *The Banks of Noon* is an especially attractive-looking volume with an appealing visual design by Romas Orantas. It's interesting that Orantas enhances the text with two photographs of Dickinson, one of which is a well-known image of the young poet from a daguerreotype owned by Amherst College. The other, the book's frontispiece, is Philip Gura's photo of Dickinson at a later age, an image that is still controversial because some aren't convinced it is actually Dickinson. I don't have an opinion about the authenticity of Gura's photo, but I'm certain that the version of Dickinson offered by Sonata Paliulytė is the real thing.

Patrick Chura

ABSTRACTS

M.K. Čiurlionis and the East
Antanas Andrijauskas

The oeuvre of M. K. Čiurlionis cannot be ascribed to any one art movement. Scholars over the years have attempted to trace the influences that determined the development of his unique style. In this essay, Prof A. Andrijauskas discusses the pivotal role of the Far East, particularly the influence of Chinese and Japanese landscape painting, on Čiurlionis's work.

Toward a Biography of Algirdas Julius Greimas (1917-1992)
Thomas F. Broden

The exile A. J. Greimas was one of the most prominent Lithuanian intellectuals of the last century. He published widely in French on linguistics, semiotics, and French language and literature. The members of the research group that he established in Paris continue to carry forward his project today.

Although it is perhaps not so widely known today, Greimas actively participated in Lithuanian public life before leaving the country in 1944. In Šiauliai, he initiated the cultural almanac *Varpai* which remains the best record of Lithuanian letters for the war years. In Kaunas, he was a member of the resistance movement the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (Lietuvos laisvės kovotojų sąjuga, LLKS) and helped write and edit its newspaper *Freedom Fighter* (*Laisvės kovotojas*), one of the three principal underground periodicals produced in Lithuania during the war. After fleeing the second Soviet occupation, he maintained close ties with the Lithuanian community, published extensively in the liberal émigré press, and was active in Santara-Šviesa. This article recounts his early years, up to the summer of 1944.

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